



**COWICHAN VALLEY**

School District

*Employee Safety  
Orientation*

**FORWARD:**

*A safe work environment is only possible when all people involved understand both the risks and the safety standards that relate to their jobs. This booklet is a summary of the many safety regulations and standards that may affect you at your job or your work site. More detailed rules and regulations can be found in the District's Occupational Health & Safety Manual and from WorkSafe BC. You are encouraged to read this booklet and practice good safe work habits to help to maintain a safe work environment.*

*"The Board of Education, School District No79 (Cowichan Valley), recognizes that the health and safety of all employees [and students] is an important concern and is, therefore, committed to providing a safe and healthy working and learning environment. The Board will develop standards and procedures in addition to its legal and regulatory responsibilities, when and where necessary, in an effort to protect staff against health and accident hazards." [pol.2500]*

*The Board believes health and safety is every employee's responsibility regardless of the specific job tasks, and encourages all employees to work safely, establishing safe working habits and conditions. Employees are expected to perform their job only if it is safe to do so and will not be disciplined for refusing to work in an unsafe environment. All employees are encouraged to promote positive attitudes toward accident prevention and suggest improvements for safe working conditions. In order to meet these goals, the Board will endeavor to;*

- ✓ ***provide and maintain a safe and healthy work environment for all employees and students;***
- ✓ ***provide adequate training, instruction and direction to employees for the safe performance of their job tasks;***
- ✓ ***ensure that safety inspections are completed at regular intervals throughout the district, including buildings, grounds and equipment to identify workplace conditions that are or may be hazardous to the health or safety of employees; and that work practices are carried out in an environment conducive to health and safety.***

*All supervisors are to ensure the health and safety of all employees working under their supervision, by maintaining compliance with the applicable regulations and standards of WorkSafe BC and the Board of Education. All employees shall be aware of all known or reasonably foreseeable health and safety hazards in their work area or work site and shall follow proper health and safety practices, observing all regulations and standards pertaining to their work responsibilities.*

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## **Occupational Health & Safety Contacts**

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2557 Beverly Street  
Duncan, BC  
V9L 2X3  
Phone: 250-748-0338  
Fax: 250-748-2739

### **Occupational Health & Safety Manager**

Kelly Kinghorn                      250-748-0338                      Ext. 258  
[kkinghorn@sd79.bc.ca](mailto:kkinghorn@sd79.bc.ca)

### **Occupational Health & Safety Secretary**

Kim Sworder                              250-748-0338                              Ext. 257  
[rentals@sd79.bc.ca](mailto:rentals@sd79.bc.ca)

### **Occupational Health & Safety Website**

<http://www.sd79.bc.ca/departments/health-safety>

## **SAFETY COMMITTEES/WORKER REPRESENTATIVES**

A joint health and safety committee is established at every work site (*school, department*) where twenty or more employees are regularly employed and where less than twenty worker employees are regularly employed, a worker health and safety representative is to be selected.

The joint health and safety committee/worker representative shall complete the following duties and functions in relation to their workplace;

1. Identify situations that may be unhealthy or unsafe for workers and advise on affected systems for responding to these situations;
2. Consider and expeditiously deal with complaints relating to the health and safety of workers;
3. Consult with employees and the employer on issues related to occupational health and safety in an occupational environment;
4. Make recommendations to the employer and the employees for improvement of the occupational health and safety and occupational environment of the workers;
5. Make recommendations to the employer on educational programs promoting health and safety of employees and compliance with the W.C. Act and WorkSafe BC Occupational Health & Safety Regulations and monitor their effectiveness;
6. Advise the employer on programs and policies required under the regulations for the workplace and to monitor their effectiveness;
7. Advise the employer on the proposed changes to the workplace or the work processes that may affect the health and safety of employees;
8. Ensure that accident investigations and regular inspections are carried out as required by the Act and Regulations;
9. Participate in inspections, investigations and inquiries as provided by the W.C. Act and WorkSafe BC Occupational Health & Safety Regulations;
10. Carry out any other duties and functions prescribed by the WorkSafe BC Occupational Health & Safety Regulations.

The joint health and safety committee at each site is also required to:

- meet monthly
- record minutes of those meetings
- post minutes at the worksite and forward a copy to the OHS office

[Reference Section 125/139 Workers Compensation Act]

## **GENERAL SAFETY - HOUSEKEEPING**

The School District wants to minimize injuries to staff (*and students*) through provisions of a healthy and safe working and learning environment. To succeed, the following housekeeping guidelines are provided so you and all district employees (*and students*) can complete your work tasks safely;

- ↪ work areas are clean and organized, with material and equipment stored safely away when not being used,
- ↪ emergency exits, emergency equipment (*including fire extinguishers and fire pull stations*) and electrical control/breaker panels are free of obstructions and accessible at all times,
- ↪ all floors, stairs and walkways are maintained in a state of good repair and are free of tripping and slipping hazards, allowing for the safe movement of people, equipment and materials,
- ↪ any stored materials or containers are stabilized by interlocking, strapping or other effective means of restraint, with no equipment, containers or material stacked or stored as to create a hazard,
- ↪ flammable, combustible or waste materials are stored in proper containers and not allowed to accumulate,
- ↪ paper coverage on walls and ceilings of school classrooms and corridors does not exceed 20% limit allowed by regulation,
- ↪ all incidents that result in damage to equipment and/or facilities are to be reported to your administrator or supervisor, immediately who shall ensure there is no further hazard.
- ↪ there is to be NO storage of school items in mechanical and electrical rooms.

## **REPORTING HAZARDS**

Each employee should know the hazards of their job, including any related emergency procedures. If unsure of the hazards, ask your supervisor before starting your work. All employees are to be alert to any hazardous situations which may develop at their work site and report these conditions immediately to their supervisor/administrator, their site joint health and safety committee representative and/or the Occupational Health and Safety Manager.

## **ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES**

Accidents don't just happen, they are caused by unsafe acts or conditions. Almost all accidents have a human factor (*unsafe act*) as the main contributory cause. For this reason, almost all accidents are preventable. Accidents are not confined to the school premises. They can occur anywhere. Some accidents may occur during extra curricular activities, such as field trips and extended over night trips. Injuries are not caused exclusively by external conditions, but may also be caused by poor physical fitness (*i.e. muscles not ready for the job, lack of proper warming exercises, etc.*). Some accidents/injuries may not be covered by WorkSafe BC. WSBC coverage is for any worker who sustains an injury or is exposed to an occupational disease as a result of the worker's work activities. Injuries sustained during 'volunteer' activities may not be covered unless the activity is endorsed and requested by the school administration or supervisor.

If you sustain an injury arising as a result of your employment, you are to notify your supervisor as soon as possible. This will start the process of compensation if required, with WorkSafe BC. If the injury sustained is of a minor nature requiring only first aid treatment, see your site First Aid Attendant and they will provide treatment and fill out any required forms. If the injury/accident causes you to seek medical treatment and/or causes you to be away from work for any time, you must complete a, **Worker's Report of Injury** (*WorkSafe BC Form 6A*). This is to be done as soon as possible after the incident regardless of the severity and submitted to your supervisor. Upon receipt of your completed injury report, your supervisor shall complete a School District, Preliminary **Accident Investigation Report**. If you sought or required first aid treatment at your work site from the site First Aid Attendant or other person, then that First Aid Attendant or other person must complete a "**First Aid Record**" form. These forms are to be submitted within three days of the incident to District Safety Office.

## **FIRST AID**

First aid attendants and supplies are located at all school sites and departments in accordance with WorkSafe BC Regulations. Ensure that you know the procedures at your work site for obtaining first aid treatment should you require assistance.



## **MEDICATION**

If it is necessary for you to take medication while working;

- ↪ ensure your physician knows all the details of your work assignment;
- ↪ obtain and comply with your physician's advice in performing your job assignment while taking your medication;
- ↪ when reporting for work or while at work ensure that you are not experiencing drowsiness, dizziness or other adverse effects that would likely interfere with the safe performance of your job tasks. If any such symptoms are experienced while you are at work, inform your supervisor immediately.

## **CONDUCT**

Any unsafe act or improper behavior that may startle or distract other employees, is unacceptable. Improper behavior includes horseplay, scuffling, fighting, practical jokes, unnecessary running or jumping, tripping others, intentionally using tools and/or equipment in a manner likely to cause harm to other employees.

School district employees shall work in an environment where all employees will refrain from and be free from discrimination.

In accordance with the Bullying and Harassment policy enacted by WorkSafe BC on November 1, 2013 the school district is taking the required steps to minimize bullying and harassment in the workplace. See school district policy 2507 for more information.

Due to the hazard and risk to you and to co-workers, no employees are to report to their workplace while under the influence of intoxicants or drugs. Any employee found at work under the influence of intoxicants or drugs shall be removed from the work site immediately.

## **THREATS AND VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE**

WorkSafe BC Regulations are very explicit regarding the protection of employees from violence in the workplace. Your supervisor will inform you of any risks of violence that you may encounter at your work site. If you believe you are at risk due to an act or threat of violence use whatever means necessary to remove yourself from the situation and report the incident immediately to your supervisor. All incidents of violence are to be reported to your supervisor utilizing the School District Threat and Violence Report form. The Cowichan Valley School District has developed a Violence Threat Risk Assessment protocol for dealing with these types of incidents in our schools. School Violence Threat Risk Assessment Teams (VTRA Teams) will use this protocol to assess the risk associated with a threat and determine the required course of action.

## **EMPLOYEE and FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EFAP)**

The aim of the Employee Assistance Program is to provide professional and confidential counselling for employees and their dependents in need, so that they can function effectively and safely both at home and in the workplace. This program is voluntary, totally confidential and is funded by the school district and the employees. More information on the Employee Assistance Program can be obtained from the your Union Shop Steward, Supervisor or Human Resources. [748-0321– loc. 221]

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

An “emergency” is a sudden, unexpected event. Each work site in the School District is to develop, implement and maintain procedures for various emergencies, natural or human caused that may involve employees, students, school facilities or school transport, while school is in session or students are in the care of the School District. Some emergencies that may effect employees, include;

- ↪ earthquake,
- ↪ fire,
- ↪ hazardous material accidents/spills,
- ↪ threats to schools and occupants (*i.e. bomb threat*),
- ↪ violent physical incident or threat,
- ↪ school bus accident,
- ↪ weather,
- ↪ School Wide Security Alert System
- ↪ other, as regulated by the WorkSafe BC (*including fall protection, confined space entry – refer to the specific procedure for the emergency plan.*)

Each employee is responsible to ensure they are aware of the emergency plans and procedures at their worksite. If in doubt, ask the Administrative Officer of the School or department supervisor, or the Site Joint Health & Safety Committee/Worker Representative.

For more information, please refer to the orange and yellow Emergency Procedures Flipbook located in every school district building.

## **WORKING ALONE**

If your supervisor has assigned you to work alone, you are required to follow the Working Alone Program as detailed in section 7.03 of the school district's Occupational Health and Safety Program manual. This program provides check in procedures through TigerTel where if a check in is missed someone will check to see if you are OK.

## **INFECTION CONTROL**

Some employees may be exposed to various infections/infestations or communicable diseases that are transmitted by bodily fluids/substances or skin contact. You should know if you are at risk to exposure. If you are concerned, consult with your supervisor about the circumstances of your concern or contact the District Safety Office. Universal precautions including disposable gloves for hand protection are to be worn whenever treating a cut or bleeding nose, etc., as blood is the single most important source of HIV/HBV (*Hepatitis B*) as well as other blood related infections. You may also wish to wear a disposable facemask if you feel this protection is needed. Hand washing is the single most important means of preventing the spread of infection. You should always wash your hands thoroughly after contact with bodily fluids and substances and when in continual contact with other persons who may have a skin infection.

When hand washing;

- remove all hand jewelry (*jewelry should not be worn when working with students who require repeat physical contact and care as a protective glove could be torn or punctured as well as micro-organisms can be lodged in the settings of your rings*);
- wet your hands with running water and wash hands vigorously with soap, rinse the soap bar off after use and rinse your hands with water thoroughly from the wrist area to the fingertips;
- ensure your hands are dried well and use the paper towel to turn off the faucet, discard the waste towel into the receptacle.
- when finished, wipe the surfaces surrounding the sink and including where the bar soap is kept with clean paper towel, discarding the towel in a receptacle;

If is not available, use water that is present, rubbing hands vigorously together for 15-20 seconds and then dry them as thoroughly as possible. To prevent exposure to possible infection, do not pick up by your hands any needles or syringes unless you are wearing disposable gloves and then use extreme caution to prevent a possible needle stick injury. Place all needle/syringes into a 'sharps' container that is properly marked as being a container to dispose needles and syringes into. If you have any questions, contact the Occupational Health and Safety Manager or your Public Health Office. [ref. District Occupational Health and Safety Manual/ Safe Work Procedures – Sharps & Bodily Fluids]

## **HARMFUL SUBSTANCES - WHMIS**

In this school district, as part of the Workplace Hazardous Material Information System, (**WHMIS**) all Material Safety Data Sheets (**MSDS**) are stored on computer. To access a MSDS, you must contact “**MSDSfetch**” at **748-0861** and follow the prompts. This information can also be accessed through MSDSfetch online by going to the School District website at <http://www.sd79.bc.ca/departments/health-safety>. Click on the MSDSfetch link, click ‘online’ and enter username “sd79cowichanvalley” and password “2507480861”. Before working with any substance/material, you must know and understand;

- how it reacts to materials or other chemicals,
- the first aid requirements,
- the personal protection that you may be required to wear while using or working with this substance,
- what the hazard of this product is,
- how you protect yourself from being hurt by the product, what you do in the event of a spill,
- where you obtain more information or refresh your memory regarding the product you are using.

If any of these questions cannot be answered, then a Material Safety Data Sheet for the substance / material **MUST** be obtained from “**MSDSfetch**” so that the answers to all these questions are known to you and followed. All containers of substances/materials in this school district are to be labeled indicating the name of the product, the safe handling information and the reference to see the Material Safety Data Sheet, if required. Never use any substance from an unmarked container until you have determined the contents and obtained a Material Safety Data Sheet, if required. All employees working with or in the vicinity of harmful/hazardous substances/materials shall receive appropriate WHMIS training.

## **EYE WASH STATIONS**

Plumbed eye wash stations and eye wash bottles are provided in all middle and secondary school facilities as well as in the Maintenance and Transportation facilities. Before using any substance or material that may be harmful to your eyes, check the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for the appropriate safety procedures. Also, check for the location of the nearest eyewash station in relation to your work area. Eye wash bottles are also located in school custodial rooms.

## **EYE PROTECTION**

Appropriate eye protection such as goggles and/or face shields are to be worn when grinding, welding, cutting, using steam cleaning equipment, weed eaters, spraying, operating chain saws or where injury to the eyes may result from flying particles such as dust, chemicals, gas, smoke, paint spray, fumes, hot oils or any other hazard. Eye goggles and face shields must be inspected before using them to ensure they will provide you with adequate protection.

## **CONTACT LENSES**

Employees who wear contact lenses are to notify their supervisor of this condition. When working in locations where gases, vapors, dust or other materials are present that may be absorbed by the contact lenses or cause harm or injury to the employee's eyes, contact lenses should not be worn. Teachers involved in instruction where gases, vapors, dust or other materials may be present that can be absorbed by contact lenses shall inquire which students under their care are wearing contact lenses and take necessary action to ensure these students do not expose their eyes to harm or injury. Eye protection is to be worn at all times under these circumstances.

## **HAND PROTECTION**

When handling materials likely to puncture, chafe or irritate your hands, suitable hand protection such as gloves or mittens are to be worn. Employees exposed to bodily substances, infections, etc. transmitted by continued skin contact are to wear hand protection to avoid contracting any associated illnesses (*see Infection Control – page 3*).

## **FOOTWEAR**

All employees are responsible to provide and wear footwear suitable to their work environment, made of appropriate material to provide the required protection. This may include safety footwear. Footwear that does not provide protection from falling items, including books; office equipment, tools, etc. (*i.e. sandals, "crocs" and etc*) shall not be worn in a school and/or office environment.

## **HEARING PROTECTION**

While working around or operating machinery and/or equipment, hearing protection is to be worn. Those employees, by the nature of their duties, exposed to excessive noise levels, shall have annual hearing tests. Warning signs are posted in all areas where the noise level exceeds 85 dBA (*decibels of noise*) as averaged over their full work shift or where peak levels are known to exceed 135 dBA. If you have concerns regarding the noise level in an area that you are required to work in, be safe – wear hearing protection and consult with your supervisor or the Occupational Health and Safety Manager.

## **HEAD PROTECTION**

Hard hats (*Safety Head Gear*) must be worn in areas where a potential hazard exists from falling or flying objects and in any excavation, around any type of digging machine or moving equipment, on any traveled portion of a roadway where work is being completed and in any other situations where there is a danger to your head.

## **PERSONAL APPAREL**

Regardless of your job task in the school district, you are expected to wear clothing appropriate to your work responsibilities that provides protection against all natural elements. Employees are not to wear loose clothing around machinery due to the possibility of it being caught, tangled or pulled into machinery. Clothing made of synthetic material which could plasticize and stick to the skin when subjected to heat or fire is not to be worn.

## **JEWELRY**

Rings, bracelets, neck chains, etc. should not be worn while using tools or working around machinery or electrical equipment. As well, those employees required to work with children that have special needs in classroom settings should not wear jewelry that can be easily grabbed or pulled which could case an injury to the worker or student.

## **TOOLS AND MACHINERY**

No tool, machine or accessory shall be used by any employee who has not been instructed, trained or otherwise qualified in the care and operation of that item. For any tool, machine or accessory that is used, the employee must wear the appropriate personal protective equipment. If in doubt, see your supervisor. Before using any machinery and/or equipment, you must ensure all guards are properly in place and operating as designed. If a machine guard cannot afford the operator the proper protection due to damage or deterioration, the machine is not to be used until the required repairs are made. If this is the case, the equipment/machine is to be locked-out until fixed. [ref. District Health & Safety Manual]

## **COMPRESSED AIR**

Compressed air is not to be used for blowing dust, chips or any other substances from equipment, clothing being worn or any other material. If any person is exposed to material being blown using compressed air, this could result in injury or a health hazard. Eye protection is to be used when using compressed air. Couplings are to be routinely examined to avoid any accidental uncoupling through wear or damage and hoses and tanks must not be pressured over the manufacturer's specifications.

## **FALL PROTECTION – LADDERS AND SCAFFOLDS**

If you are required to work at a place from which a fall of 3 metres (*ten feet*) or more may occur, or where a fall from a lesser height involves an unusual risk of injury, you are to ensure that the WorkSafe Fall Protection Regulations and school district procedures are followed. Only approved ladders or scaffolds are to be used when required to work in an area or reach locations out of the normal reach when standing on floor or ground surface. If you have any questions ask your supervisor. [ref. Occupational Health and Safety Program manual Section 7.10]

## **LIFTING**

Lifting incorrectly can cause back injury, therefore when lifting consider the following;

- the weight of the lift;
- be certain of your footing;
- lift with legs, not the back, keep the back as straight as possible;
- keep your balance, don't twist or jerk under the strain of the lift;
- don't turn while lifting, lift first then turn;
- if the lift appears too heavy or awkward to lift alone, **get help!**

There is no maximum weight that should be lifted, it is an individual decision, taking into account the size and weight of the object to be lifted. [ref. Safe Work Procedure – Lifting]

## **LOCK-OUT PROCEDURES – Energy Sources**

Lock-out procedures define the methods by which energy sources are isolated, locked-out and tested for effective protection. All employees required to work with or conduct any maintenance or repairs on a power activated service, system, equipment, which includes electric, compressed gas, chemical, hydraulic, tensioned spring, mechanical or elevated object or part, must be familiar with the School District, "Lock-Out" procedures **before** commencing work in this area. [ref. Occupational Health and Safety Program manual Section 7.08]

## **CONFINED SPACES**

School District employees shall not enter or work in a confined space or enclosed space until such time that it is determined that no harmful atmosphere is present or may develop, that adequate continuous ventilation exists and work procedures are established. [ref. Occupational Health and Safety Program manual Section 7.02]

## **OPERATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT VEHICLES**

Employees required to operate any school district vehicles shall possess all necessary licenses and certificates. School district vehicles are to be used in connection with school district business. Unless otherwise authorized all operators are to carry only school district employees on school district business. Any traffic violations resulting from the use of a school district vehicle shall be the responsibility of the driver of that vehicle, including parking fines that have been issued. Before commencing a shift or driving a school vehicle, the operator shall conduct a pre-trip inspection. Any abnormal conditions are to be reported to the Transportation Department mechanic or your supervisor immediately. Smoking is prohibited in school district vehicles. If you are involved in an accident advise your supervisor as soon as possible of the accident, the location and circumstances. Cell phone use while operating a school district vehicle is also prohibited.

## **ASBESTOS - *Material Maintenance Program***

Asbestos is a group of minerals that occur naturally as bundles of long, silky fibres. The properties of asbestos including strength, flexibility and resistance to heat and chemicals, make it ideal for use in construction materials, textiles and automotive parts, all of which are found in a school environment. When released into the air the “friable” asbestos can be inhaled and cause various lung-related diseases including asbestosis, mesothelioma, lung cancer and other cancers. Materials located throughout the School District are inspected on an ongoing basis to ensure that they are in a “non-friable” state. These materials include vinyl tile, wallboard, pipe insulation, cement-like pipe insulation and wall filler, to name a few. Every site has an asbestos survey booklet that is continually updated. This booklet must be consulted prior to any work that might disturb the material. If you find asbestos containing material, or suspected asbestos containing material, that is damaged it is to be reported immediately to the District Safety Office and Maintenance. Should you have any concerns or questions about the materials in your school facility, please do not hesitate to contact the Occupational Health and Safety Manager. [ref. Occupational Health and Safety Program manual]

## **SMOKE FREE ENVIRONMENT**

Effective September 1, 2007, Tobacco use is prohibited in or on all School Board owned buildings, grounds or vehicles. [ref. SD79 policy 2405, BC legislature Bill 10)

## **RIGHT TO REFUSE UNSAFE WORK**

The District supports the position that no employee shall carry out or have cause to carry out any work process and/or operate any tool, appliance or piece of equipment, when that person has reasonable cause to believe that to do so would create an undue hazard to the health and safety of any person. [ref. Occupational Health and Safety Program manual]



**Questions you may wish to ask . . .**

- ↪ *what are the dangers of my job?*
- ↪ *is there any safety gear I will have to wear? -- if so, am I trained how to use it? -- when?*
- ↪ *where are fire extinguishers, first aid kits and other emergency equipment located at my work site?*
- ↪ *who is the first aid person at my work site?*
- ↪ *will I receive training in emergency procedures? when?*
- ↪ *what are my health & safety responsibilities?*
- ↪ *who do I ask if I have a health or safety question?*
- ↪ *will I receive job safety training? -- when?*

***REMEMBER – If you are not sure, ASK before you start work!***