

Employee Safety & Health Handbook

Safety Is In Your Hands



Revised – June 2025

ENGLISH (Accessible)

INTRODUCTION

The Employee Safety and Health Handbook is designed to help employees understand the District's Accident Prevention Program. This program aims to create a safe and healthy workplace by addressing a wide range of areas focused on preventing accidents and injuries.

While each individual program element may have limited impact on its own, when integrated and supported by employees at all levels, the program can significantly reduce the frequency and severity of job-related injuries among district employees.

It is important that you take the time to read this information thoroughly. After reviewing the handbook, please reach out to your supervisor if you have any questions.

Responsibilities

Employer Responsibilities:

- Provide a safe and healthy workplace that is free from recognized hazards.
- Establish, supervise, and enforce safety rules.
- Provide required safety training to all employees.
- Ensure that personal protective equipment (PPE) is worn when necessary.
- Investigate all accidents, regardless of their severity.

Employee Responsibilities:

- Know and comply with all safety rules and procedures.
- Immediately report all accidents to their supervisor.
- Identify and report all potential hazards and play an active role in creating a safe and healthy workplace.
- Take personal responsibility for working safely and use common sense while performing your job.

Nothing we do is worth getting injured!

Safety Policy

This district is committed to ensuring a safe and healthy work environment for all personnel. Our goal is to minimize the frequency and severity of accidental injuries by offering safety information and appropriate training to protect the welfare of our employees.



Safety Rules

Safety rules are created to minimize the risk and impact of accidents.



All accidents can be prevented.

It is your responsibility to follow all safety rules related to your job. Please consult your supervisor for specific safety rules that apply to your position.

All safety rules pertain to employees using common sense and remain aware of potential hazards in their work environment. **Failure to follow safety rules may result in disciplinary action.**

Accident Reporting

Report all accidents, near misses, and hazardous conditions to your supervisor immediately. Afterward, report your worksite accident or injury using one of the following methods:



1. Call the PSWCT Nurse at (833) WCT-NURS if you are injured on the job and need medical attention. You will speak to a live nurse who will assess your injury and initiate the claim filing process.

OR

2. To report an incident, visit the website pswctup.org and complete the online incident reporting form. This will generate an Accident/Incident Report that will be sent to your supervisor. Alternatively, you can scan the QR code using your phone's camera, which will redirect you to the same website.



If you indicate that you have sought or intend to seek medical care, a medical claim for workers' compensation benefits will be established for you.

For potentially life-threatening injuries CALL 911

First Aid Requirements

The district will ensure that a sufficient number of employees receive first aid training. According to the law, each site must have at least one individual who is qualified in CPR and First Aid. Please consult your site supervisor to identify the qualified person in your area.



Additionally, general first aid guidelines state that "First Aid Kits" should be readily available for employee use. Please check with your site supervisor to find the location of your kit.

Safety Committee

The district has established a safety committee comprising members appointed by management and those elected by employees. The primary role of this committee is to monitor the effectiveness of the Accident Prevention Program.

It achieves this by:

- ✓ Reviewing inspection reports from external agencies.
- ✓ Reviewing accident investigations to ensure that corrective actions have been implemented.
- ✓ Investigating any hazards reported by employees.
- ✓ Distributing safety information and minutes from safety meetings to be posted on all district safety bulletin boards.

Safety and Health Training

Ongoing safety and health education programs will be offered to all employees to raise awareness of factors that cause accidents, boost morale by demonstrating management's commitment to employee safety, and encourage compliance with safety and health regulations. These programs will present accident prevention as a positive, desirable, and essential aspect of all activities.

Emergency Actions

All employees will receive training on emergency procedures during their safety orientation or when transferring to a new site. The emergency action plans specific to each location will serve as the training guide.



Here are some important points to remember:

- ✓ Know your escape route in case of an emergency (such as a fire or earthquake). Familiarize yourself with the emergency evacuation procedures and actively participate in fire and emergency evacuation drills
- ✓ Be aware of the location of emergency equipment, including fire extinguishers, fire alarm pull boxes, and natural disaster kits).
- ✓ Familiarize yourself with the district's Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP), which outlines various potential risks and the appropriate actions to take during an emergency or natural disaster.
- ✓ Please check with your supervisor to find out where your posted emergency escape route is located.

Hazard Reporting

A hazard is an accident waiting to happen!

Please take a moment to reflect on the hazards you encounter at work every day. Sometimes, an accident may not result in injury; this is referred to as a **"near miss."** It is crucial to report a "near miss" to your supervisor as soon as it occurs. Your supervisor will investigate the incident and determine the necessary corrective actions.



It's your responsibility!

- ✓ Employees have both the right and the responsibility to report any unsafe acts, conditions, or procedures they may encounter.
- ✓ Please report all hazards to your supervisor in writing or via email.
- ✓ Whenever possible, hazards will be addressed at the site level. However, some may require assistance from the maintenance department for resolution.
- ✓ Hazard reporting forms are available on your Safety Bulletin Board

Personal Protective Equipment

All employees whose positions require the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) will receive instruction on how to properly use that PPE from their supervisor.



This instruction will cover the following points:

- ✓ The necessity for using, caring for, and maintaining PPE.
- ✓ PPE will be provided free of charge to each employee whose job requires its use.
- ✓ Failing to perform any job while using the required PPE may result in disciplinary action.

Safety Bulletin Board

The Safety Bulletin Board serves as a vital tool for communicating safety-related information to employees.



Please make sure you know the location of your Safety Bulletin Board, which will include the following information:

- ✓ Names of Safety Committee Members.
- ✓ Names of First Aid certified personnel.
- ✓ Emergency phone numbers.
- ✓ Minutes from Safety Committee meetings.
- ✓ Required WISHA/DOSH posters.
- ✓ Hazard reporting forms.

Find out where the Safety Bulletin Board is located at your site.

DISTRICT SAFETY PROGRAMS

Hazard Communication Program

The Hazard Communication Program aims to ensure that employees are informed about the chemical hazards and protective measures associated with hazardous chemicals and products used in their work areas. This program follows the Globally Harmonized System (GHS) of hazard communication, also known as the **“Workers’ Right to Understand”** standard. The key components of this program include:



- ✓ A complete inventory of all hazardous chemicals, properly labeled.
- ✓ Access for employees to up-to-date Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for all chemicals used in the workplace.
- ✓ Training for employees on hazard communication regulations, specific hazards related to their jobs, and the proper use and care of personal protective equipment (PPE) associated with those chemicals.
- ✓ Provision of required PPE at no cost to employees.

Please note: Employees are discouraged from bringing household chemicals to work. Always consult with your supervisor before using any substances that have not been provided or approved by your district.

Science Laboratory Safety Program

The purpose of this program is to ensure that employees who handle hazardous chemicals in laboratories are aware of the potential risks and the necessary protective measures for their safety.



The district appoints a Chemical Hygiene Officer (CHO) to develop a comprehensive Chemical Hygiene Plan (CHP) that outlines the hazards associated with laboratory work and the required safety precautions. Employees working with chemicals in laboratories receive thorough initial training, along with annual refreshers to keep their knowledge current.

Lockout-Tagout Program

This program outlines the requirements for locking out or tagging out energy sources. Its purpose is to ensure that machines or equipment are completely isolated from all potentially hazardous energy. This isolation must occur before employees engage in any service or maintenance activities, as unexpected energization, startup, or the release of stored energy could result in injury.



Affected employees will receive specific training on lockout/tagout procedures during their initial job safety training, which will be conducted by their supervisor. Additionally, every new or transferred employee, along with any other employees who may work nearby, will be instructed in these procedures.

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Program

creating a safe and healthy educational environment, which enhances the performance of both students and staff. While it is recommended that school districts establish a written IAQ program, it is not legally required. Each district designates an IAQ Coordinator who is responsible for leading initiatives to improve ventilation, reduce airborne contaminants, and address any concerns raised by employees.



If you encounter an IAQ-related issue, please report it to your supervisor or the district IAQ Coordinator.

Important Note: To ensure a safe indoor air environment, do not use any industrial or household chemicals that have not been approved and purchased by the district.

Hearing Conservation Program

This program was designed to prevent hearing loss among employees by minimizing their exposure to excessive noise and providing appropriate protection.



The district will identify all areas where noise levels exceed established limits and implement preventive measures to reduce that exposure. These measures include ensuring that employees wear hearing protection and receive training about the effects of occupational hearing loss.

Outdoor Heat Exposure Program (Heat Stress)

All employees whose jobs involve outdoor work in hot weather are at risk for serious harm, including death. Exposure to extreme heat can lead to a variety of symptoms such as heat cramps, heat rash, heat exhaustion, fainting, and heat stroke. Additionally, heat-related illnesses can increase the likelihood of accidents, such as falls or incidents while operating equipment.



The Outdoor Heat Exposure rule applies when outdoor temperatures reach or exceed specified trigger levels. Employees are encouraged to drink water frequently to stay hydrated, and they should have access to shade and take regular breaks during hot weather.

Annual training is required for employees to help them recognize the signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses, understand their impact on health, and learn prevention strategies.

Respiratory Protection Program

This program outlines the requirements for respirator use among employees who may be exposed to respiratory hazards while performing their job duties. It includes procedures for selecting appropriate respirators and filters, as well as outlining training requirements, medical evaluations,



fit testing, and guidelines for the proper use and care of respirators. Additionally, provisions for voluntary use are included.

Affected employees will undergo medical screening and receive specialized training before they are required to wear an air-purifying respirator.

Please note: N95 masks are classified as respirators and are subject to these requirements.

Asbestos Management Program

Asbestos in schools is governed by the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA).



Under AHERA, school districts are required to appoint a qualified asbestos manager, conduct inspections for asbestos-containing building materials, develop a management plan, and provide notifications about asbestos to parents, teachers, and employee organizations.

Fall Protection Plan

This program was created to protect district employees who may need to perform tasks or operations at a height of four feet or more above a lower level. Employees who are affected will receive specialized training in fall protection.

To help prevent falls, please follow these guidelines:

- ✓ Always use handrails when using stairs.
- ✓ Always use handrails when using stairs.
- ✓ Exercise caution when walking on surfaces that may be icy, snowy, rocky, oily, wet, or otherwise unstable.
- ✓ Clean up spills immediately to prevent slipping hazards. - Keep stairs, walkways, aisles, and work areas clear of boxes, loose materials, wires, and other objects to eliminate fall hazards.
- ✓ Choose shoes that provide comfort and safety, ensuring they are appropriate for your work environment.
- ✓ Do not stand or climb on desks, chairs, or other unstable surfaces to reach for objects. Instead, use a ladder.

Confined Space Program

This program identifies and classifies all locations that meet the WISHA/DOSH definition of a confined space based on any potentially hazardous conditions they may present.



A confined space is defined as an area that is large enough for an employee to enter but has limited means of access or exit, poor natural ventilation, and is not intended for continuous employee occupancy. Examples of confined spaces include, but are not limited to, tanks, tunnels, trenches, vaults, manholes, sewers, and silos.

Districts are required to identify all confined spaces and maintain a confined space entry policy and procedures.

Under no circumstances should anyone enter a confined space or breach the entry point with any part of their body unless they are trained in and have fully implemented the confined space entry procedures.

Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan

This program details the necessary measures to protect employees from exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials (OPIM) that may carry bloodborne pathogens.



Examples of bloodborne pathogens include the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and the hepatitis B virus (HBV). Employees who may be at risk of occupational exposure to blood or these potentially infectious materials will receive additional training.

Wildfire Smoke Program

This standard applies to workplaces where employers should reasonably anticipate that employees may be exposed to wildfire smoke.



Employees exposed to a concentration of PM_{2.5} of 20.5 µg/m³ or higher (as specified by the Washington Air Quality Advisory 101, which corresponds to an Air Quality Index of 69) for a cumulative total of one hour or more during a shift will receive awareness training, information on exposure control, and access to N95 particulate respirators.

Workplaces with internal operations may be exempt from this standard if the employer ensures that all windows, doors, bays, and other exterior openings remain closed, except when necessary for entry or exit. Enclosed vehicles with air filtered by a cabin air filter are also exempt, if windows, doors, and other openings are kept closed unless needed for entry or exit.

WORKPLACE SAFETY GUIDELINES

Safe Lifting

Most back injuries result from improper lifting. Protect your Most back injuries occur due to improper lifting. To protect your back, it's crucial to practice safe lifting and carrying techniques.



Remember: it's much easier to prevent a back injury than to recover from one!

Prepare for the lift, ask yourself:

- ✓ Can I lift it alone?
- ✓ Do I need mechanical help, such as a cart or dolly?
- ✓ Is it too awkward for one person to handle?
- ✓ Should I ask a co-worker for help, or divide the load into smaller portions?

If you decide that you can manage the load by yourself, follow these steps:

1. **Tuck your pelvis** - Tighten your stomach muscles and tuck your pelvis. This helps support your lower back while lifting.
2. **Bend your knees** - Always bend your knees when lifting anything. This helps maintain your center of balance and lets the strong muscles in your legs do the work of lifting while protecting your back.
3. **Hug the load** - Bring the object you are lifting as close to your body as possible. Keep your back upright as you lift, and gradually straighten your legs to lift the load.
4. **Pick up the load** - Ensure that your feet, knees, and torso are pointed toward the load when you lift it. Stand upright and pivot using your feet. When carrying the load, change direction by moving your feet rather than twisting your body. Twisting while lifting can strain your spine.
5. **Put the load down** - If possible, place the load down somewhere other than the floor to make it easier to lift again later. Avoid lifting items above shoulder height.

By following these guidelines, you can help prevent back injuries and work more safely

Office Ergonomics

There is no denying that computers have fundamentally transformed the workplace. They have made organization and complex tasks much easier for millions of workers each day.



However, while computers are beneficial, they can also present ergonomic risks. Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) can occur from the repetitive motion of the hands and arms. Additionally, improper posture and positioning can lead to strain in the back, neck, and eyes.

These injuries happen far too frequently in the workplace. Often, we associate on-the-job injuries with physically demanding activities, but even the most common office tasks can result in injury. Taking a few precautions can help you avoid pain and discomfort.

Here are some simple guidelines to help prevent repetitive strain injury (RSI) in the workplace:

Chair

- ✓ Set the height of your chair so that your feet are supported on a footrest, or if your workstation height allows, keep your feet flat on the floor.
- ✓ Ensure the angle between your torso and legs is greater than 90°.
- ✓ Maintain 2-4 inches of space between the front of the seat and the back of your knees.
- ✓ Relax your shoulders.
- ✓ Support your forearms while keeping your elbows and wrists in a neutral position, with your wrists at or below elbow height.
- ✓ Position the backrest to be nearly upright or slightly reclined if it has head support.
- ✓ Adjust the backrest to provide full support for your lumbar curve.

Keyboard

- ✓ Adjust the keyboard so your arms, wrists, and hands are in a straight line. Your hands should be slightly lower than your elbows.
- ✓ Position the mouse and keyboard at the same height, with the mouse close to the keyboard.
- ✓ Allow at least 1-2 inches of clearance below the keyboard for your knees and legs to move freely.

Monitor

- ✓ Place the monitor directly in front of the keyboard (centered on the "g/h" split of the keyboard), with the top of the screen at or below eye level (at least 24 inches from your eyes).
- ✓ Adjust the screen angle to eliminate glare. - Use a document holder to keep documents close to the monitor, preferably at the same height and viewing distance. - Illuminate your documents adequately with direct task lighting.
- ✓ To reduce eyestrain, periodically divert your gaze from the monitor and focus on distant objects.

Slips, Trips and Falls

During a typical insurance policy year, approximately 25% of all reported injuries are attributed to various types of slips, trips, and falls. By reviewing the following important safety guidelines, school employees can be better prepared to recognize, evaluate, and control these hazards.



To avoid slips, trips, and falls, follow these general guidelines:

- ✓ Environmental Awareness – Pay attention to where you are walking.
- ✓ Take your time – Rushing increases the likelihood of taking shortcuts and becoming inattentive.
- ✓ Use handrails – Always use handrails, especially on steps and ramps.
- ✓ Wear proper footwear – Opt for slip-resistant shoes that are flat, rubber-soled, and feature wide tread designs.

Many fall hazards occur on wet or icy surfaces, typically found in areas such as bathrooms, around water fountains, and in cafeterias.

- ✓ Take your time: Walk slowly and carefully.
- ✓ Avoid Wet or Icy Areas: If possible, take a safer route to your destination.
- ✓ Exercise Extra Caution: Be especially cautious during cold or rainy weather where ice may accumulate.

In addition to wet, icy, and slippery surfaces, school district employees may encounter trip hazards in the following situations:

- ✓ Boxes of office equipment: Keep boxes and storage items out of walkways.
- ✓ Electrical cords: Manage computer and appliance cords properly to prevent trips.
- ✓ Mats and Carpets: Ensure that mats and carpets are secured and not rolled up at the edges.
- ✓ Desk and Filing Cabinet Drawers: Keep desk and file drawers closed when not in use.
- ✓ Speed Bumps and Bumper Stops in Parking Lots: Ensure these are painted for visibility; they can be hard to see in the dark.
- ✓ Holes and Uneven Sidewalks: Report holes and uneven surfaces to the school district maintenance department so they can be repaired.

Please take a moment to evaluate your work area for any potential fall hazards you may encounter.

Ladder Safety

Ladder safety is an important lesson that is often overlooked. Each year, over 500,000 people are injured in falls involving ladders. Most of these incidents occur because individuals ignore basic ladder safety rules.



Our school district uses portable ladders in various settings, including maintenance, academic, and administrative tasks. Misusing these ladders can lead to serious injuries or even fatalities.

Our goal is to provide safety information to all school district members to help reduce the potential for injury.

Please follow these ladder safety guidelines:

- ✓ Use a ladder of the proper length to reach the height you need. Do not use chairs, boxes, or desks as ladders; these are unsafe to stand on.
- ✓ Choose the right ladder to support your weight for the job you are about to perform.
- ✓ Inspect the ladder BEFORE using it. Check the rungs, spreaders, and side rails. Never use a damaged ladder.
- ✓ Place the feet of the ladder on firm, even ground. The bottom of the ladder should be about 1 foot away from the wall for every 4 feet of height the ladder reaches. The upper and lower sections of an extension ladder should overlap to provide stability.
- ✓ Face the ladder and use BOTH hands while climbing. Stay centered between the rails.
- ✓ Do not lean over the side of the ladder. Your belt buckle should not extend beyond the side rail. Carry tools in a tool belt or raise and lower them using a hand line.
- ✓ When using single or extension ladders, do not stand above the third rung from the top, and do not climb above the point where the ladder makes contact with the wall or vertical support.

By adhering to these guidelines, we can ensure a safer environment for everyone.

Workers' Compensation Filing Information

IF A WORKPLACE INJURY OR DISEASE OCCURS

This District is subject to Washington State industrial insurance laws and has been approved by the state to cover its own workers' compensation benefits. Self-insured employers must provide all benefits required by the law. The Department of Labor and Industries regulates your employer's compliance with these laws. If you become injured on the job or develop an occupational disease, you will be entitled to industrial insurance benefits. Your claim will be handled, and your benefits paid by your employer.

IN CASE OF INJURY OR DISEASE

REPORT YOUR INJURY OR DISEASE to your supervisor (listed below).

Your employer will provide you with information on how to file a workers' compensation claim. You must complete the claim filing process if you seek medical treatment.

GET MEDICAL CARE. You have the right to go to the doctor of your choice.

If you are injured on the job and need to seek medical attention, you can go to the doctor of your choice. Once your claim is filed the claims administrator will evaluate your claim for benefits. All medical bills that result from an allowable on-the-job injury or occupational disease will be paid by your employer. You may be entitled to wage replacement or other benefits. Your employer will explain this to you.

IMPORTANT

Your employer cannot deny you the right to file a claim, and your employer cannot penalize you or discriminate against you for filing a claim. Every worker is entitled to workers' compensation benefits for any injury or illness, which results from his/her job.

Any false claim filed by a worker may be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

If you have any questions or concerns, contact your employer's representative at the claims administration address or phone number below, or call the Department of Labor and Industries, Self-Insurance Section (360) 902-6901.

EMPLOYER MUST COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:

Report your injury to:

Claims administration address:

Your Supervisor or Site Manager

Sound Workers' Compensation Trust
800 Oakesdale Ave SW
Renton WA 98057-5221
(425) 917-7667