Summary

School employees include teachers, administrative staff, facility management personnel and maintenance staff. These employees perform a wide range of tasks, many of which can cause bodily injuries or illnesses. You can prevent such injuries and illnesses by following safe work practices and using proper protective equipment.

Examples of some injuries and illnesses are:

- cuts and amputations from the use of machine equipment in shops and gardening tools
- bruises and abrasions from plants and trees
- burns from hot soldering irons, burners, heaters, and hot engines in auto shop
- electrical shock or electrocution from contact with live electrical parts or electric powerlines
- slips and falls in wet and/or cluttered areas
- soreness and pain in hands, wrists, shoulders or back as a result of doing repetitive work, working in an awkward posture, applying too much force over and over again, operating vibrating equipment or lifting heavy loads improperly
- itching, swelling, redness of the skin as a result of exposure to very hot or very cold weather, or contact with plants and animals
- burns and skin disorders as a result of contact with laboratory chemicals, cleaning solutions, pesticides, or contact with plants and animals
- illness as a result of a contact with people with infectious diseases or contaminated biological wastes
- allergies as a result of dust inhalation, contact with plants and animals, and insect bites and stings

This Guide provides ways of working safely to prevent these injuries and illnesses.

Many health and safety behaviours are learned by example. Children and youth model what they observe. Comprehensive safe school plans and programs should focus attention on the strengths and experiences of students, teachers, administrators and other school personnel.
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1. General Safety

Inspect the general condition of the classrooms and the building facilities at the beginning of the school term, and at least monthly thereafter. You may use the following checklist as a guideline. Add or delete items of inspection as required.

Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfactory, requires attention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>INSPECT FOR …</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OSH legislation</td>
<td>Posted (as required)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floors</td>
<td>Clean, dry, uncluttered, non-skid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceilings, walls, windows</td>
<td>Clean, dry, dust/mould-free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>Good general condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stairways</td>
<td>Tidy, uncluttered, well illuminated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exits and signs</td>
<td>Visibility, illumination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladders</td>
<td>Proper type, condition, access,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illumination</td>
<td>Intensity, glare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>Thermal comfort of occupants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ventilation</td>
<td>Condition of ducts, odours, noise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire extinguisher</td>
<td>Proper type, location, inspection/ maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste disposal</td>
<td>Waste disposal containers,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean-up routine</td>
<td>Established responsibilities,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical equipment</td>
<td>Power outlets, extension cords,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First aid procedure(s)</td>
<td>Posted, first aid box accessible,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency procedures</td>
<td>Posted, clear, staff trained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHMIS</td>
<td>Labels, MSDS/SDS, training provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety rules</td>
<td>Posted, clear, understood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazard warning signs</td>
<td>Posted, visibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. Grounds Maintenance

General Precautions

TRAIN your helpers to ensure that they can work safely with any tools or power equipment, and that they understand the hazards of each task.

IDENTIFY and destroy poisonous plants such as poison ivy.

PROTECT against insects with insect repellents when needed.

REST periodically during strenuous jobs such as digging or sawing, especially in hot weather.

MAKE sure emergency numbers are clearly posted.

KNOW location of first aid kit and how to use the contents.

DO NOT TOUCH stray or dead animals. Contact an animal control agency for removal.

Personal Protective Equipment

WEAR high-cut safety footwear with steel toes and reinforced soles.

USE eye protection when power tilling, breaking up rocks or concrete, using strong cleaning agents, spraying or dusting.

USE approved head protection when working under low branches and falling objects.

WEAR sturdy gloves with grips.

USE vibration absorbing gloves while operating vibrating equipment.

WEAR gloves made of the appropriate material when handling fertilizers and pesticides.

WEAR proper sunglasses when in direct sunlight for extended periods.

USE UV sunscreen.

WEAR a brimmed hat and comfortable clothing that provide sun protection.

DO NOT WEAR loose or torn clothing.
8. Asbestos Management

Asbestos is a well known carcinogen. Exposure to asbestos has been linked to mesothelioma (a rare type of cancer of the pleura-covering of the lungs and the inner surface of the chest wall), asbestosis (scarring of the lungs), and other cancers which may appear 10–20 years or more after exposure. Identification and removal of asbestos containing materials is the best method of eliminating the risk of harmful exposures.

In the past, common uses of asbestos included:

- insulation, fire proofing, sound proofing, ceiling and floor tiles, acoustic spackles, and vinyl asbestos floor tiles;
- thermal insulation on pipes, boilers, and ceilings, fire protection on structural steel beams;
- lining of heating and ventilation duct work, window glazing, and adhesives.

Asbestos is no longer used in these products but some of the older, installed products may still remain. When contained in stable solid building materials, asbestos is not released into the air and hence, does not pose health risk. Renovation work and damage to building materials can produce dry, crumbly (friable) material capable of releasing asbestos fibres in the air. Airborne asbestos fibres enter the lungs with the inhaled air. Specific procedures and precautions have been developed to prevent the release of asbestos fibres in the air. Extreme caution is necessary to protect children from asbestos exposure.

The US government has adopted the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA–40 CFR 763) in 1987. In Canada, guidelines are available from Health Canada, school boards and the government health and safety departments. In consultation with the health and safety committee, each school should establish their own asbestos management plan. The following is a general outline of the actions recommended to control asbestos exposure:
2. Workplace or School Violence Prevention Policy

Every school or workplace should have a violence prevention policy developed by management in consultation with employees and other stakeholders. The purpose of the policy is to clearly communicate management’s commitment to preventing violence and to provide an overview of your school or board’s position on violence.

How to write a violence prevention policy?

DEFINE what you mean by violence in precise, concrete language.

PROVIDE clear examples of unacceptable behaviour (verbal and written threats, harassment, physical intimidation or assault) and working conditions (working late or working alone without acceptable safeguards).

STATE in clear terms your school’s view toward violence and its commitment to the prevention of violence.

PRECISELY state the consequences of making threats or committing acts of violence. For example:

Within the school or workplace, consider when to apply verbal or written reprimands, suspension, or termination/transfer (of employee), or take legal action.

For classrooms or areas that provide services to the public, consider when to apply reprimands, temporarily or permanently suspensions or withdrawal of services, or take legal action.

OUTLINE the process by which preventive measures will be developed.

ENCOURAGE reporting of all incidents or potential incidents of violence.

OUTLINE the confidential process by which employees or students can report concerns or incidents, and to whom.
1. Legislative Responsibilities in Schools

The legislation applicable to schools prescribe general and some specific safety responsibilities and cover all occupants which includes students, staff, Board staff, and visitors. The safety responsibilities include the following:

**School Board/Trustees**

- COMPLY with the duties of the employer as stated in the Health and Safety Act.
- ESTABLISH fire drills and emergency procedures.
- MAINTAIN school buildings, furniture and equipment in proper repair.
- OBTAIN adequate insurance for building, equipment, employees, and volunteers while under the jurisdiction of the Board.
- DEVELOP a policy statement that includes safe school plans.
- ENSURE a safe and peaceful school.
- ASSIGN responsibilities.
- MONITOR compliance.
- PROVIDE training.
- INVESTIGATE incidents of unsafe conditions, violence and vandalism.
- DEVELOP corrective action plans.

**Director of Education/Supervisory Officer**

- SUPERVISE the use and maintenance of the building and property of the School Board.
- VISIT schools and classrooms as the school board may direct.
- ASSIST teachers to bring about improvement in the quality of education.
- MAKE SURE that the schools are conducted in compliance with the Education Act and Regulations.