

# **Seward Public Schools**



## **Employee Safety Manual**

**Updated: August 2017**

# The Importance of Safety

Everyone can understand the importance of workplace safety. But not everyone gives serious thought to the cost effective properties of a safe workforce.

The cost of employee accidents can be divided into two categories: **Direct and Indirect** costs. Seward Public Schools' Workers Compensation insurance premiums cover the medical expenses and compensation payments associated with direct costs, however indirect costs add to the district's expenses. The indirect cost of disrupted work schedules and damaged equipment could be redirected to improving employee benefits and salaries.

Avoid the "**I'll Do This Just Once**" trap. If a short cut is dangerous, unsafe or hazardous, **STOP**. Do not take the chance.

The school district strives to provide a hazard free environment and expects each employee to perform the duties of their job in the safest manner possible.

## Injury/Accident Reporting Guidelines

All work-related injuries must be reported immediately to your supervisor.

Upon notifying your supervisor, you shall call the office of the **Business Manager** who will then contact our insurance company. Our insurance provider will work with the employee and Business Manager to fill out all of the necessary paper work.

Seward Public Schools is currently insured through Employees Mutual Insurance Company (EMC). They will investigate and process all claims.

# Employees' Responsibility to General Safety and Accident Prevention

Accident prevention is important. Safety is everyone's responsibility. No one wants to be injured.

Seward Public Schools can be a safer place to work if you do your part.

- Follow the rules
- Report all injuries IMMEDIATELY
- Avoid horseplay
- Don't take shortcuts
- Wear personal protective equipment
- Wear clothing appropriate for the job
- Keep tools in good repair, use the proper tool for the job, and use it safely
- Don't tamper with machine guards. Keep revolving parts shielded when machinery is in operation
- Maintain good housekeeping
- Read and understand Material Data Safety Sheets when working with chemicals
- Report all unsafe and hazardous conditions
- Maintain a safe attitude
- Use proper lifting and carrying positions at all times when moving materials/equipment. Bend your knees and lift with your legs.
- Watch for slippery walking surfaces or obstacles that may cause a fall
- **Never climb on makeshift ladders and stools**
- Don't substitute extension cords for required wiring

## Slips, Trips and Falls

Major injuries can occur anytime an employee slip, trips or falls. These injuries range from a small bruise to broken bones and head injuries. How can falls be prevented?

- Clean-up spills and wet, slippery walking surfaces
- Keep stairs and aisles clean, orderly and free of clutter
- Avoid shortcuts, use designated walkways
- Only carry loads that you can handle
- Use a ladder or step stool if you must access something beyond your reach.
- Turn on lights
- Use handrails on stairs
- Report possible tripping hazards if you can't take care of it yourself
- Close file drawers immediately when finished
- Avoid running
- Aisles and stairs/stairwells should be kept clear at all times
- Establish and maintain specific areas for storage
- Use ice melt or sand on icy walkways and in parking lots.
- When weather conditions are icy/snowy:
  - Wear shoes with good traction
  - When exiting your vehicle, use its doors to help support your weight. If you lose your footing you may be able to catch yourself and keep from falling
  - Stay on designated paths; don't take short cuts through piles of snow of uncleared/untreated areas.

## Storeroom Housekeeping

Overcrowded, unorganized storerooms hide any number of safety/health risks.

- Check shelving units for sharp corners and protruding nails.
- Store chemicals properly
- Place heavier items on shelves located between knees and chest height. Put only the lightest items above shoulder height or below the knees.
- Electrical and Water heater rooms are not storerooms. If they must be used for storage do not block access (minimum of 3 feet) to panels or machinery.
- Liquids should never be stored in electrical rooms. The floors in electrical room should be kept clean and dry at all times.
- Water heaters can be a source of ignition. Flammable materials and gas powered equipment should be stored elsewhere.

## Using Tools Safely

Tools are necessary to any job. In order to insure they work properly and safely daily inspections are a must.

- Examine electrical cords for exposed wires and/or defective plugs.
- Wrap extension cords neatly and store when not in use. Extension cords are not to be used in place of permanent wiring.
- Each tool should be stored in a designated place/space when not in use.
- Familiarize yourself with power tools **BEFORE** you use them. Never use a tool you are unfamiliar with. Never perform work for which you have not been trained.
- When all else fails, read the **USERS MANUAL BEFORE** using the tool.
- Prepare the work area. Whenever possible restrict access to the work area and stay mindful of others around you.
- Keep all safety guards in place.
- Utilize safety goggles and other necessary safety equipment.

## Chemical Safety

Almost everyone works with hazardous substances. The absence of apparent physical or health hazards associated with a product doesn't eliminate the potential possibility of danger.

When using chemicals be sure to:

- Follow directions carefully
- **Never** mix chemicals together. Seemingly safe chemical ingredients may be dangerous if mixed together
- Store flammables in a properly ventilated area, away from sources of heat or flame
- **Never** use chemicals from an **UNMARKED** container. All chemicals should be properly labeled (product name, use and hazards)
- Store chemicals according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Avoid contact with skin.

## Ladder Safety

Ladders are a common and useful tool. Their hazards are easily overlooked, so be careful.

Keep these rules in mind when using ladders:

- Use a ladder when it is needed. **Chairs, boxes and desks are not ladders and are unsafe to stand on.**
- Use the correct ladder for the job. There are numerous types of ladders. Make sure you choose the right ladder for the job you are to perform.
- Inspect the ladder **BEFORE** you use it. Check the rungs, spreaders and side rails before use. Never use a damaged ladder.
- Use common sense when working on ladders. Never lean or reach too far to either side; move the ladder if necessary. Check for slippery surfaces and uneven footing.
- Climb and descend ladders **CAUTIOUSLY**. Face the ladder and hold on with **BOTH** hands. Tools should be carried on a tool belt or raised and lowered using a hand line
- Check your shoes for slippery substances.

## Lifting Safety

Moving objects is a common task. Pushing, pulling and lifting can be done effortlessly and safely with thoughtful planning. Your body is like any other tool or piece of equipment. The job can be easily accomplished if you keep moderately fit and focused.

Know your physical limitations and remember these guidelines.

- Be realistic when assessing the load. **Plan the move in your mind before you begin the physical task.** If you **think** the load is too bulky or heavy.....
- Never store heavy objects higher than your shoulders. Lifting even the lightest objects over one's head puts additional strain on the back.
- Ask for assistance or break the load into smaller, more manageable sizes.
- Use mechanical assistance when possible.
- Warm-up your back and leg muscles. Learn some simple stretching exercises.
- In preparation for lifting, stand close to the object with feet shoulder width apart.
- Squat down, bending at the hips and knees. Keep your back straight and rise looking forward.
- Grip the load, arch your lower back inward and rise slowly. Again, keep the load close to your body.
- **Avoid** twisting your torso while carrying a load. **Turn your whole body** in the direction you want to go. Twisting places additional stress and strain on the spine and back muscles.
- To lower the load, **squat first**, bending naturally at the hips and knees. Keep your lower back arched inward.
- Use a Hoyer lift to lift handicapped students who weigh more than you can safely lift without mechanical aid.

# Motor Vehicle Operation

As the driver of a school vehicle, you are responsible for operating it in a safe manner. You must adhere and comply with all state and local rules and regulations, as well as any safe driving practices prescribed by your supervisor.

Drive safely. Concentrate on your driving. Never take strong medication prior to operating a motor vehicle. Illness, medications or extreme fatigue can affect your judgment and reaction time. Under no circumstances will any employee be allowed to drive while under the influence of narcotics or alcohol. Speed should be limited so that an emergency stop is safely possible. Slow down at curves and intersections.

**Always** wear a seatbelt.

Riding on the sides, tailgate, roof or any other part of the vehicle not designed for seating, is prohibited.

Park the vehicle in a manner that neither interferes nor obstructs the view of other drivers or with normal traffic flow. Always remove the ignition key.

Beware of backing out of parking areas. Never back out unless absolutely necessary and plan ahead to avoid backing. Back slowly and carefully.

Keep alert and make sure you have a clear view at railroad crossings and tracks.

Be courteous. The elimination of accidents can be achieved by good driver habits.

When poor driving conditions result due to weather conditions, extra caution must be taken. Drivers must slow down, increase following distance, anticipate conditions on the road ahead.

(Nothing in this section supersedes state bus driving rules, regulation, and/or statutes.)

# Fire Prevention

The potential for fire can be reduced by:

- Handling flammables properly.
- Place solvent soaked or oily rags in a sealed metal container.
- NO SMOKING
- Insuring all office equipment is turned off at the end of the workday.
- By not overloading electrical outlets.

Employees are not allowed to burn candles or utilize standing lamps in any school building.

# Workplace Violence

Workplace violence is a growing national problem. Seward Public Schools will not tolerate acts or threats of physical violence, intimidation, or harassment which involve or affect our employees.

## It's Your Back

**Back injuries happen, but they don't have to happen to you!**

- Exercise will strengthen your back and abdominal muscles
- Know proper lifting procedures and use them each and every time you lift
- Wear proper back support when lifting
- Practice good posture. You'll have a stronger, healthier back and you will look and feel better.
- Watch your weight and practice good nutrition.
- Sit in a chair that adequately supports your back. Try to sit with your knees higher than your hips.

## Safety Committee

The following Safety Committee Members will work to help provide a safe working environment for all employees. They will meet regularly to assess safety concerns and reevaluate this plan to determine what changes might be necessary to provide for additional safety. The committee will also conduct work site analysis for safety considerations.

Please report any safety concerns to representatives of the committee. They will bring those concerns to the entire group for discussion.

Safety Committee Members: Josh Fields, Matt Dominy, Jessica Dominy, Scott Axt, Kirk Gottschalk, Tom Vajgrt, Rick Weatherholt, Heidi Covert, Noelle Baker, Jill Johnson, Connie Biaggio, Michelle Cooksey or Jennifer Andersen

## Training and Awareness

Supervisors are responsible for providing this safety manual to all new employees, along with any on the job training that might be necessary.

This manual is not all inclusive. We ask that you report any safety concerns and or recommendations to one of the committee members listed above so we might improve our safety manual and employee safety.



