

PHYSICAL PLANT
OPERATING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

PP/OP 02.01: Safety and Health Program

DATE: June 17, 2009

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Physical Plant Operating Policy and Procedure (PP/OP) is to set forth the safety and health standards for this department by providing a safe and healthy work environment through the prevention of accidents, occupational injuries, and illness.

REVIEW

This PP/OP will be reviewed in May of each odd numbered year (ONY) by the associate director for business office and material resources with recommendations forwarded to the managing director – physical plant.

POLICY/PROCEDURES

1. **Safety Policy**

The objective for the Safety and Health Program will be to reduce injuries and illnesses to a minimum with completely eliminating them as our ultimate goal. Components of the program will include:

- a. An Employee Wellness Program
- b. Incident/Accident Reporting and Investigation
- c. Early Return to Work Program
- d. An Accident Review Board
- e. Safety and Health Observations and Surveys
- f. Safety and Health Training
- g. Personal Protective Equipment
- h. Safety and Health Rules
- i. A Safety Awards Recognition Program
- j. Enforcement of employee compliance

2. Accountability

a. General

The entire department must share the commitment for safety and health. Each employee must accept the responsibility for:

- (1) Leadership in the safety and health program, its effectiveness and improvement, and providing safeguards required to ensure safe conditions.
- (2) Developing the proper attitudes toward safety and health, and ensuring that all operations are performed with the utmost regard for the safety and health of all personnel involved.
- (3) Wholehearted, genuine cooperation with all aspects of the safety and health program including compliance with all rules and regulations and for continuously practicing safety while performing any duties.

With each employee accepting the above responsibilities, a guaranteed positive outcome should be realized with regard to the entire Physical Plant.

b. Administrators/Superintendents will:

- (1) assist with monitoring and control of the department's health and safety program.
- (2) provide the leadership necessary to maintain progress toward policy programs goals, encourage a positive safety attitude, promote employee interest and involvement in the safety and health program, and serve as an example in all aspects of the safety program.
- (3) provide technical support and direction to personnel for recognizing, evaluating, and correcting unsafe conditions and work processes.
- (4) coordinate and train supervisors in accident reporting, investigation, and prevention.

c. Supervisors/Foremen will:

- (1) ensure all newly assigned employees are briefed on safety and health factors and hazards related to their work environment according to the requirements set forth in PP/OP 02/04. *New Employee Safety Orientation Program*.

- (2) perform continuous safety observations of work areas for hazardous conditions and unsafe practices and initiate prompt corrective action(s).
- (3) encourage employees to be alert to any hazards they encounter and report them for corrective action.
- (4) ensure personal protective equipment is provided and properly used and maintained.
- (5) maintain good housekeeping in all work areas.
- (6) emphasize a “zero tolerance” for unsafe practices or actions such as running in work areas, smoking in prohibited areas, operating machinery or tools without safeguards, horseplay, and working at an unsafe speed.
- (7) promptly and thoroughly investigate accidents, take corrective action to prevent recurrence and complete required forms.
- (8) seek prompt medical attention for injured employees and, when possible, transport them to treatment source.
- (9) immediately notify section director of any employees observed to be physically or emotionally incapable of performing assigned duties in a safe manner.
- (10) commend and recognize employees who contribute to the maintenance of a safe environment and have an accident-free work record.
- (11) monitor and require compliance with safety rules, policies, and procedures.
- (12) supervise and evaluate employee safety performance.

d. Employees will:

- (1) read, understand, and comply with department safety instructions and procedures when performing assigned duties.
- (2) use only approved tools and equipment provided by the department.
- (3) never use unauthorized procedures and shortcuts.
- (4) never remove and/or operate equipment/tools without safeguards.

- (5) report to supervisor any unsafe conditions, practices, equipment, or other deficiencies observed.
- (6) immediately report all injuries or accidents and render assistance to injured person(s).
- (7) use and maintain personal protective equipment as required.
- (8) actively participate in the safety and health program and training.
- (9) report to work in a physical condition conducive to completing assignments safely.

3. Employee Wellness

The Physical Plant recognizes that overall employee wellness is directly related to the ability of the employee to work safely. The department will use available resources, including the Employee Assistance Program, periodic training, and any other means available to improve the wellness of its personnel.

4. Incident/Accident Reporting

All incidents/accidents will be reported to the Physical Plant safety coordinator.

Incidents are classified as any minor personal injury requiring minimal or no first aid and no lost work time. An incident form will be completed by the employee and supervisor and forwarded to the safety office. Refer to PP/OP 02.19 for further guidance.

Any personal injury requiring medical attention and/or lost work time is classified as an accident. A work related personal injury accident will be reported to the safety office immediately. A formal accident report will be prepared describing the circumstances in detail. A formal investigation will be conducted to determine the cause of the accident so that corrective action may be taken to prevent future recurrence. Refer to PP/OP 02.02 for specific guidance.

All Physical Plant vehicles involved in a moving violation accident that requires a police report will be reported immediately to the safety coordinator. Refer to PP/OP 02.14 for specific guidance.

Effective September 1, 2005, all positions assigned to the Physical Plant became Security Sensitive Level II and with that stipulation any accident, whether personal or vehicular, will be subject to a drug test if reasonable suspicion exists.

5. Early Return to Work Program

The Early Return to Work Program is a systematic approach to returning temporarily disabled employees involved in a personal injury accident to less physically demanding work situations, allowing the employee to contribute to the department while retaining his/her sick leave. For additional guidance, refer to PP/OP 02.03.

6. Accident Review Board

The Accident Review Board was established for the investigation of personal injuries resulting from accident or occupational illness to prevent recurrences. Refer to PP/OP 02.12 for specific guidance.

7. Safety and Health Observations and Surveys

Personnel should continually be aware of their work environment by routinely making observations in their area for hazardous conditions and unsafe practices. Immediate corrective action should be taken to eliminate any existing hazards.

As a part of the routine observation process all sections will visually inspect eyewash/shower stations documenting their monthly inspection date on the attached tag.

Applicable areas will also inspect safety harnesses and lanyard and document the condition prior to each use on the attached inspection tag. Additional inspection tags may be obtained from the Physical Plant Safety Office.

Personal protective equipment will be inspected regularly to ensure it is in safe operating condition.

Vehicles, tools, and equipment will be inspected, repaired, or replaced to ensure safe operating condition.

All identified unsafe equipment, tools, etc. should be removed from service immediately.

The Safety Hazard Suggestion Reporting Program is available for participation by all personnel. The reporting form located as an attachment to PP/OP 02.13 may be used to provide safety suggestions, ideas, and recommendations to improve the safety program or for identifying and reporting safety and health hazards throughout the Texas Tech University campus. The responsible department will be notified and will make every effort to correct the hazard. Refer to PP/OP 02.13 for specific guidance.

8. Health and Safety Training

The safety coordinator will provide periodic training in general topics pertaining to employee safety and health. Annual training will be conducted on required topics such as the Hazard Communication Act, Respirator Training/Testing, Forklift Certification, Hearing Conservation, etc.

Newly hired or transferred employees will be enrolled in the New Employee Safety Orientation Program. This three-part program includes:

- (a) general safety orientation
- (b) job specific training
- (c) follow-up

For more specific guidance, see PP/OP 02.04. Prior to any actual work assignment new employees will begin their orientation process.

All new employees will receive STOP (Safety Training Observation Program) within the first six months of their employment.

9. Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment for eyes, face, head, ears, respiratory devices, and extremities shall be provided and used wherever it is necessary by reason of hazards of processes or environment to prevent injury or illness. Attachment A of this PP/OP provides detailed information on the appropriate type of eye and face protection required for specific processes.

Prescription safety glasses are available through the safety office.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) will be provided to all employees in addition to training for proper use. Employees are responsible for advising their supervisor(s) if additional PPE requirements are necessary.

Responsibility for inspecting, cleaning, and properly storing protective equipment lies with the employee. Intentional abuse, failure to use, or repeated loss of protective equipment will be cause for progressive disciplinary action.

Employees working overhead will be required to use goggles or safety glasses.

Grinder operations will require the use of a full face shield.

Hard hats will be worn in all areas designated as “Hard Hat Area.” Refer to PP/OP 02.22 for specific guidance on the use of hard hats.

10. Safety and Health Rules

a. Safe Work Clothing (Shop and Plant work areas)

- (1) Loose hanging neckties, long flowing coats, and open sweaters will not be worn.
- (2) Aprons will not be worn except when absolutely required.
- (3) Long belts hanging from buckles will not be worn.
- (4) Baggy, loose, or unbuttoned sleeves, loose trouser buttons, or torn clothing will not be worn. Clothing should be comfortable, but fit snugly to avoid danger of becoming entangled in moving machinery/equipment or creating a tripping or stumbling hazard.
- (5) Oil or grease-soaked clothing presents a hazard on the job since many fire hazards such as cigarettes and torches may be present. Therefore, clothing should be kept reasonably clean.
- (6) A state of partial undress such as stripping to the waist on the job site is not allowed.
- (7) Rubber suits, boots, gloves, and safety goggles or face shields must be worn by personnel who are involved with work on acid/caustic systems.
- (8) Personnel who are required to work in areas containing asbestos materials must wear protective suits with hood/feet, gloves, and respirators. Refer to PP/OP 02.22 for specifics.

b. Personal Safety Hazards

- (1) Employees with long hair will be required to wear a hair net or have it pulled back and tied while working with any kind of machinery or power tools.
- (2) Employees will not wear long beards when working around machinery. Beards also present a hazard to those who are required to use respirator equipment on the job.

- (3) Shop and plant employees should wear shoes that are durable and suitable to safely perform work as required by individual position descriptions. All shoes should be kept in good repair. Employees are encouraged to wear safety shoes with steel toe guards to afford additional foot protection.
- (4) Employees working around machinery should remove all jewelry such as watches, rings, and key chains as an added safety precaution.

c. Work Area Safety

- (1) Areas will be kept as neat and clean as possible to prevent employees from tripping or falling over objects that may be left needlessly lying around; i.e., pieces of wood and pipe, hand tools, and cords.
- (2) All floors will be kept clear of oil, grease, or other substances that could cause slipping. Signs will be placed in conspicuous areas stating, "Caution, Wet or Slippery Floors" when cleaning/waxing floors.
- (3) Employees using machinery, saws, etc., must wear and use the protective safety equipment such as goggles, face shields, flame resistant aprons, and guards on saw blades at all times when machinery is "ON."
- (4) Extension cords no longer required for a job will be picked up immediately and put away in a safe place to prevent tripping and falling. Extension cords must be three-wire grounded cords.
- (5) All electrical panels and electrical equipment will be marked indicating voltage and all circuit breaker panels should be marked on inside of panel box to indicate the area covered by the breaker. Signs or stencils should indicate that "authorized personnel only" will have access to the panel and/or circuits.
- (6) Decorative candles will not be used in the workplace unless candlewicks are removed.
- (7) All ladders should indicate the weight limits. Weight limits should be stenciled on all ladders.

d. Motor Vehicle Safety

All Physical Plant employees will comply with state laws governing motor vehicle safety, which includes the use of seat belts. Vehicles will be inspected prior to use to ensure they may be operated safely. The daily vehicle log will be completed as required. Drivers will comply with traffic control signs, signals, markers, speed limits, and officials directing traffic. A spotter is highly recommended for vehicles with limited rear visibility and for any other situations the driver and/or passengers deem necessary. Personnel are given complete responsibility to use common sense and good judgment when determining if a spotter is required for any specific situation. Individual section directors may find it necessary to provide additional directives on vehicle safety pending the types of accidents experienced in their areas of responsibility. Pedestrians on campus will be given the right-of-way at all times. Refer to TTU OP 78.01 Vol. III, and OP 61.24 Vol. III for more specific guidance.

e. Back Injury Prevention

(1) Lifting

Assistance from another worker is required when lifting any load weighing over sixty (60) pounds.

- (a) Stand close to the load with feet wide apart.
- (b) Squat down, back straight, bending at the hips and knees, stomach muscles tight. Remember, bending at the waist requires you to lift your upper body weight and weight of the object at a 10:1 ratio. Bending at the waist to pick up something as light as a Sunday newspaper can put over 1,000 pounds of pressure on your lower back.
- (c) Grip the load, maintaining the natural “S” shape of the spine.
- (d) Keep the load close to your body. The closer the load is to your body, the less pressure it exerts on your back.
- (e) Avoid twisting with a load. Turn with your feet, not with your spine.
- (f) When possible, avoid reaching to lift.
- (g) Know your limitations. Avoid lifting too much weight or awkward items.
- (h) Plan out your lifts in advance and ensure the path is clear of obstacles.

- (j) Set the load down smoothly and slowly, squat down, bending at hips and knees, maintaining the natural “S” shape of the spine.
- (2) Sitting
 - (a) Maintain your back in its natural “S” shape.
 - (b) Your buttocks should be back in the chair with you weight on your upper thighs, knees higher than hips.
 - (c) Elevating the feet can relieve pressure on the lower back.
 - (d) Avoid sitting in chairs and sofas that you sink into. The image that soft is comfortable is wrong when it does not provide proper support.
 - (e) Turn your whole body instead of twisting part of it to reach something that is off to one side.
 - (f) Use your elbow to support your arm when you are on the phone. Do not cradle the phone in your neck.
- (3) Standing
 - (a) Maintain the natural “S” shape of the spine. Place one foot in front of the other.
 - (b) Avoid slouching and leaning.
 - (c) If you stand for long periods of time, elevate one foot and alternate it with the other often.
- (4) “Key Ingredients” for a “Trouble-Free” Back
 - (a) Good Posture
 - (b) Moderate Exercise
 - (c) Weight Control

11. Safety Award Recognition

- a. The purpose of the safety award recognition program is to increase safety awareness and initiative among personnel of the Physical Plant.

- b. Physical Plant personnel who have not experienced a vehicle accident and a personal injury accident will be referred to as “accident-free.”
- c. Individual Safety Recognition Award categories include the following:
 - (1) All Physical Plant employees who have maintained an accident-free record are recognized annually with a certificate and pen.
 - (2) Safety recognition awards are also presented to new employees after the first three years of accident-free employment.
 - (3) Tenured employees who have continuous accident-free records for five years will receive a safety award at the end of that period. All subsequent safety awards will be given at five-year intervals only if the safety record remains accident-free.

12. Employee Compliance

An accident prevention program is most effective when it is associated with standards of discipline. Horseplay and carelessness are frequently the basic cause of serious accidents. Unauthorized smoking, violation of safety rules, and failure to report injuries are also factors leading to disciplinary action. These behaviors can, by themselves, be the basis of disciplinary actions such as counseling, suspension, and dismissal. In the event of repeated or intentional failure of an employee to comply with the division safety and health program, all directors will use uniform, progressive disciplinary measures to encourage the employee into compliance.

Safety performance will be evaluated as a portion of every employee’s work performance. The Physical Plant emphasizes a participatory, educational approach to obtaining employee compliance with safe work practices and regulations.

RESPONSIBILITIES

POSITION

Associate Director for
Business Office and Material Resources
– Physical Plant

SECTION

Review

MONTH

May
(ONLY)

APPROVED: _____
Reviewer

APPROVED: _____
Managing Director – Physical Plant