

Public Schools Manual



Ohio

Bureau of Workers' Compensation

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Introduction

BWC's Division of Safety & Hygiene has developed this safety and health publication for schools and educational institutions. While this publication is not all-inclusive, it attempts to highlight many common causes of injuries to school employees.

When this book refers to employees, it refers to certified personnel, such as teachers and counselors; and classified personnel, such as secretaries, nurses, custodians, bus drivers and teacher aides. When it refers to all employees, it refers to classified and certified employees, as well as all administrative groups, including supervisors, principals, superintendent, treasurer and business manager.

BWC realizes that organizations within the education industry have individual needs and that not all the information presented here is pertinent to every employer. However, this manual can serve as a good starting point and a convenient reference for managing the safety issues within your district.

Safety isn't the only thing you can do to reduce this cost. You can also lower your premiums by proactively managing your workers' compensation claims. This includes investigation, early reporting of injuries and working with your employer services specialist and claims service specialist.

BWC's goal is to help companies eliminate incidents and injuries while reducing workers' compensation expenses. The combination of proactive safety strategies outlined in this manual and a hands-on claims management will help you reduce injuries and lower your workers' compensation costs.

This manual can also provide your company's safety teams with information to meet its goals and obligations. It contains information on incident prevention, together with a complete explanation of its use, and benefits and methods of application.

To learn more about BWC's other safety services, visit ohiobwc.com, or call 1-800-OHIOBWC, and request a safety services catalog.

Chapter 1

Safety Management

It's no secret the safety and health of our children are a top priority in school districts. They directly contribute to the quality of education. In addition, the safety and health of all employees who work for our schools are just as high a priority. They directly contribute to the educational process and funding.

Workers' compensation claims for needless injuries and illnesses are not a wise expenditure. You can prevent many claims with proper management. However, safety commitment from the board of education, superintendent and treasurer are vital to provide proper safety management and claim prevention. The administrative group confronts many problems that require immediate attention and which often divert attention from safety and health activities.

When this happens, it is likely that accidents and injuries will increase significantly, and as a result, the administrative group spends dollars, better spent elsewhere, to cover workers' compensation costs. All school district employees also must share a commitment to a safe school environment, as it is their own health they help protect.

Schools need to develop safe work practices and communicate them effectively to employees. As schools employ many people performing a variety of work activities they must develop specific safe work practices for each department, depending on the nature of the work performed.

Safe work practices supplement other management actions, such as proper workplace design and integrating safety into all job functions. Be sure to develop safe working practices that are reasonable and specific. Practices that you cannot enforce will potentially impair the effectiveness of other safe work practices.

The most effective safe work practices are those in which the employees performing the work help to develop. People tend to buy into the safety process more if they are involved in the process. Participation in executive, building and departmental employee safety teams also helps educate employees on potential accident causes and methods to control and eliminate them.

Write safe work practices in language that is easily understandable and which emphasizes the proper way to do the job rather than what is prohibited. For example, say "Use a ladder to reach ... instead of "Don't stand on a chair to ..."

Give new employees a written copy of the general safe work practices and any department-specific practices they will need to follow to do their jobs without injury or illness.

Make safety training an ongoing process. The administrative group and safety teams should frequently review general and area-specific safe work practices with employees. All employees working in or visiting various other areas than their own need an understanding of safe work practices in ALL those working areas.

Developing safe work practices also is an ongoing process. Do not consider the practices cast in stone. Safety teams need to review them periodically and revise them to keep them up to date.

Chapter 2

Accident analysis

Accident analysis is primarily a fact-finding procedure you use. You use the facts to prevent a recurrence of similar accidents. Properly handled, accident analysis also increases employee safety and health awareness, and builds rapport between the administrative group and certified employees.

Eliminating hazardous situations reduces injuries and illnesses. It is easier and much more cost effective to eliminate and reduce hazards than it is to teach employees to live with hazards in the work environment.

Identifying all accident causal factors, so you can take corrective action, is the objective of an effective accident analysis. The analysis can shed light on unsafe or hazardous conditions, poor decisions or behaviors, a lack of administrative group supervisory accountability, poorly defined responsibilities, and inadequate or non-existent procedures.

Even minor injuries can reveal accident causal factors, which, if corrected, can prevent other, more serious injuries. Therefore, analyze minor injuries or even close calls as thoroughly as a serious injury.

Immediately following an accident:

- Ensure the employee receives immediate medical care;
- Start the accident-analysis process promptly;
- Maintain conditions at the accident scene as much as possible;
- Involve the supervisor, the affected employee and any witnesses;
- Form a fact-finding committee in the event of serious accidents.

At the minimum, you should assemble the following information:

- Injured employee's name;
- Date and time of injury;
- Occupation and task being performed at the time of the injury;
- Normal work hours;
- Department;
- Address;
- Sex;
- Age or date of birth;
- Social Security number;
- Length of service;
- Physician and hospital name;
- Type and extent of injury;
- Description of accident or illness scenario;
- Analysis of causal factors;
- Recommended corrective action;
- Injured employee statement;
- Witness statements;
- Name of person completing the form and the date.

Photographs and drawings may help clarify the report information.

Use the information from all accidents to get a complete picture of how safety you are managing, to identify what changes might be necessary and to develop justification for addressing the accidents' causal factors to prevent future injuries or illnesses.

Administrative group review of accident-investigation reports is important, in that it raises awareness of what hazards exist and what has been done or must be done to eliminate the hazards. Accident analysis is an effective tool only if appropriate follow-up action is taken.

Chapter 3

Safety and health meetings

School districts have an array of job classifications and various buildings. Thus, school districts need several levels of active employee safety and health meetings, and safety involvement teams. This enables the development of continuity across the school district from building to building and from similar classroom to similar classroom. Here's how it can work.

- An executive safety involvement team is primarily composed of the administrative group with a facilitator, such as the superintendent.
- The superintendent usually informs the board of education and members of the employees safety program about policies to be adopted and followed. This ensures all employees' safety within the school district.
- The treasurer usually informs the board of education of the workers' compensation costs per year.
- The superintendent and treasurer work together to maintain an ongoing safety process keeping yearly workers' compensation costs to a minimum.

A building safety involvement team is composed of a facilitator, usually one of the administrative group members, such as the building principal. Additional member representatives for each job classification within that building, such as in a middle or high school, include an art, industrial education, physical education and science teacher; custodian; secretary; counselor; etc. This team:

- Creates positive solutions to situations. This is not a gripe session;
- Conducts building safety audits;
- Assigns tasks to complete needed solutions.

A departmental safety team is composed of a facilitator, usually one of the administrative group members, such as the business manager or the supervisor of a particular area across all buildings. Additional member representatives for each department or area include art teachers, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, cleaners, custodial, industrial education teachers, physical education teachers, science teachers, etc. This team:

- Comes up with positive solutions to situations. This is not a gripe session;
- Conducts departmental safety audits.
- Assign tasks to complete needed solutions.

Assign responsibility at each level of team involvement. After all, this is a matter of life or limb in many situations.

The purpose of employee safety and health meetings is to discuss significant information needed to prevent accidents and illnesses. An administrative group person usually convenes and facilitates these meetings, with all employees present.

Effective safety meetings can help promote understanding, create commitment and allow employees to participate in the safety and health process.

Safety and health meetings also help develop a sense of teamwork. They provide an opportunity for certified and classified employees and the administrative group to engage in give-and-take discussions on a variety of safety topics. Providing how-to information and engaging in healthy dialogue about safety and health issues helps employees perform their jobs more safely.

Safety and health meetings are important in getting employees actively involved in your efforts to maintain a safe and healthful working environment. Use meetings to request employees' ideas about safety policies and procedures; for setting up employee teams to develop safe work practices; and to encourage employees to report unsafe conditions.

Effective safety and health meetings stimulate employees to think about safety and health concerns. Schedule meetings on a regular basis. You can use discussion items and topics, such as those found in the Division of Safety & Hygiene's *Safety Leader's Discussion Guide* to plan meetings and provide an outline for discussion. Develop meeting plans in advance to foster maximum employee participation and cover issues thoroughly.

Successful meeting tips include:

- Schedule regular meetings: once a week, twice a month or at least monthly;
 - Plan for 15- to 30-minute meetings. Start and end on time;
 - Respect everyone's opinion;
 - Use a reference source, such as the *Safety Leader's Discussion Guide* (available at no charge from the Division of Safety & Hygiene);
- Encourage all to participate by asking questions or seeking suggestions;
 - Seek quiet areas to meet;
 - Devote the meeting exclusively to health and safety matters;
 - Use visual aids to supplement, but not replace, your presentation;
 - Preview visual aids and prepare introductory remarks. Come prepared;
 - Prepare and distribute a meeting summary and minutes of the last meeting;
 - If discussing an accident or illness, focus on facts surrounding the incident, the injury and causes;
 - Discussion of failure to adhere to a safety procedure should cover why the behavior was unsafe, the potential hazards and constructive discussion on following procedures.

Problem solving and decision-making routines include fishbone diagramming, brainstorming, multi-voting, group normalization, high-low grid, consensus, decision analysis and force field analysis.

Chapter 4

Employee safety and health training

A school system's safety and health training may encompass more than 12 types of programs for various groups of certified and classified employees either to have a good working knowledge or just to have an awareness.

The Ohio School Board Association partnered with the BWC to develop a school check list. The safety programs' list of questions is a quick view of the program needs. Some program/plans are:

- Bloodborne pathogens;
- First-aid training;
- Electrical safety;
- Lock out/tag out;
- Emergency action;
- Fire prevention;
- Hazard communication;
- Laboratory chemical safety;
- Hot work;
- Respiratory protection;
- Hearing conservation;
- Confined space entry;
- Crane and hoist;
- Powered industrial trucks;
- Personal protective equipment;
- Access to medical and exposure records.

Begin safety and health training at the beginning of every school year, when a person is transferred to another department or when learning a new job. Cross training is extremely important for your safety and health process when employees are helping out in other departments. An orientation and training check list is available to provide assistance.

Each administrative group should have a procedure for educating employees in the department's safe work practices and for following up. This ensures the education process was successful. While a good safety orientation program can help shape a new employee's perspective on job safety, the administrative group often neglects to take advantage of this opportunity.

An effective technique often used during orientation involves following a check list containing specific items for discussion. The administrative group may find using a check list especially helpful. Consistency and confidence in the training are beneficial. A well-planned and well-executed safety orientation forms the foundation for each individual's future safety and health performance.

Each administrative group person (business manager, principal or supervisor of certified or classified employees) should ensure that new employees receive a copy of specific safe work practices and procedures, also that the employees understand them.

Effective job safety training

1. Explain the training objective and the reason it is important to the employee. A person is more interested in learning if he or she understands why the information is important.

2. Break down the total job or procedure into specific parts and identify each key step. By understanding how safety integrates into each step of a job, an employee learns to safely and correctly perform the job.

3. Demonstrate the proper way to do the job or procedure. Explanations of how to perform a task usually are insufficient. Perform a step at a time, pausing to emphasize key points. Encourage questions, to ensure he or she fully understands.

4. Ask the person to perform the job or procedure describing at each step not only what is going to be done, but also why. By letting the employee recite and perform the job, you will learn if he or she understands and can safely perform the task.

5. Return periodically to see how the employee is doing and to see if there are any questions or problems. Since early identification and correction of improper work procedures will help an employee develop safe and efficient work habits, the follow-up process is an essential element.

Continue safety and health training on a regular basis. Regular training might include:

- Monthly safety and health meetings;
- Regular personal safety contacts;
- Safety training related to changes in work processes or procedures;
- Safety training related to the nature of the work or safety compliance issues, such as hazard communications, fire safety and emergency procedures.

Assistance with your safety training needs is available from BWC's Division of Safety & Hygiene, which offers a variety of training materials, statewide training courses and customized training services. Other resources include a publications and a video library.

Treatment of sick or injured employees

Report immediately all work-related injuries and illnesses, regardless of severity. Make sure all employees receive prompt first aid and medical care. Ensure all school health employees and/or designated first-aid volunteers are trained and certified in both first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation. You also should develop and implement a medical-emergency response plan. To implement it successfully, all employees must be familiar with the plan. If possible, routinely practice it.

Your medical response plan should contain the following information:

- Emergency telephone numbers;
- Roles and responsibilities of first-aid providers;
- Identification of all types of medical emergencies;
- Training in techniques to prevent the spread of bloodborne pathogens;
- The medical-emergency response process for each type of medical emergency, including the provider and method of transportation;
- How to report and document the medical incident and response.

Make first-aid supplies available to employees. These must be physician-approved, inspected monthly and replenished as necessary.

Training

The school must ensure those individuals who provide medical-emergency assistance are trained not only to provide first aid, but also to prevent the transmission of bloodborne pathogens. Conduct training at the time of employment and annually thereafter. At a minimum, the training should cover these topics:

- A copy and explanation of OSHA's bloodborne pathogen standard (29 CFR 1910.1030);
- Causes and symptoms of bloodborne diseases;
- Disease transmission modes;
- The school's exposure-control plan and how to obtain a copy;
- Tasks and activities that might cause exposure to infectious materials;
- Methods to prevent or reduce exposures, including engineering controls, work practices and personal protective equipment (PPE);
- Proper use, location, handling, removal, decontamination and disposal of PPE;
- Reasons for selecting PPE;
- Information on hepatitis B vaccine;
- What to do in case of contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials;
- Post-exposure evaluation and follow-up actions;
- Signs, labels and color-coding requirements.

It is essential that employees have a thorough understanding of how to report injuries and illnesses, and how to obtain appropriate care. Prompt care frequently prevents medical complications that might result from apparently minor injuries.

Policy and procedures

- Employees should have a managed care organization (MCO) card that explains procedures to follow in case of injury;
- Create a policy establishing a process for claims management between the administrative group and all employees;
- As an example, follow MCO card procedures for medical treatment from the school's pre-selected medical provider, report the injury immediately, medical provider reports back to administrative group, selected medical provider should have a philosophy of sports medicine;
- Collaboration occurs between the school, administrative group and employee unions to provide wage continuation and return-to-work strategies.

If referral to a medical provider is necessary, use a medical treatment request form created by your school. Use of such a form greatly improves communication and understanding between all parties (employer, employee and physician) and functions as a valuable tool to facilitate the medical-treatment process and augments the workers' compensation process.

The administrative group supervisor who initiates the form can accompany the employee to the physician or clinic. Following treatment, the doctor or nurse completes the form and returns two copies to the school. The supervisor receives one as does the workers' compensation manager. The employee can carry these copies. In instances involving serious injury or illness, the form may be dispensed with at the time of the incident to avoid delay in obtaining treatment. After the situation is in control, the doctor or nurse can complete the form

Chapter 6

Job safety analysis

For years, job safety analysis (JSA) has been a simple, but effective means to identify hazards and potentially unsafe procedures associated with a specific task or job. You can use the analysis process to identify hazards and educate employees in safe procedures. JSA techniques are effective tools for all employees because they efficiently analyze the job or task, and produce detailed information on task-specific accident risks, process improvements and control measures.

JSAs may not fit into all employee tasks. In certain areas, such as custodial, maintenance and others that the safety involvement team discovers, a JSA will be beneficial.

When considering where to use the JSA process, analyze first the tasks or jobs having the poorest accident experience or those with the greatest potential for injury. By establishing priorities, the JSA process focuses attention on areas that can have the greatest impact on accident prevention.

A JSA provides a systematic means to take advantage of the workers' previous experience and knowledge, and increases employee involvement in establishing safety awareness while developing safe work practices.

Accomplishing these objectives requires each administrative group person to:

- Understand the objectives and means of analyzing jobs element by element;
- Recognize the JSA process as an effective tool, and incorporate it into the regular accident-prevention and safety-management process;
- Develop and implement a correction process that responds to identified problems in a timely manner;

- Review the results and take action, if appropriate, on all JSAs completed in their employee tasks;
- Retain a copy of all approved safe job procedures developed as a result of a JSA;
- Educate and train employees using the information developed through the JSA process;
- Regularly observe employees, and ensure they use safe work practices.

In practice, this means the person conducting the JSA must competently assess each job element and identify potential hazards or risks. Assume, for example, the task is to analyze usage of a pressurized-water fire extinguisher (this is not a work task, but it should be a well-understood process). The process might look like this:

- Remove the extinguisher from its wall bracket, and identify the potential hazards. Employees should perform the task, if possible, with the trainer acting as a coach. The trainer should help when necessary, until the process proceeds smoothly;
- Identify each succeeding element, such as carrying the extinguisher to the fire until you have broke down the entire job into its elements. Again, identify such hazards as the weight of the extinguisher, or slips, trips and falls;
- After the analysis is complete list all possible methods or actions associated with each element that will eliminate, reduce or prevent an accident or illness. Agree on which accident-prevention techniques you will use.

This completes the step-by-step job outline and associated safe work practices you must integrate into each step of the job.

Indoor air quality

Indoor air quality, commonly described as Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ), is a common concern within most school systems. Reported cases of flu-like symptoms have turned out to be indoor air contamination caused by lack of proper ventilation. Common indoor air contaminants and their sources include:

- Mold, bacteria, dust and other contaminants collected in building ventilation ducts;
- Vehicle exhaust, due to poor placement of air-intake vents;
- Formaldehyde, found in new carpeting and carpet adhesives, upholstery, draperies, and building materials, such as particle board;
- Mold from damp carpeting;
- Toxic fumes from art supplies, cleaning supplies and laboratory chemicals;
- Ozone from copying machines.

Carbon dioxide

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) indicates the exchange of fresh air. Outdoor ambient concentration of CO₂ is usually between 350 and 450 parts per million (ppm). In non-industrial settings, the indoor CO₂ level of occupied spaces is higher than the outside levels since humans breathe out significant amounts of CO₂.

CO₂ measurements are used to judge how well the air turns over in a given area. When the indoor levels reach 800 to 1,000 ppm or higher of CO₂, this is most likely a result of inadequate ventilation.

With this less than ideal air exchange, the school may retain any substances present. When contaminants are present, even at low levels, complaints such as headaches, fatigue, eye and throat irritation, etc. of susceptible individuals can become symptomatic.

Recommendations

These steps help assure good indoor air quality:

- Change the HVAC filters regularly;
- Clean air handling unit drain pans, outside air intakes and humidifiers;
- Keep duct work clean.

Note: In more than 50 percent of IEQ studies performed by the National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH), complaints were generated from insufficient fresh air.

Thermal comfort

An environment that is either too hot or cold, too humid or too dry, also affects the health of employees and the students. American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) standard 55 lists comfort guidelines for indoor temperature and relative humidity levels.

The standard recommends temperature ranges of 68 to 78 degrees during the winter and 71 to 78 in the summer. Keep relative humidity between 30 and 60 percent. At lower humidity levels, mucus membranes can dry out; at higher levels, there is a risk of unwanted biological growth.

ASHRAE requires 20 cubic meters (cfm) of outside air per person in indoor space.

Chapter 8

Chemical safety

Chemicals in laboratory classes at all grade levels can be hazardous to teachers and students alike. Cleaners, custodians and maintenance personnel also must handle chemicals properly to avoid injury. The consequences of poor management of chemicals include fires, explosions, burns and acute or chronic health effects. Although a school lab is not going to possess the same quantity of chemicals as an industrial facility, safety precautions are still important.

Education and preparation

Train all employees and students who use lab facilities and chemicals to handle chemicals safely. They must be aware of chemical hazards and precautions. Obtain material safety data sheets (MSDSs) for all chemicals on hand and keep them on file in each building. MSDSs contain critical information about the toxicity and other properties of a chemical, as well as storage recommendations, proper cleanup and disposal techniques, and first-aid procedures.

It is important to keep an accurate inventory of chemicals, so you always know what and how much of it is in storage. Always keep extra copies of the MSDSs and the inventory records in place,

separate from the laboratory, in case of a fire. Be proactive and contact the local fire department to review the chemical inventory so that in case of a fire, firefighters know what chemicals are on hand and where they are located.

Equip the laboratory with first-aid kits, fire blankets, fire extinguishers and, when possible, an eyewash station and safety shower. Inspect fire extinguishers monthly and service them yearly. Develop a written evacuation plan for emergencies; ensure you mark exits for easy visibility and keep them clear.

Inspect the laboratory's ventilation hoods yearly to ensure they work. Also, check to make sure vapors from the ventilation hoods are exhausted outside the building. If people elsewhere in the building are complaining of odors, one possible scenario is that the hood is working properly, but the exhaust is not being directed outside.

When handling chemicals, make sure teachers and students wear protective equipment, such as gloves, eye protection and aprons when handling chemicals.

Storage

You can trace many incidents involving hazardous chemicals to improper storage of the materials. Do not store incompatible chemicals in close proximity to each other. Interaction can cause a fire, explosion or the formation of highly toxic gases. Keep flammable materials in a fireproof storage cabinet. Sort chemicals into the following categories and store separately:

- Acids;
- Bases (caustic);
- Alkaline metals;
- Flammable or combustible liquids;
- Oxidizers;
- Reducing agents;
- Organic peroxides;
- Acid-reactive compounds.

Other common problems in chemical-storage areas include chemicals kept past their effective dates, damaged storage containers, missing or illegible labels, overloaded storage shelves and unlocked storage areas. When stored past their effective dates, certain chemicals can undergo changes to create a different hazard. For example, diethyl ether can form potentially explosive peroxides.

Certain materials can undergo dangerous chemical reactions if defective storage containers allow contact with air or moisture. Several problems can arise from over-stocking chemical storage shelves: containers can fall or be knocked off causing a spill, or containers stored on the floor can create a tripping hazard. Always keep chemical storage rooms and cabinets locked when unsupervised.

Disposal

It is important that you dispose of used or outdated chemicals in the proper manner. That manner varies from chemical to chemical. Many chemicals, for example, cannot simply be poured down the drain as they react to the piping system or may not be water-compatible. Establish disposal procedures for each type of chemical using the MSDS as a guide.

Chapter 9

Ergonomics

More than half of all occupational illnesses are a result of cumulative trauma disorders (CTDs). Back injuries alone account for millions of dollars in workers' compensation costs.

Traditionally, workstations, such as desks and chairs have been set up to accommodate the work process; the designer did not consider the human operator. Ignoring human limitations resulted in increased injuries and illnesses, and lowered attention levels.

Ergonomics is the task of designing the workstation to accommodate the employee, instead of expecting the employee to function in a work area that does not match his or her physical capabilities or limitations. Workstations designed for worker comfort, without excessive physical or mental stress, improve productivity, work quality, job satisfaction and attitude. Child-sized desks and chairs are a perfect example of fitting the workstation to the person.

By eliminating the distractions of aches, pains and premature fatigue, you reduce or eliminate:

- Complaints, tardiness, absenteeism and high turnover rates;
- Injuries, work restrictions and disabilities;
- Economic loss;
- Loss in expertise.

Maximizing employee efficiency and reducing injury-related costs are sound educational reasons for using ergonomically, well-designed work environments.

Identifying problem areas

You can use several methods to determine employee work areas in your facility where ergonomic risk factors might exist. Accident records, workers' compensation history and first-aid reports will help pinpoint the types of injuries that occur. Personnel records can help identify where absenteeism and tardiness are a problem. And interviews with employees can provide information on symptoms. Task analysis or JSA is another

effective technique for finding and documenting ergonomic problems.

CTDs

CTDs refer to wear and tear on the musculoskeletal system. The effects of repeated stress on a certain body part add up over a period of time, resulting in injury. Any part of the musculoskeletal system can be subject to CTDs. For example, pressure on the median nerve in the wrist, either from work that requires constant bending of the wrists or direct pressure on the nerve from a work surface, can cause carpal tunnel syndrome.

Many back injuries also are the result of CTD, such as repeated bending, lifting and twisting, rather than an isolated incident. Other examples of CTDs include:

- Tendinitis;
- Vibration syndrome;
- Thoracic outlet syndrome.

Risk factors

Certain physical elements of a job or task are potentially stressful and known to contribute to CTDs. Job stresses become harmful and may result in CTDs when the employee exceeds his or her capabilities and limitations.

Factors that increase the risk of CTDs include:

- Repetitive motions;
- Awkward postures;
- Forceful exertions;
- Mechanical pressure on soft tissues;
- Inadequate rest.

Other contributing factors include adverse environmental conditions, such as cold, vibration and personal characteristics. People also are exposed to CTD risk factors off the job.

Just because one or more of these factors may be present in a job does not necessarily mean a CTD will develop. However, especially with multiple risk factors, the potential for CTDs is higher. If any or all of these risk factors can be reduced or eliminated, the potential for overexertion or injury decreases.

Bloodborne pathogens

Any one of us can be exposed to infectious blood or other bodily fluids. The greatest risk, however, is to employees who come into contact with sick or injured persons. These can include school-health employees, coaches, playground monitors, art teachers and industrial education teachers. Also, any person providing first aid for cuts and scrapes, including custodians, cleaners, maintenance employees and bus drivers are at risk. Bloodborne pathogens include the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which causes AIDS and the hepatitis B virus (HBV).

HIV attacks the body's immune system and impairs its ability to resist diseases. The early symptoms of AIDS include fever, loss of appetite, weight loss, chronic fatigue and skin rashes. In later stages of the disease a patient may develop certain types of cancer, pneumonia and other infections.

The hepatitis B virus is more infectious and widespread than HIV. As with HIV, some people who are infected never become symptomatic. For those who do, however, the infection can lead to cirrhosis, and other chronic liver diseases and liver cancer.

Controlling exposure

Schools are required to develop a written exposure-control plan detailing the procedures to eliminate or minimize employees' bloodborne pathogen exposure. Your exposure control plan, which you must update yearly and which all employees must follow, includes:

- Departments where employees are at risk of exposure:
 - a. Elementary school teachers and aides (recess accidents);
 - b. Gym teachers and coaches;
 - c. School nurses or first-aid providers;
 - d. Shop teachers;
 - e. Custodian and cleaners.

- Employees' job duties that could cause exposure;
- Employer notification procedures for exposure hazards and protective measures;
- Procedures for evaluating exposure incidents.

Engineering controls

The following engineering controls are required:

- Specially identified puncture-resistant, leak-proof containers for used and blood-contaminated sharp instruments;
- Disposable airways or resuscitation bags, mechanical respiratory-assistance equipment, pocket mouth-to-mouth resuscitation devices.

Work-practice controls

Employees follow work-practice controls to eliminate hazard exposure. The most effective of these is universal precautions — treating all blood and other potentially infectious body fluids as if they are infected.

Provide employees with easily accessible hand-washing facilities wherever possible. We recommend antiseptic hand cleanser and clean towels or antiseptic towelettes. Employees who have been exposed to blood or bodily fluids must immediately wash their hands with soap and water. Require employees to use special leak-proof, labeled, closed containers for disposing of blood-contaminated trash and other materials. Ensure they wear gloves if handling contaminated instruments. Disinfect contaminated surfaces with a solution of 90 percent water and 10 percent bleach. Use freshly prepared solutions that have not been stored for more than a day.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

Employees should wear equipment to protect the skin, eyes, mouth and mucous membranes from exposure. Protective equipment includes disposable gloves, facemasks and safety glasses or goggles.

Chapter 11

Safety and health hazard audits

These audits are useful routines for executive, building and departmental safety involvement teams to conduct at a consistently scheduled time.

Chapters 12, 13 and 14 contain examples of items to review during an audit in these specific areas. Of course, you review many of the same situations in all other areas of school buildings. Evaluate such hazards as physical, electrical, chemical, fire, slips/trips/falls, hand-tool safety, ladders, fall protection, portable and stationary power tool guarding, confined space entry and ergonomics.

Upon completion of this routine, address and immediately correct any imminent danger. Then, schedule the removal and correction of all other hazards to protect all employees.

Chapter 12

Transportation department

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), nearly 400,000 school buses travel more than 4 billion miles transporting children to and from school. Those two factors alone drastically increase the likelihood of a bus-related accident; yet, remarkably, less than one-half of 1 percent of fatal traffic crashes since 1988 involved school buses.

While traffic safety is important, ergonomics are perhaps an even greater concern for those who drive the buses, and hazardous exposures are more of a problem for those who maintain and repair them.

Bus ergonomics

School buses are designed more with utility than comfort in mind. They're designed to transport as many students as possible. Unfortunately, that design sacrifices certain factors.

Prolonged sitting and bus vibration are a source of back injuries among drivers. Operating the levers that open and close bus doors, which a driver must do repeatedly during the day, can cause shoulder and back injuries.

You can retrofit seats designed for better shock absorption to older school buses to help protect the driver against cumulative vibration effects. Air-powered doors also are available, which the driver can operate with the push of a button on the dashboard instead of having to lean out from his or her seat to operate levers. If purchasing new buses, contact the manufacturer to see if it can equip them with these features.

Safe bus operation

Because they are entrusted both with their own safety and the safety of as many as 60 or 70 schoolchildren, it is imperative that bus drivers receive thorough training and up-to-date information on all school policies, traffic laws and safe operational techniques. Regular inspection and maintenance also are important to the safe operation of school buses.

Chemical exposures

Carbon Monoxide (CO) from vehicle exhaust can be a concern for bus drivers, passengers and mechanics.

CO is a by-product of incomplete combustion. It is a tasteless, colorless and odorless gas that displaces the oxygen in air and causes asphyxiation for its victims.

Factors that can cause carbon monoxide to enter a vehicle include damaged or defective exhaust pipes, openings in the floorboard or body of the vehicle, or open windows if the vehicle is idling. Inspect exhaust systems and the vehicle's structural integrity regularly to prevent the chance of exposure.

Do not allow an engine to run for prolonged periods when the vehicle is indoors, such as in the bus-maintenance area. You must adequately ventilate maintenance areas must to prevent overexposure to CO and vapors from petroleum products and other chemicals.

Asbestos exposure is a hazard for anyone performing brake repairs. Safe work practices, such as wearing PPE, can minimize the threat. The use of a wet-washing technique for cleaning brake assemblies can control asbestos emissions. Only permit properly trained employees with special brake-cleaning equipment to perform brake work when asbestos exposure may occur.

Physical hazards

The area where buses are maintained and repaired may contain grinding tools and a variety of other power and hand tools. Safe work practices outlined in this manual's Physical hazards chapter can reduce the potential for lacerations, fractures, eye injuries and other injuries attributable to working with machinery.

Housekeeping measures, such as keeping floors dry and clean, and walkways unobstructed, can prevent slips, trips and falls. Proper storage techniques also can reduce fire hazards by keeping flammable and combustible materials away from heat sources, such as welders or portable heaters.

Physical hazards

Machine guarding

Unguarded pinch points on machinery, such as grinding wheels and saws are a source of many serious injuries. Pinch, nip or shear points are the points at which a person can be caught between the moving parts of a machine or between the material and the machine's moving parts. Guarding problems may exist in shop class equipment as well as in equipment the custodial staff uses.

You can identify machine hazards by asking these questions:

- Can an individual be caught in, on or between two objects?
- Can an object strike an individual?
- Can an individual come in contact with a hazardous object?

Effective guarding can eliminate many of these hazards. When possible, purchase equipment with factory-installed guards. You should guard a machine's point of operation — where the saw blade meets the wood, for example — at all times. Point-of-operation guarding usually is required on the mechanical power transmission components of machines. Also, you should guard equipment, such as portable power tools, lawn mowers and grinders to protect workers against injury.

Guarding methods include:

- Light curtains (a beam of light which, if interrupted, automatically deactivates the machine);
- Air clutches with palm buttons;
- Steel mesh;
- Guardrails;
- Lawn mower covers;
- Flexible guards, such as the movable guard on a power saw;
- Mechanical barriers.

Hand tools

Common hand tools include:

- Striking tools (hammers, mallets and sledges);
- Turning tools or wrenches;
- Metal-cutting tools (snips, shears, bolt-cutters, hacksaws, chisels and files);
- Wood-cutting tools (saws, planes and wood chisels);
- Screwdrivers;
- Pliers;
- Knives;
- Crowbars.

For workers to use tools safely, they must be designed for the job, be in good condition and used properly. Workers who ignore any of these factors put themselves at serious risk of injury. Repair or replace tools with damaged or defective striking surfaces and replace damaged handles. Keep tools clean and free of rust, and cutting edges sharp and clean. Ensure screwdrivers and wrenches are the right size for the job. Store tools properly to prevent accidental contact.

Portable power tools

Nearly all power tool accidents are due to inadequate training, improper technique, failure to wear personal protective equipment or poor maintenance. Allow workers to use power tools only after they are familiar with their controls, safety requirements and operating procedures. Have workers inspect all tools before use to ensure they are clean and in good condition. Make sure the power switch on the tool is turned off before connecting it to a power source and ensure all safety guards are installed.

Disconnect power tools from the power source before performing adjustments or maintenance. Equip tools with a three-prong plug for proper grounding or double-insulate. Replace or repair loose wires or frayed insulation and replace rather than splice electrical cords.

Ground-fault circuit interruption (GFCI) is necessary to prevent accidental shock when working in wet conditions. Power-tool operation requires the worker's undivided attention; prohibit horseplay.

Walking and working surfaces

Slips, trips and falls lead to many workplace injuries. You can often attribute these injuries to housekeeping issues or unguarded openings. Keep floors and hallways clean, dry and free of obstructions that might create tripping hazards. Run cords and wiring overhead so no one will trip. Repair or replace flooring with holes, loose boards, and protruding nails or splinters. Repair or replace broken stairs and rebuild uneven steps to a uniform height and tread width.

Guard openings in floors with covers, grating or standard guardrails (42-inch top rail, 21-inch mid-rail and four-inch toe board). We recommend round metal tubing, but you may use two-by-fours if they can withstand 200 pounds of horizontal pressure.

Open-sided stairways and floors, elevated platforms and runways also should have standard guardrails. Place stairway handrails 30 to 34 inches higher than the top surface of the tread with at least a three-inch clearance between the rail and the wall. Stairway handrails should withstand at least 200 pounds of pressure.

Ladders

Portable ladders should be in sound, usable condition without cracks, splinters, breaks, bends and damaged or missing braces. Destroy defective portable ladders.

Stationary or fixed ladders must be free of defects and designed to support their intended load. Place a fixed ladder at least 7 inches from the nearest permanent structure.

Food service department

Burns and lacerations are the injuries most commonly associated with the preparation and serving of food. Slips and falls are a concern as well due to wet, slippery floors.

Kitchen equipment

Knives and other utensils, equipment, and broken glassware and dishes can all cause lacerations. Employees can suffer burns from stoves, ovens, cooking utensils and other hot surfaces. Train employees in safe work practices and the proper use of kitchen equipment.

Preventing cuts

- Keep knives and other cutting blades sharp.
- Always use a cutting board when slicing or chopping food.
- Discard broken or chipped glassware.
- Keep hands away from cutting surfaces.
- Do not put your hands into food-processing equipment or garbage disposals.

Preventing burns

- Wear long-sleeved shirts.
- Always assume that a pot, pan or handle is hot.
- Wait for a surface to cool down, or wear proper gloves, before touching.
- Do not open a pressurized cooking device that is under pressure.
- Always keep handles away from hot burners.
- Turn handles so they do not protrude from the stove or counter area.
- Always use mitts when placing objects in or removing them from an oven.
- Open lids of pots and pans away from you rather than on the same side of the pan.
- Turn hot water faucets on slowly to prevent splashing.

Slips, trips and falls

Good housekeeping practices will prevent many slips and falls. Suggestions include:

- Clean up spills immediately;
- Keep the area free of boxes, carts and other obstructions that might create a tripping hazard;
- Use non-slip floor mats and finishing products;
- Use “Wet floor” signs to warn people who might be walking through an area that has been mopped or where a spill has occurred;
- Check floors for such tripping hazards as loose or broken boards or tiles.

Requiring food service employees to wear non-slip shoes also is an effective way to reduce or prevent slips and falls on wet floors.

Electrical hazards

Electrical shock or electrocution can occur due to faulty wiring, defective equipment or contact with electrical outlets. To reduce the potential of electrical shock or electrocution:

- Inspect power cords, plugs, and equipment for damage;
- Repair or replace damaged equipment;
- Always turn off equipment before plugging it into a power supply;
- Be sure all electrical equipment is properly grounded;
- Do not use electrical equipment in wet conditions, unless it has GFCI protection;
- Have an electrician check any cord that feels unusually warm;
- When unplugging, pull on the plug itself, as pulling on the cord can cause damage.

Lockout/tagout

Before any kitchen equipment, such as dishwashers, mixers and ovens, is cleaned or serviced by either food service workers or facility maintenance staff, identify and lock out all energy sources. Energy sources can include electrical, thermal (hot water), chemical (soaps or disinfectants) and mechanical. Simply unplugging a dishwasher is not sufficient, as there may be hot water lines and/or chemical solutions connected to the dishwasher that can cause injuries.

Fire hazards

Ignition of grease, contact between stoves or ovens with cardboard or paper, or faulty electrical cords and equipment can cause fire. To reduce the potential of fire:

- Keep combustible materials away from the cooking area;
- Do not use wet or defective electrical equipment and wiring;
- Keep oils and grease away from an open flame.

Develop written fire safety procedures and make sure employees understand them. Train employees to identify different types of fire extinguishers and how to use them. Make sure all employees know the locations of extinguishers and alarms. And keep exits and hallways free of obstructions.

Chemical exposures

Sink, oven, floor cleaners and other cleaning chemicals can be hazardous if not used properly. Train employees in the safe use, handling, storage and disposal of chemical kitchen products. Obtain MSDSs from the product manufacturer and keep them on file. This way, you have information on the toxicity, safe usage and first-aid procedures for all chemical products used.

Store chemicals in appropriate, labeled containers in a designated storage area. Always store liquid chemicals on a lower shelf. Provide and require use of PPE, such as rubber gloves and safety glasses or goggles to be worn when handling chemical products.

Violence in schools

Acts of violence have been an ever-increasing problem in U.S. workplaces. According to figures released in 1996 by National Institute For Occupational Health, an average of 20 workers are murdered weekly. Another 1 million or more are assaulted each year. Obviously, certain occupations face a greater risk, such as those which require employees to handle money or guard valuable property, and those employees who work alone or late at night. However, recent high-profile incidents show that schools, unfortunately, are not immune to acts of violence.

The school is a special setting where the threat of violence can come from a number of sources. These include employees, students, parents and others. The protection of school staff and students depends on assessing the potential for dangerous situations and taking steps to counteract them. As no particular strategy will be effective for all schools, collect information on as many school violence incidents as possible to help you determine the type of prevention strategy that is necessary and effective in your school.

Contributing factors

School violence finds its roots in a broad range of factors which include:

- External risk factors, such as public contact, working in high-crime areas, exchanging money and working alone or in small numbers;
- Psychological and social issues, such as domestic troubles, perceived lack of trust or caring and media influence;
- Employment and economic issues, such as job changes or downsizing and tension between administration and employees;
- Denial that violence is a problem or that it cannot happen in any particular setting, the belief that it is a social and not a workplace problem;
- Stress created by life-changing issues, substance abuse and personal problems;
- Autocratic or out-of-touch leadership styles, unrealistic expectations, preferential treatment and lack of teamwork.

If some combination of these ingredients comes together, the chance of violence increases dramatically.

The Columbine High School tragedy serves as an example of these overlapping factors: troubled teens, an environment where they felt like outcasts and ongoing ridicule by other students. There are four types of warning signs for pending violence:

- Type I—Increased crime in the area, employee concerns, special or unique conditions or events;
- Type II—Security breaches, close calls, employee concerns;
- Type III—Employees, students, parents and fans who:
 - Keep largely to themselves and have few interests outside of school;
 - Hold grudges;
 - Have trouble accepting authority or criticism;
 - Tend to blame others;
 - Repeatedly violate rules and policies;
 - Have a history of interpersonal conflict, intimidation or violent behavior;
 - Are preoccupied with weapons and refer frequently to them;
 - Have substance-abuse problems;
 - Are frequently depressed or withdrawn;
 - Express an unwanted romantic interest in someone;
 - Have increased absence, tardiness or grievance activity.
- Type IV—Problems with personal relationship (real or perceived):
 - Divorce;
 - Spousal abuse;
 - Recent break up;
 - Stalking incident;
 - Restraining orders.

Prevention strategies

Strategies to prevent violent situations include:

- Policy of zero tolerance toward real or implied acts of violence;
- Awareness training for all employees;
- Crisis plan and crisis team to respond to and help mitigate potentially violent situations;
- Stringent hiring policies, including rigid background checks;
- Communication, trust and honesty;
- Administrative and employee involvement;
- Help with stress, change and uncertainty.

Substance use in schools

Substance use damages lives. Just as you fight to prevent drug and alcohol use among the young people in your schools, you must fight to prevent use among your employees. Substance use is often the silent and unseen cause of work-related accidents. Unfortunately, schools and their employees often are not aware of this invisible danger until it's too late.

National statistics show that drug and alcohol users are more likely to be involved in a workplace accident or injure other employees. Consider these statistics:

- Education—Substance users are 33 percent to 50 percent less educationally attentive than non-users;
- Absenteeism—Employees who inappropriately use substances are absent an average of three weeks more yearly and tardy three times more than non-users;
- Accidents—Users are three to four times more likely to have an accident on the job, and five times more likely to file a workers' compensation claim;
- Medical claims—Substance users file 300 percent to 400 percent more costly medical claims;
- Employee theft—An estimated 50 percent to 80 percent of all pilferage, theft and loss is due to substance-using employees.

If you want to help keep your employees safe and reduce the chance of a drug-or alcohol related accident, then just say yes to BWC's Drug-Free Workplace Program (DFWP).

The voluntary DFWP encourages schools to detect and deter substance use and misuse, and take appropriate corrective action. As an incentive, participating schools may receive technical support and may be eligible for a 10-percent to 20-percent discount on their workers' compensation premiums.

However, even schools who do not qualify for the discount will benefit from establishing a substance-free environment for their employees. Any drug-free work place program should include the following components:

- Written policy;
- Employee education;
- Supervisor training;
- Drug and alcohol testing;
- Employee assistance;
- Safety.

Schools who want to establish such a program may use the technical assistance and support provided by BWC and the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services.

Fire prevention and protection

Fires require three important elements to burn—fuel, oxygen and heat. Examples include:

- Fuel sources - gasoline, diesel fuel, paint, paint thinner, wood scraps, cardboard, paper and trash;
- Heat sources - torches, matches, cigarettes, heaters and lights;
- Oxygen - present both in the atmosphere and in compressed gas cylinders.

Fuel is the easiest element to remove. Concentrate on housekeeping measures to help prevent fires by disposing of scrap materials before they accumulate. Store flammable and combustible materials away from heat sources.

Fire and fire extinguisher classification

There are four types of fires:

- Class A - ordinary combustibles like wood, paper, cloth and most plastics. The most effective extinguishing agent for Class A fires is water or solutions that are largely water, because the cooling effect will reduce the burning material to below its ignition temperature;
- Class B - flammable or combustible liquids, such as petroleum products and grease. Agents that smother the fire by inhibiting oxygen (CO₂, dry chemical, halon or foam) or inhibit the chemical chain reaction work best for extinguishing this type of fire;
- Class C - electrical equipment. This type of fire requires a non-conductive extinguishing agent, such as CO₂, dry chemical or halon;

- Class D - combustible metals, such as aluminum, magnesium, zirconium and titanium. The use of water and other conventional extinguishing agents is ineffective and may even cause a violent reaction. These fires can be extinguished with specially prepared agents.

Fire extinguisher use and maintenance

Train only those employees required to use extinguishers in the event of a fire for the proper use of fire extinguishers.

Note: If the school's emergency action plan says everyone must evacuate the building and not fight the fire, employees do not need fire-extinguisher training.

We recommend annual, documented training of employees authorized to use fire extinguishers. These employees need to know:

- Location of fire extinguishers;
- How to operate fire extinguishers and the hazards involved with the early stages of fire-fighting;
- Classes of fires and classifications of fire extinguishers;
- Location of telephones and how to contact the fire department;
- How to check a fire extinguisher to see that it has been re-charged;
- Who to notify when a fire extinguisher has been used and needs re-charging.

Use fire extinguishers in an upright position. First, discharge the extinguisher approximately 8 feet from the fire. Work quickly, as the contents of an extinguisher will empty in about one minute. In an enclosed area, you may want to be on your knees with your head no higher than the height of the fire extinguisher. The best air to breathe is between knee level and the floor.

When using a water-type extinguisher, direct the stream at the base of the fire and move forward. With a dry-chemical extinguisher, attack the nearest edge of the fire and move forward while sweeping the nozzle rapidly from side to side.

If you are using CO₂ to fight a flammable liquid fire, spray the CO₂ in a sweeping motion to sweep the flames off the burning surface. Attack the nearest edge of the flame and move forward. Be careful when using this type of extinguisher in an enclosed area because the CO₂ will cause oxygen deprivation.

When two or more employees are using fire extinguishers on a flammable-liquid fire, they must act as a team working from the same side of the fire and making sure the fire does not re-ignite between them.

Maintain all firefighting equipment in good operating condition and periodically inspect it. Immediately replace defective equipment. Conduct an annual maintenance check of fire extinguishers and record the maintenance date.

Fire alarms

In the event of a fire, anyone should be able to contact the fire department quickly. Post signs instructing personnel how and where to turn on an alarm, whether it is by telephone, siren or horn. Also, ensure fire lanes are unobstructed, so firefighters always have easy access to the building.

Personal protective equipment

Although eliminating hazards in the work environment is important, it may not always be possible or feasible to do so. In the maintenance or transportation departments of the school system or in the vocational education department, for example, the use of grinding wheels and other power tools may produce particles that could be injurious to the eyes. In cases like this, the use of PPE is necessary.

Examples of PPE include:

- Face and eye protection — safety glasses, goggles and face shields;
- Head protection — hard hats and bump caps;
- Protective footwear — safety shoes, rubber boots and metatarsal guards;
- Hand protection — heat or chemical-resistant gloves.

The type of PPE required in a given set of circumstances will depend on the specific hazards and the duration and intensity of exposure. It is important to select and have employees use the proper type of PPE to protect them from the identified hazard. To be effective, PPE must be readily available, sized correctly and designed for the use intended.

Proper care of PPE is important, as it helps protect against damaged or defective equipment and increases the protection provided to employees. When applicable, PPE must meet the requirements specified by the American National Standards Institute.

Training is an important part of any PPE program. It takes little time to explain the objectives and use of PPE as well as a school's policy on its use. As with any safety and health-training activity, document the following information:

- Date and time of training;
- Subject and instructor;

- Outline of training;
- Title of any videos or slides shown;
- Handouts used to supplement training;
- Attendance;
- Scores from written training exercises.

The training must include:

- When and what PPE is necessary;
- Proper way to put on, take off, adjust and wear PPE;
- Limitations of PPE;
- Proper care, maintenance and disposal.

Employees must demonstrate they understand PPE requirements and proper use before you give the permission to perform job tasks that require PPE. Re-training must be done whenever changes in the job task or in the type of PPE used make the previous training obsolete. You also must do it when there appears to be a lack of understanding or skill in using PPE.

The school must have a written PPE program, including:

- Objectives;
- Definitions;
- School policies;
- User responsibilities;
- Procedures;
- Written certification of hazard assessment;
- Employee training records.

The person responsible for safety issues should be in charge of the school's hazard-assessment and PPE-selection process. The administrative group is responsible for ensuring the correct PPE is available, functional and worn correctly. Also, the administrative group should let employees know how to replace equipment and what to do if they have an equipment problem.

Safety committees/involvement teams

Many organizations do not take advantage of formal safety committees. Often, organizations underestimate the value of these committees. However, safety committees have the potential to significantly affect workers' compensation costs by enhancing the organization's accident-prevention process.

Purpose

Safety committees foster communication, an important component of the organization's safety process. Employee involvement in school safety provides many advantages. The school benefits by tapping into a reservoir of knowledge that employees possess and by incorporating supervisors' perspectives into the decision-making process. Close collaboration between employees and supervisors encourages a closer working relationship and provides opportunities for greater understanding.

It is important the administrative group recognizes the contribution that safety committees can make with regard to accident prevention and cost containment in their organization. Administrative support is important to achieve successful outcomes.

Two-way communication is crucial for achieving success. Employees need to believe the administration is listening, that they have a say in safety-related matters and that their opinions are important. Participation in group decision-making and problem-solving discussions helps to involve employees in the school's safety processes and creates a sense of ownership.

The safety committee is not the safety coordinator's committee. The committee should be representative of all departments (See chapter 3). Consequently, the safety coordinator should not be the chairperson. The chairperson should be a regular committee member. The safety coordinator should attend as an ex-officio member of the committee.

It is helpful to elect a vice-chairperson or secretary to assist with meeting minutes, communication, scheduling and follow-up. Some committees use a system wherein the vice-chair assumes the

chairperson's role at the end of the term and a new vice-chair is elected for the next term. This ensures continuity and allows the new chairperson to learn important aspects of committee operation while acting as vice-chair.

Functions and responsibilities

Committees function best when they define their own mission and objectives. Functions vary by organization. What works for one may not work for another. You may use the following list of functions as guidance for developing responsibilities:

- Review the safety and health program for the school system;
- Conduct regular safety audits to identify safety problems with equipment, procedures or behaviors;
- Conduct safety training for the staff;
- Take action to address and correct safety-related problems;
- Develop safe work practices and policies;
- Accompany compliance inspectors;
- Represent other employees' views on safety matters.

The committee should regularly meet to review the safety of operations, the adequacy of safety training programs and the organization's illness and injury records. With this information, the committee can participate in establishing the school's safety goals and objectives. Committees also should work toward achievement of agreed-upon safety and health goals.

Benefits

As the school finds more and more ways to involve employees in workplace safety, the momentum for working safely will build. Employees will feel good about their contribution to the safety of their own workplace and emerge as stakeholders.

Viewed as a constructive resource, labor/management committees that focus on safety can provide very effective strategies for safety and health. The financial and human benefits include reduced costs, and the preservation of human resources.

Chapter 20

Recordkeeping

Recordkeeping provides a controlled and consistent method of documenting safety data and a method to summarize loss-prevention activities. Reasons for gathering and maintaining good recordkeeping systems are based on:

- Gathering information to reduce accidents, injuries and illnesses;
- Maintaining regulatory compliance;
- Tracking and analyzing data and activities;
- Providing a source of information for management;
- Justifying programs and budgets.

Organizations have different recordkeeping needs. For best results, use developed forms that meet your organization's needs and challenges.

Information about basic recordkeeping forms and how to use them is available for schools.

Contact BWC's Division of Safety & Hygiene library for assistance at 614-466-7388, or send an e-mail to library@bwc.state.oh.us.