

# Employee Safety & Health Handbook

**2021-22**



## Introduction

The **Employee Safety and Health Handbook** is offered to familiarize employees with the District's **Accident Prevention Program**. This program was developed to establish a safe and healthy work environment. The elements of this program cover a broad spectrum of areas; all are designed to prevent accidents and injuries.

Taken individually, the program elements have minimal effect, but as an integrated program, and with the support of employees at all levels, it can reduce the frequency and severity of job-related injuries to district employees.

It is **required** that you take some time to read through this information. After reading this handbook, ask your supervisor to answer any questions you might have.

## Responsibilities

The **employer** is responsible for providing a safe and healthy workplace free from recognized hazards:

- Establish, supervise, and enforce safety rules.
- Provide the required safety training to all employees.
- Ensure that personal protective equipment (PPE) is worn when tasks dictate.
- Conduct an investigation of all accidents, regardless of severity.

The **employee** is required to:

- Know and comply with all safety rules and procedures.
- Immediately report all accidents to your 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 dedicated to providing a safe and healthful work environment for all district personnel. It is our goal to reduce the frequency and severity of accidental injuries by providing our employees with safety information and appropriate safety training as a means of protecting employee welfare.



## Safety Rules

Safety rules are established to reduce the frequency and severity of accidental injuries.



All accidents are preventable.

It is your responsibility to follow all safety rules pertaining to your job.

- ✓ Please ask your supervisor about specific safety rules that pertain to your job.

- ✓ All safety rules pertain to employees using common sense and being aware of the hazards of their work environment.
- ✓ Failure to follow safety rules could result in disciplinary action.

## Accident Reporting and Investigation

Report all accidents and near misses from hazardous conditions to your supervisor.



If you are injured on the job, you are required to fill out an online **Accident/Incident Report** form. Visit our website, [www.pswct.org](http://www.pswct.org), to begin the electronic filing of your accident/incident report.

If you are injured on the job and seek medical attention by a physician, please request the workers' compensation claim information from your site supervisor. You will need to file a **Self-Insurer Accident Report (SIF-2)**. Visit our website, [www.pswct.org](http://www.pswct.org), to begin the electronic filing of your SIF-2.

Generally, you are not required to report minor, incidental injuries (cuts, bruises, and abrasions). If you are unclear whether an accident should be reported, discuss it with your supervisor.

## First Aid Requirements

The district will provide first aid training to a sufficient number of employees. The law requires that districts provide at least one CPR/First Aid qualified person per site. Please check with your site supervisor for the qualified person in your area.



General first aid guidelines provide that "First Aid Kits" will be available for employee use. Please check with your site supervisor for the location of your kit.

## Safety Committee

The district has a safety committee composed of management appointed and employee-elected members.

The main function of this committee is to monitor the effectiveness of the Accident Prevention Program.

It accomplishes this by:

- ✓ Reviewing inspection reports from outside agencies.
- ✓ Reviewing accident investigations to ensure corrective actions have been taken.
- ✓ Investigating any hazards reported to them by employees.
- ✓ Providing safety information and safety meeting minutes to be posted on all district safety bulletin boards.

## Safety and Health Training

On-going safety and health education programs will be provided for all employees in an effort to increase awareness of accident causation factors, improve morale by

demonstrating management's concern for the safety of their employees, and promote acceptance of safety and health regulations by presenting accident prevention as a positive, desirable, and integral part of all activities.

### Emergency Actions

All employees will be provided training on emergency actions during the employees' safety orientation or transfer to a new site.



The emergency action plans developed for each location will be used as a training guide.

Here are some important points to remember:

- ✓ Know your escape route in the event of an emergency (fire, earthquake, etc.). Learn your emergency evacuation procedures and participate in fire and emergency evacuation drills
- ✓ Know the location of emergency equipment (fire extinguishers, fire alarm pull boxes, natural disaster kits).
- ✓ Become familiar with the district's Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP) that addresses a variety of perils and actions to take in the event of an emergency or natural disaster.
- ✓ Please check with your supervisor for the location of your posted emergency escape route.

### Hazard Reporting

A hazard is an accident waiting to happen!

Please take some time to think about the hazards that you encounter at work on a daily basis. Sometimes an accident does not result in an injury. This type of accident is commonly called a "near miss." A "near miss" should be reported to your supervisor immediately. Your supervisor will investigate the incident and assess for corrective actions.



### *It's your responsibility!*

- ✓ It is the employee's right and responsibility to report any unsafe act, condition, or procedure that they encounter.
- ✓ Report all hazards to your supervisor in writing or by email.
- ✓ If possible, all hazards will be corrected at the site level. Some hazards may require further assistance from your 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 be provided instruction on use of that PPE by their supervisor. The instruction will include:



- ✓ The requirement for use, care, and maintenance of PPE.
- ✓ The issuance of PPE will be provided free of charge to each employee whose job requires its use.

- ✓ Performing any job without the use of the required PPE could result in disciplinary action.

### Safety Bulletin Board

The Safety Bulletin Board is used to communicate safety-related information to employees.



Know the location of your Safety Bulletin Board. The Safety Bulletin Board will contain:

- ✓ Names of Safety Committee Members.
- ✓ Names of First Aid certified personnel.
- ✓ Emergency phone numbers.
- ✓ Safety Committee meeting minutes.
- ✓ WISHA/DOSH required 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 was developed to ensure that employees are informed of the chemical hazards associated with products used in their work areas. These are in compliance with the new Globally Harmonized System (GHS) labeling requirements to ensure chemicals are consistently and clearly identified.



This is known as the “**Workers’ Right to Understand**” standard for chemicals in the workplace. These standard states that:

- ✓ Employees will have access to SDS (Safety Data Sheet) information for all chemicals used in the workplace.
- ✓ Employees will be trained on proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE) associated with the chemicals they are using.
- ✓ Required PPE will be provided free of charge.

**Please Note:** Employees are discouraged from bringing household chemicals to work. Please check with your supervisor before using any consumer formulated cleaning product at work.

### Science Laboratory Safety Program

The scope of this program is to ensure that employees working with hazardous chemicals in laboratories are informed of hazards, know the proper hazard evaluation methods, and know how to protect themselves from exposure to chemicals.



The district will designate a **Chemical Hygiene Officer (CHO)** to develop a written **Chemical Hygiene Plan** and provide yearly training to employees who work with chemicals in labs.

### Lockout-Tagout Program

This program establishes the requirements for the lockout or tagout of energy sources.



It is used to ensure that machines or equipment are isolated from all potentially hazardous energy, and locked-out or tagged-out before employees perform any servicing or maintenance activities where the unexpected energization, start-up, or release of stored energy could cause injury.

Affected employees will be given specific training on the lockout or tagout procedures during their initial job safety training conducted by their supervisor.

Each new or transferred employee, and other employees, whose work operations are or may be in the area, shall be instructed on the lockout or tagout procedures.

### Hearing Conservation Program

This program was developed to protect employees from potential hearing loss due to exposure to high occupational noise levels.



The district identifies all areas that exceed designated noise levels and takes preventive measures to reduce that exposure depending upon the noise levels.

### Outdoor Heat Exposure Program (Heat Stress)

All employees whose positions require them to work outdoors in hot weather can result in serious illness or even death. Workers exposed to extreme heat may experience symptoms of heat-related illnesses (HRI), such as heat cramps, heat rash, heat exhaustion, fainting, heat stroke, and other symptoms.



Heat-related illness is also linked to injuries from falls, equipment operation accidents, and other on-the-job incidents. The *Outdoor Heat Exposure* rule applies from May 1 through September 30, every year, when employees are exposed to outdoor heat at or above applicable temperature levels. Employees are encouraged to frequently consume water or other acceptable beverages to ensure hydration and understand the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness, how it affects their health, and how it can be prevented.

### Respirator Program

This program establishes the requirement for the proper use of respirators, types of filters, fit testing and training for employees who may be exposed to airborne toxins during performance of their jobs.



Affected employees will receive medical screening and specialized training prior to being required to wear a respirator.

### Asbestos Management Program

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



AHERA requires school districts to have a properly accredited asbestos manager, perform inspections of the schools for asbestos-containing building materials, prepare a management plan, and provide asbestos related notifications to parents, teachers, and employee organizations.

## Fall Protection Program

This program was developed to protect district employees who may be required to perform tasks or operations four feet or more above a lower level. Affected employees will receive specialized training for fall protection.



Following these guidelines can prevent falls:

- ✓ Always use handrails when using stairs.
- ✓ Use caution when walking on surfaces that contain ice, snow, rock, oil, water, or other adverse or unstable material or condition.
- ✓ Immediately clean up spills.
- ✓ Prevent fall hazards by keeping stairs, walkways, aisles, and walk areas clear of boxes, loose materials, wires, and other objects.
- ✓ Select shoes for comfort and safety that are compatible with your work environment.
- ✓ Do not stand or climb on a desk, chair, or other unstable surface to reach for an object. Use a ladder!

## Confined Space Program

Under this program, all locations that meet the WISHA/DOSH definition of a confined space are identified and classified based upon any hazardous conditions they may present.



A confined space is a space that is large enough for an employee to enter or break the plane of entry, has restricted means of entry or exit, has unfavorable natural ventilation and is not designed for continuous employee occupancy.

Examples of confined spaces include, but are not limited to: tanks, tunnels, trenches, vaults, manholes sewers, and/or silos.

Districts shall identify all confined spaces and maintain a confined space entry policy and procedure.

Do not enter a confined space or break the plane of entry with any part of your body if you are not trained in and have not fully implemented the confined space entry procedure.

## Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan

This program provides requirements to protect employees from exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials (OPIM) that may contain bloodborne pathogens.



Examples of bloodborne pathogens are the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and hepatitis B virus (HBV). Employees who have occupational exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials will receive further training.

## WORKPLACE SAFETY GUIDELINES

### Safe Lifting

Most back injuries result from improper lifting. Protect your back by practicing proper lifting and carrying techniques. Remember: It's easier to prevent a back injury than to recover from one!

**Prepare the lift** - think about the load you'll be lifting. 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 split the load into several smaller ones?

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

**Tuck your pelvis** - Tighten your stomach muscles and tuck your pelvis. Tightening the stomach muscles automatically helps to support the lower back.

**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.

**Hug the load** - Bring the object you are lifting as close to your body as possible. Keep your back upright as you lift. Gradually straighten your legs to a standing position to lift the load.

**Pick up the load** - Make sure your feet, knees, and torso are pointed toward the load when you lift. Come to an upright position then pivot using your feet. As you carry the load, change direction with your feet, not by twisting your body. Twisting and lifting at the same time can overload your spine. When you are ready to set the load down, have your feet pointed toward the load.

**Put the load down** - If possible, choose a place other than the floor to set down the load, so the load will be easier to pick up if it must be moved again. Avoid lifting above your shoulder height.

### Office Ergonomics

There is no denying that computers have forever changed the workplace. They have made organization and complicated tasks much easier for millions of workers each day.



While computers are helpful, they can also pose ergonomic risks. Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) can happen from repetitive motion of the hands and arms. Also, improper posture and positioning can cause back, neck, and eye strain.

These injuries happen far too often in the workplace. Most of the time we think of on-the-job injuries from very physical activities, but the truth is that even the most common office tasks can lead to injury. Taking a few precautions could save you from pain and suffering. Here are some simple guidelines to help prevent RSI in the workplace.

### Chair

- ✓ Set the height of your chair to allow support of your feet with a footrest, or if your workstation height allows, place your feet flat on the floor.
- ✓ Make sure the angle between your torso and legs is greater than 90°.
- ✓ Allow 2-4 inches of space between the waterfall front of the seat and the back of your knee.
- ✓ 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 nearly upright, or slightly reclined if you have head support.
- ✓ Fine tune the backrest to provide full support of your lumbar curve.

### Keyboard

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

### Monitor

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



### Slips, Trips and Falls

Slips, trips and falls have been a major cause of injury over the years in workers' compensation insurance programs.



During a typical policy year *approximately* 25% of all reported injuries can be attributed to various types of slips, trips, and falls. We hope by reviewing the following important safety guidelines, school employees will 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 – You are more likely to take short cuts and be inattentive when in a hurry.
- ✓ Use handrails – Particularly on steps and ramps.
- ✓ Wear proper footwear – Slip resistant shoes that are flat, rubber-soled, with wide tread designs are best.

Many fall hazards occur on wet or icy surfaces. These areas can be found around bathrooms, around water fountains, and in cafeterias.

- ✓ Take your time – Walk slowly and carefully.
- ✓ Avoid areas that are wet or icy – Take a safer route to your destination.
- ✓ During cold or rainy weather, be especially careful of walking areas where ice can accumulate.

In addition to wet, icy, and slippery surfaces, school district employees have encountered trip hazards with the following situations:

- ✓ Boxes of office equipment – Keep boxes and storage items out of walkways.
- ✓ Electrical cords – Computer and appliance cords must be managed properly to avoid trip hazards.
- ✓ Mats and carpets – Be sure mats and carpets are secured and are not rolled up on 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 – Speed bumps and bumper stops should be painted for visibility. They are still hard to see when it is dark.
- ✓ Holes and uneven sidewalks – Report holes and uneven surfaces to maintenance so they can be fixed.

Please take some time to evaluate your work area for any fall hazards that you may encounter.

## Ladder Safety

Ladder safety is often an overlooked lesson. Over 500,000 people each year are injured by falls involving ladders. Most of these incidents occur because the victims violate the basic rules of ladder safety.



Portable ladders are used at our school district sites in a wide variety of settings: maintenance, academic, and administrative. Misuse of portable ladders can result in serious injuries from falls, or in some cases, death.

It is our goal to provide safety information to our school district members to reduce the potential for injury.

Please follow these ladder safety guidelines.

- ✓ Use a ladder of proper length to reach the height you need. **Chairs, boxes, and desks are not ladders and are unsafe to stand on.**
- ✓ Make sure you choose the right ladder to support your weight for the job you are about to perform.
- ✓ Inspect the ladder **BEFORE** you use it. Check the rungs, spreaders, and side rails before use. 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 that the ladder rises. The upper and lower sections of an extension ladder should overlap to provide stability.
- ✓ Face the ladder and hold on with **BOTH** hands while climbing. Stay in the center of the rails.
- ✓ Do not lean over the side of the ladder. Your belt buckle should not be further than the side rail. Tools should be carried on a tool belt or raised and lowered using a hand line
- ✓ On single or extension ladders, never stand above the third rung from the top and never climb above the point where the ladder touches the wall or vertical support.

## Workers' Compensation Claims Filing - Online

*I have been injured on the job and need to see a doctor. What do I do next?*



Notify your supervisor of your injury. Visit our website, [www.pswct.org](http://www.pswct.org), to begin the electronic filing of your injury claim (**SIF-2**). The online claim form should *only* be completed if your injury needs **medical attention**.

Once the online form has been completed, your district claims administrator will receive a copy. Upon completion of the form online, you will be provided paperwork to take to your doctor. A Claims Manager from Puget Sound Workers' Compensation Trust will be in contact with you to discuss your claim.

For additional questions please contact Puget Sound Workers' Compensation Trust at (425) 917-7667.



# 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 a "Self-Insured Accident Report" (SIF-2). You must complete this form with your employer if you seek medical treatment.

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

Complete a "Physician's Initial Report" form at your doctor's office. Have your doctor mail this form to your employer's claims administration address listed below. 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:**

**Your Supervisor or Site Manager**

**Claims administration address:**

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