



Grounds Maintenance



Safety Man says...

“Grounds Maintenance staff have many hazards that are unique to their occupation and can create serious problems if not handled safely.”

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Section I – Safety Rules

Section II – Safety Inspections

Employee Request for Correction of Safety Hazard

Employee Safety Observation

Grounds Maintenance Safety Inspection



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Safety Rules



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INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

On the job accident prevention is the responsibility of all the district's employees. It is the further responsibility of each employee to correct or report any unsafe condition or practice that he or she may observe.

Each supervisor is responsible for prevention of accidents to employees working under his/her supervision. It is the supervisor's responsibility to train these employees to enable them to work safely and efficiently.

GENERAL SAFETY RULES

The following are some important general safety rules that each employee is required to follow, regardless of work assignments.

1. Lifting improperly is a major factor of the tremendous number of claims for back injuries. The following procedures should be followed:
 - a. Size up the load; make sure it is stable and balanced. Test the weight to ensure you can lift it yourself.
 - b. Plan the job. Ensure that your path of travel is clear and that you have identified the location where you will place the load.
 - c. Establish a good base of support. Use a wide balanced stance with one foot ahead of the other.
 - d. Bend your knees and get as close to the object as possible. Lift with your legs and not your back.
 - e. Get a good grip on the object to be lifted. Make sure you can maintain your hold throughout the lift and won't have to adjust your hands later.
 - f. Lift gradually, don't jerk, but use a slow steady movement.
 - g. Keep the load close while carrying; this prevents you from arching your back and adding additional stress to your back.
 - h. Pivot; don't twist when you need to change directions. Move your feet in the direction of the lift. Twisting is especially harmful for your back.
 - i. If the load is too heavy either enlist another helper or use a mechanical device.
2. Good housekeeping is an aid to safety. All employees shall keep tools, equipment, and work areas clean and orderly.
3. Keep aisles stairways and exits clear of boxes and other tripping hazards. Do not obstruct exits.
4. Clean spills immediately. Mark the spill if you must leave to retrieve assistance or additional supplies.
5. Each employee should know the location of fire extinguishers in their work area. The area in front of a fire extinguisher should be kept clear for ready access. Employees should not fight



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fires that are beyond their fire training and limitations of the available fire fighting equipment. When in doubt, call professional help and evacuate to a safe area.

6. Gasoline will not be used as a washing or cleaning fluid. When cleaning solvent is required, use an approved cleaning solvent.
7. Material will be stored in a safe and orderly fashion. Flammable liquids should be stored in an approved Flammable Storage Cabinet.
8. Any employee, while on duty or on district property, who possesses, sells, or receives any illegal drug or who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, will be discharged and, in appropriate situations, referred to law enforcement authorities.
9. Smoking will not be allowed at any facility.
10. Use caution when opening doors which serve two-way pedestrian traffic.
11. Use a stepladder or a step stool for reaching above shoulder height. Never stand on the cap of a ladder.
12. While in a district vehicle, seat belts are required to be worn at all times. Do not disable airbags unless you have written permission from your Supervisor.
13. Do not operate machinery that you are not familiar with and have not been trained to use.
14. Inspect all tools and equipment prior to use to ensure they are in working order and do not present a hazard.
15. After use put all tools/or equipment back in their proper place.
16. Disconnect all electrical cords by grasping the plug and carefully disengaging; never yank by the cord. If an electrical cord is frayed or wires are exposed remove it from service.
17. Use handrails when using the stairways. Never take more than one stair at a time.
18. Only qualified, designated employees should work on electrical wiring and equipment.
19. Horseplay or practical jokes will not be tolerated.
20. Material Safety Data Sheets must be available, at the point of use, to any person who requests this information.
21. Report all accidents to your supervisor.
22. Report all unsafe or broken tools and equipment to your supervisor. Mark the tool or equipment so that no one else will use.
23. Observe all warning signs, safety bulletins and posters.
24. Do not do any job that appears unsafe; ask your supervisor for guidance.



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GROUNDS MAINTENANCE SAFETY RULES

The following are some important general grounds personnel safety rules that each employee is required to follow:

1. Do not operate any equipment unless you have been properly trained and are familiar with the specific equipment.
2. Use equipment only for jobs for which it was designed, etc.; do not trim hedges with mowers.
3. Keep hands and body parts from under machines.
4. Do not leave machinery running unattended.
5. Prior to mowing, pick up rocks, wire, bottles, and any item that may damage a mower or become an airborne missile.
6. Prior to mowing, locate and mark all obstacles.
7. Always wear eye and ear protection when mowing (dust masks, optional).
8. Use drop chains on tractor-towed mowers; be sure the chains are within one-half inch of the ground. Watch for slopes and go slow.
9. Disengage PTO prior to leaving tractor seat.
10. Use proper “KILL” switches to stop engine.
11. Use extreme caution when attempting to field repair any mower. Ensure all ignition sources are deactivated.
12. Report all mechanical defects to your supervisor.
13. Do not refuel mowers indoors.
14. Keep all flammable liquids in an approved Flammable Liquid Storage Cabinet.
15. Use eye goggles and gloves when handling chemicals.
16. Know your chemicals; review Material Safety Data Sheets regularly.
17. When in doubt of any grounds procedures, contact your supervisor.

MOWING SAFETY RULES

1. Keep gasoline in an approved safety can and properly labeled. These safety cans are the type with spring-loaded and vented caps.
2. Do not fill tanks of mowers indoors.



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3. Do not operate any grounds maintenance equipment unless you have been properly instructed and authorized.
4. Keep hands and feet from under machine.
5. Do not leave mowers running unattended. This means leaving it by a distance of 25 feet or more.
6. Do not use mowers to trim hedges.
7. Wear proper eye protection, dust masks and hearing protection.
8. Pick up rocks, wire, etc., before mowing. Watch for other obstacles.
9. Use drop chains on tractor-towed mowers and be sure that the chains are within one-half inch of the ground. Watch slopes. Go slow, with no hot-rodding or showing off.
10. Use proper “kill” switch to stop the engine.
11. All power lawn mowers and edgers shall be equipped with adequate guards which shall remain in place while being operated.
12. Electric mowers and edgers shall be properly grounded.
13. Check the following before making inspections, repairs, or adjustments:
 - a. Turn control lever to the “off” position on gas and electric mowers and edgers.
 - b. Remove the spark plug wire on gas mowers and edgers.
 - c. Disconnect the power source on electric mowers and edgers.

MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY RULES

The following are some important general motor vehicle operation safety rules that each employee is required to follow:

1. Concentrate on driving. A good driver dismisses all worries or anger when operating a vehicle.
2. Never press for the right of way. Always yield to avoid an accident.
3. Always limit vehicle speed so there is clear space and time for an emergency stop. Remember that at high speed, drivers have less time to think and react in an emergency and a far greater distance is required to stop.
4. Slow down in heavy traffic or densely populated areas.
5. Adjust speed for low visibility or adverse weather conditions.
6. Slow down at intersections or curves. Use appropriate signals well in advance of any action.



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7. When driving in city traffic, be alert for mistakes or unexpected actions of others, drive more slowly and keep alert for pedestrians and cross traffic.
8. Before stopping or changing directions, plan ahead of time, signal early and slow down gradually to give drivers following a chance to change pace and react accordingly.
9. Avoid “tailgating”. Use safe following distance.
10. Use extra caution and slow vehicle when approaching children at play or when passing through school zones.
11. Keep alert at railroad crossings. Make sure you have a clear view of the tracks. School buses must stop at all railroad crossings.
12. When driving at night, keep the windshield clean, keep to the right, avoid looking into the headlights of oncoming vehicles, and use lower beam.
13. Drive at speeds, which permit stopping within visibility range of your headlights.
14. Keep headlight beams depressed to reduce the reflected glare caused by fog, rain, or wet pavement.
15. Vehicles should be parked off the traveled way where they will not interfere with normal flow of traffic and will not obstruct the view of other drivers.
16. When parking put transmission in lowest gear or in park, set parking brake firmly, turn the front wheels toward the curb.
17. Engines are to be stopped ignition keys removed, and the doors locked when the operator leaves the vehicle unattended.
18. All persons riding inside a vehicle shall use seat belts, when provided and required by law.
19. Perform a pre-trip inspection. This includes checking the following:
 - a. All fluid levels.
 - b. Directional signals.
 - c. Lights and warning reflectors.
 - d. Safety belts.
 - e. Tires, including spare, if provided.
 - f. Windshield wipers.
 - g. Heater and defroster.
 - h. Horn.
 - i. Fire extinguisher, if provided.
 - j. Rear view mirrors. Inside and outside.



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- k. Safety equipment, flares, flags, chock blocks, chains.
 - l. Brakes and related equipment.
 - m. Steering mechanism.
 - n. Muffler and exhaust system.
20. When a vehicle is returned to the facility a post trip inspection is required. It is a requirement that vehicles transporting students be parked with no less than ½ tank of fuel. All other vehicles will be fueled as designated by the appropriate department.
 21. Always consider proper loading and proper load distribution as factors in safe driving.
 22. Tools and equipment placed in cars or truck cabs shall be stored in such a manner as not to interfere with vision or in any way interferes with the proper operation of the vehicle. Any equipment or materials being transported in the bed of the truck should be secured.
 23. Nothing shall be stored on the rear window ledge of any vehicle.
 24. When entering, exiting, or dismounting from a vehicle, watch footing to avoid slipping or falling. Never attempt to enter, exit or dismount from a vehicle while it is moving.
 25. Trailer, tool boxes, and trailer mounted machinery should be hitched to the towing truck with safety chains, in addition to the towing eye fastening.
 26. No person shall be permitted to ride in or on trailer mounted equipment while it is being towed.
 27. Trailer mounted equipment shall be towed at a speed reasonable under the conditions and with due regard for safety.
 28. Slow moving vehicle signs (inverted triangle) must be used on tractors, slow moving vehicles, and equipment (maximum speed 25 miles per hour).
 29. No one shall drive a vehicle or operate a piece of equipment that is defective.
 30. If involved in an injury accident, your first duty is to help the injured. Do not attempt anything beyond making the injured comfortable and providing emergency first aid. Send someone for medical help.
 31. In the event of an accident, all employees must contact their supervisor immediately. Any bus driver involved in an accident may be subject to a drug and alcohol test.
 32. Never take drugs or strong medications before driving. Remember that drugs, illness, or extreme fatigue may affect your ability to judge distances, speed and driving conditions, and slow your reaction time.
 33. Do not hang items from the rear view mirror of vehicles.



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34. Ear protection is required for heavy equipment operators when there is a noise hazard to the ear.
35. Emergency/hazard warning lights should be used when vehicles are operating (or parking) under conditions that might interfere with other vehicle traffic.
36. Do not operate, nor instruct other employees to operate an unsafe vehicle or equipment.
Drivers of vehicles transporting loose materials such as dirt, sand, gravel, sludge, or other material that can blow (or spill) off the vehicle, shall cover the material with canvas or otherwise secure it as appropriate.

LADDERS

1. Completely inspect all ladder hardware and fittings before each use.
2. Inspect all ropes and cables and replace them if defective.
3. Do not use defective ladders; report them immediately to your supervisor.
4. Portable ladders are designed as one-man working ladders based on a 200 pound load. Do not load a ladder more than the rated limits.
5. Do not use metal ladders while working near electrical wires or electrical equipment. Use a wood or fiberglass ladder.
6. Be sure your shoes are free of any material which could cause you to slip while climbing.
7. Set the ladder base firmly on the ground or floor. Ladders must not be placed on boxes, barrels, or other unstable bases.
8. Do not climb a ladder if you are ill or afraid of heights.
9. Do not paint wooden ladders; this hides possible cracks. Use linseed oil instead.
10. Do not store wooden ladders where they will be exposed to the elements; store them where there is good ventilation.
11. Do not use a ladder which has been tagged “Dangerous — Do Not Use.”
12. Do not climb a ladder behind an unlocked door, doorway, or without someone standing guard.

The following rules apply to straight extension ladders.

13. Never stand above the top three rungs.
14. Secure the ladder to prevent it from slipping or falling by tying it off to a fixed object at the top at both rails or to a proper sized single support attachment. Choose a ladder equipped with non-slip safety feet. Since the ladder usually must be climbed to secure the top, someone should



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stand at the bottom and hold the ladder while this is being done. If the job is of short duration, it may not be feasible to tie the top. If this is the case, the ladder should be held by another person until the job is completed and the person is safely on the ground. Only when the top is secured should someone work from the ladder alone. When ladders with no safety feet are used on hard, slick surfaces, a foot ladder board or cleat should be used against the base.

15. Do not reach out from a ladder, even when it is being held. Move the ladder instead.
16. Keep your shoes and the ladder rungs free from grease, mud, ice, etc. Clean oily or greasy ladders with a safety solvent, or steam clean.
17. Do not use ladders or ladder sections upside down. Always use right side up. The extension ladder should always be erected so that the upper section is resting on the bottom section.
18. When working from a position on the ladder, always brace your knees against the side rails near the end of the ladder rungs to increase stability.
19. Do not climb ladders when wearing high heels, sandals, or thongs.
20. Position straight ladders so that the base of the ladder is $1/4$ of the ladder length, or approximately 75° , with the horizontal.
21. Ladders must be $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet taller than the building top.

The following safety rules pertain to stepladders.

22. Select a stepladder tall enough to reach the work. Never stand on the top two steps or on the bucket shelf.
23. Be sure the stepladder is fully spread and the spreaders are locked; be sure that the spreader is not bent or loose.
24. The bracing on the back legs of a stepladder is designed for stability and not for climbing.
Always have someone hold your stepladder if you are climbing higher than four feet



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Acknowledgement of Safety Rules for Grounds Maintenance

I have received the Safety Rules for Grounds Maintenance and fully understand the rules. If in the future I have any questions regarding any of the Rules I will seek clarification from my Supervisor immediately.

Name: (printed)

Name: (Signature)

Date: _____



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Safety Inspections

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As a supervisor, you should always be on the lookout for hazardous conditions or practices in your workplace. One way to keep track of these factors is to make inspections. Informal safety inspections are a part of daily work activities and require that supervisors and their employees constantly be on the lookout for hazards on the job. Formal inspections should be more intentional and include a review of all aspects of the operations.

GOALS OF THE SAFETY INSPECTION

The basic purposes of safety inspections are to ensure compliance with standards and to serve as a tool to evaluate safety performance activities. Prompt correction of substandard or hazardous conditions detected in an inspection shows that the organization is seriously concerned with accident prevention. Also, if it is discovered that workers are not following safety procedures while performing their jobs, appropriate actions can be taken to educate or retrain employees in safety policies and guidelines.

FORMAL SAFETY INSPECTIONS

In addition to informal or continuous inspections, formal inspections should be made at least annually. These formal inspections are a vital part of a strong loss control program.

When conducting an inspection, it is important to categorize the different areas at each campus to perform a thorough site audit. Categories include, but are not limited to:

- Gymnasiums
- Maintenance areas
- Boiler rooms
- Cafeterias
- Industrial/Fine Arts shops
- Classrooms
- Storage areas
- Science storage areas
- Laboratories
- Offices

All noted unsafe conditions should be corrected immediately to prevent injury to staff and students or damage to property. Documentation of these inspections should be kept on file for at least three years. An informal inspection (not documented) should be conducted daily by supervisors and employees before each shift. Hazards that cannot be corrected immediately should be documented so that responsibility for corrective action can be assigned.

A sample *Employee Safety Observation, Safety Inspection Checklist* and an *Employee Request for Correction of Safety Hazard Form* are presented here as a guide to assist the district in formulating and carrying out a formal safety inspection procedure.

Discuss any substandard inspection results with your workers. Regularly reinforce, or retrain, your employees in safe work practices. Discuss with them the hazards they face with the materials or conditions in their work area. Encourage workers to notify you of any hazards they might discover by utilizing the *Employee Request for Correction of Safety Hazard Form*. It is up to you to set the standard for safety and motivate your workers to develop and maintain appropriate safety practices.



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EMPLOYEE REQUEST FOR CORRECTION OF SAFETY HAZARD

This form is to be completed when an employee has noted a hazardous situation. It is the responsibility of the site administrator, or supervisor, to ensure that follow-up and corrective measures are taken.

To: _____ (Site Administrator)

This is a request that the following safety hazard be investigated and/or corrected.

Dept. _____ Bldg. _____ Room _____

Location of hazard _____

Specific description of hazard _____

What measures were taken to temporarily control the hazard?

Signed: _____
Employee Date

Administrator Recommendation:

1. Corrective action will be taken by:

Name: _____ Due Date: _____

2. Referred to Maintenance for immediate action;

3. Other: _____

Signed: _____
Site Administrator Date

Date Hazard Corrected: _____



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EMPLOYEE SAFETY OBSERVATION

EMPLOYEE: _____ **DATE:** _____

WORK PRACTICE OBSERVED: _____

1. Unsafe or Awkward Positions

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| _____overreaching | _____under overhead work |
| _____bending/stooping | _____overcrowding |
| _____lifting/back bent | _____near heat/cold extremes |
| _____obstructed sight | _____aisle obstructed |
| _____other | _____ |

2. Unsafe Work Procedures

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| _____improper tool/equipment | (specify)_____ |
| _____work exceeds capability | (specify)_____ |
| _____work endangers others | (specify)_____ |
| _____hazardous chemicals or materials | (specify)_____ |
| _____personal protection | (specify)_____ |

3. Other Concerns

Work Practices Remarks:



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SAFETY INSPECTION CHECKLIST

Location: _____ Date: _____

Inspector: _____

	Storage Areas	OK	Needs Improvement	Date Corrected/Initials
1	Are floors clean, dry and in good condition?			
2	Are aisles free of boxes or clutter?			
3	Are electrical panels accessible and properly labeled?			
4	Are doors and latches working properly?			
5	Are products or supplies properly stored? Light items on top, arranged to avoid tipping			
6	Is shelving in good condition?			
7	Are shelves adequate to bear weight of items stored?			
8	Are combustibles kept away from heat sources?			
9	Flammable liquids stored in an approved Flammable Liquids Storage Cabinet?			
10	Are outlets, switches and electrical components working properly?			
11	Are ladders in good condition and properly stored?			
12	Are chemicals properly labeled?			
13	Are Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) available for all chemicals?			
14	Is the first aid kit readily accessible and adequately stocked?			
15	Are all lights working properly?			
16	Are keys removed from storage equipment so that equipment cannot be started inadvertently?			
17				
18				



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	General Work Areas	OK	Needs Improvement	Date Corrected/Initials
1	Are floors in good condition?			
2	Are aisles free of clutter?			
3	Pot holes are covered or repaired?			
4	Are doors and latches working properly?			
5	Are plugs on equipment in good condition with grounding wire intact?			
6	Are electrical cords in good condition, without nicks or bare wires?			
7	There are sufficient electrical outlets so cords for appliances do not cross traffic areas.			
8	Have portable fire extinguishers been inspected and serviced within past year?			
9	Is a first aid kit readily available and fully stocked?			
10	Emergency plan posted and emergency telephone numbers are checked regularly?			
11	Are outlets, switches and electrical components working properly?			
12	Is lighting adequate and lights working properly?			
13	Does a plastic shield or cover protect the fluorescent tubes in light fixtures?			
14	Are exit signs illuminated?			
15	Is access to breaker panels, fire extinguishers, and fire exits unobstructed?			
16				
	Work Practices	OK	Needs Improvement	Date Corrected/Initials
1	Are areas to be mowed inspected prior to use of equipment?			
2	Refueling of equipment is not conducted indoors.			
3	Is gasoline stored in a approved safety can and properly labeled?			



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5	Are employees using proper lifting techniques			
6	Are ladders inspected prior to use for condition?			
7	The proper height of ladder is used for task at hand?			
8	No jewelry worn that could get caught in machinery/tools.			
9	Is defective equipment tagged and removed from service?			
10	Is appropriate eye protection worn for the job at hand?			
11	Is appropriate hearing protection worn?			
12	Are tools inspected prior to use?			
13	Are defective tools marked and removed from work area?			
14	Are employees aware of weather hazards that could effect their work operations and how to respond?			
15				
16				
	General Worksite	OK	Needs Improvement	Date Corrected/Initials
1	Workers Compensation posters displayed			
2	Safety signs and warnings are posted			
3	“Caution – Wet Floor” signs available			
4	First Aid Kit readily available?			
5	Is fire extinguisher readily available?			
6				
	Health and Safety Training	OK	Needs Improvement	Date Corrected/Initials
1	New employees receive orientation training			
2	Safety meetings are held regularly			
3	Employees know how to report hazards, and potential hazards?			
4	Employees know how to report an on the job accident.			



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5	All employees receive training to include:			
	Work Area Hazards			
	Emergency Action Plan			
	Equipment Operations			
	Personal Protective Equipment			
	Hazard Communication			
	Lockout/Tagout			
6	Safety Rule acknowledgement on file for every employee			

