

Graham County Employee Safety Guidelines & Emergency Response Plan



Prepared By: Graham County Safety Committee and Graham County Director of Human Resources

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PURPOSE

Safety is the number one priority of Graham County Government. The primary importance of the Safety Guidelines Policy and Procedures are to provide for the reduction of accidents and injuries to customers, employees and the general public. Safety is a shared responsibility between all county departments and their employees.

Graham County's Safety Guidelines and OSHA Compliance Reference Manual is a general reference for all Department Directors, Supervisors and employees regarding protection from hazards that can result in work related injuries and illnesses. It is intended to inform and educate employees in the prevention of accidents resulting in efficient utilization of taxpayers' dollars to provide services to members of our communities. A successful safety program must not only provide for the safety of employees but also offer protection of the visiting public by preventing unsafe acts or conditions within Graham County facilities.

The policy contains only highlights of the Safety and Health Regulations for general industry under North Carolina's Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) and other regulatory groups. It is not intended to be a complete manual on safety and health, but should be used as a reference guide for the identification of common hazards found in Graham County Government operations. Failure to include all OSHA safety and health standards does not give license to ignore such standards.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

- It is the policy of Graham County to provide safe working conditions, personal protective equipment (PPE) as required, safe equipment, proper job instructions, adequate supervision and frequent review of working practices to assure that employees can perform their jobs safely and productively.
- Workplace accidents place an unnecessary financial burden on taxpayers. Most accidents can be prevented by training, common sense and diligence from employees and supervisors. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each employee, and especially those in a supervisory capacity, to assure that work is planned, performed and supervised with safety in mind, and that all necessary safety requirements are in place.
- It is the policy and intention of the County that a comprehensive safety program will be followed.
- In support and recognition of the importance of a vigorous safety program, the County Safety Coordinator, under the direction of the Director of Human Resources, is hereby directed to implement a comprehensive safety program in accordance with the Graham County Safety Guidelines Policy and Procedures.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Board of Commissioners

The board of commissioners supports a countywide safety program through Personnel Policies, Safety Guidelines Policy and Procedures and budgetary considerations.

Safety Committee

The Safety Committee will function as an advisory body to develop and recommend to the Director of Human Resources matters of policy and procedure affecting administration of the Graham County Safety Program. Specifically, the committee is responsible for:

- Planning and recommending policies and procedures affecting the development and administration of an accident prevention program.
- Reviewing statistical data, records and reports of safety matters to determine the effectiveness of the program and recommendations or remediation needed.
- Serving as the accident review board by reviewing incidents of workplace accidents, injuries and/or illnesses.
- Determining if employee Safety Plans and Emergency Response Plans established by departments are sufficient to meet the needs of the county safety program and employees.
- Accessing safety training and awareness topics.
- Inspecting the workplace.

A list of Safety Committee members is located in Appendix 9.

Safety Coordinator

The safety coordinator is responsible for the implementation and operation of the safety program which will include training, accident and insurance follow-up, and vehicle and building safety. The safety coordinator will represent the Director of Human Resources in all safety matters and can stop a work operation temporarily when serious injury or property damage is possible. The safety coordinator may request a meeting with any employee in an on-the-job injurious situation in an effort to determine the cause of the situation or accident.

Department Directors

Each department director is designated as responsible to the Director of Human Resources for employee safety. The department director has supervisory responsibility for all safety functions and activities within his/her area. Each department director will:

- Provide leadership by setting a proper example for all employees.
- Review accident records and accomplishments of the safety program with the Safety Committee.

- Be responsible for successfully implementing and operating the department Safety Plan and Emergency Response Plans (submit plans to the Safety Committee for review).
- Appoint Safety Representatives (one primary and one alternate) in their department.
- Require department safety meetings at least annually or as needed to review accidents, analyze causes of accidents and promote free discussion of hazardous work problems and possible solutions. Minutes from the meeting shall be submitted to the Director of Human Resources.
- Ensure all employees assigned to their facilities are aware of and trained to execute Safety Plans and Emergency Response Plans.
- Provide personal protective equipment and instruction when necessary, and follow-up on proper use of equipment.
- Encourage safety suggestions and written comments from employees, and adopt those that are feasible.
- Require accidents to be promptly reported, thoroughly investigated by supervisory personnel, and properly recorded.
- Ensure that prompt, corrective action is taken whenever unsafe conditions are recognized, and unsafe acts are observed.
- Ensure that all employees are reasonably free from all physical and mental impairment in the performance of their work responsibilities.
- Direct that any flagrant disregard of safety rules and regulations by employees be grounds for discipline or dismissal, as outlined in the Personnel Policy.
- Ensure that proper OSHA records be posted.

Supervisors

Supervisors are charged with the responsibilities of quality and quantity of production with the department, and therefore are responsible for the work conduct of the same. Supervisors should be afforded the necessary knowledge to carry out their duties with efficiency and safety. Supervisors should:

- Have a thorough knowledge of the Safety Plans and Emergency Response Plans.
- Ensure all employees are trained and aware of the Safety Plans and Emergency Response Plan when hired and annually.
- Provide instruction and training to workers so that they may fulfill their job in a safe manner.
- Make daily inspection of the department to ensure that no unsafe conditions or unsafe practices exist.
- Initiate immediate corrective action where unsafe conditions or practices are found.
- In the event of an accident, properly complete Form 19 with the department Safety Representative and investigate all accidents to determine what must be done to

prevent recurrence of a similar accident. This should be completed and submitted to the Director of Human Resources in time that she/he can submit within three working days to the proper insurance company.

- Be familiar with all procedures that must be followed in the event of an emergency.
- Enforce safety rules and regulations of the County and each respective department.
- Provide good example by safe work habits.
- Develop and administer an effective program of good housekeeping, and maintain high standards of personnel and operational cleanliness throughout all operations.
- Require doctor's permission for an employee to return to work after a workers' compensation injury or an extended absence from work.

Employee

To assist the employees in developing a keen "safety awareness", the following responsibilities are assigned:

- To abide by the safety rules and regulations of the County and their respective departmental policies, procedures and plans.
- To regard the safety of fellow workers at all times.
- To report any unsafe conditions to their Supervisor.
- To contribute ideas and suggestions for improving the safety of conditions or procedures to the Supervisor.
- To use individual knowledge and influence to prevent accidents.
- To attend safety training sessions as required.
- To report accidents and injuries immediately.
- To use the safety equipment and PPE provided to them in performing daily work assignments as required.
- To not operate equipment for which training or orientation has not been received.
- Protect the public from unsafe conditions resulting from work that could present a hazard to them.
- Take care not to abuse tools and equipment, so that these items will be in useable condition for as long as possible, as well as to ensure that they are in the best possible condition while being used.

OPERATIONS

Safety Committee Meetings

The Safety Coordinator will provide an agenda of the meeting. The designated Safety Committee Secretary will take minutes of the meeting and send to all members within two weeks after the meeting date. Meetings will be held quarterly on the first Thursday of the first month of each quarter at 10:00 AM at the Graham County Emergency Management Services Facility

located at 70 West Fort Hill. Minutes will be sent to the Director of Human Resources to maintain for record.

Departmental Safety Meetings

Department Directors are responsible for conducting a departmental safety meeting annually or as needed to review accidents, analyze causes of accidents and promote free discussion of hazardous work problems and possible solutions. Minutes from the meeting shall be submitted to the Director of Human Resources.

Safety Training and New Employee Orientation

In order to obtain the maximum degree of safety awareness, a continuous education and training program must be administered. All newly hired or assigned employees must receive a safety orientation before going to work in their designated job duty. Orientation will be organized by the employee supervisor.

Training will include at least the following:

- ❑ Hazard Communication
- ❑ Chemical Hygiene
- ❑ Bloodborne Pathogens
- ❑ Fire & Emergency Response
- ❑ General Safety

Additional training may include:

- ❑ Accident Prevention
- ❑ Ergonomics
- ❑ Other Relevant Training for Safety

Refresher training will be held annually for all employees; Mandatory training will be held for all employees as significant updates to the safety plan occur.

Chemical Training

Chemical safety information will be conveyed during orientation and all new employees must be trained by their supervisor about hazardous chemicals in their work area at the time of their initial assignment.

If employees are reassigned to an area for which they have not received training, they will be instructed at the time of their entry into the new work area.

Refresher training will be held annually for all employees;

Mandatory training will be held for all employees as significant updates to the safety plan occur.

Training will include at least the following topics:

- ❑ Physical and health hazards of chemicals in the work area
- ❑ Methods and observation techniques used to detect the presence or release of a hazardous chemical
- ❑ How to lessen or prevent exposure to these hazardous chemicals through usage of controls, work practices and personal protective equipment
- ❑ How to use material safety data sheet information
- ❑ How to read and understand labels
- ❑ Contingency plans for medical and chemical accident response
- ❑ Information about Chemical Hygiene

Biohazard Training

All employees with potential for occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens participate in a training program at no cost to the employee. Training is held during work hours. Training is provided at the time of initial employment and annually thereafter. Additional training is offered whenever new or modified tasks or procedures affect the employee's occupational exposure.

The Training and Education Program shall contain, at a minimum, the following elements:

1. A copy of the OSHA standard and an explanation of its contents; (29 CFR Part 1910.1030, pages 64175-64182).
2. A general explanation of the epidemiology and symptoms of bloodborne diseases.
3. An explanation of the modes of transmission of bloodborne pathogens.
4. An explanation of the employer's Exposure Control Plan and a means by which the employee can obtain a copy of the written plan.
5. An explanation of the appropriate methods for recognizing tasks and other activities that may involve exposure to blood and other potentially infectious material.
6. An explanation of the use and limitations of methods that will prevent or reduce exposure, including appropriate engineering controls, work practices and personal protective equipment.
7. Information on the types, proper use, location, removal, handling, decontamination and disposal of personal protective equipment.
8. An explanation of the basis for selecting personal protective equipment.
9. Information on the hepatitis B vaccine, including information on its efficacy, safety, method of administration and benefits. The vaccination will be offered at no cost to the employee.
10. Information on the appropriate actions to take and the people to contact in an emergency involving blood or other potentially infectious material.
11. An explanation of the procedure to follow if an exposure incident occurs, including the method of reporting the incident and the medical follow-up that will be made available. Also information on the medical counseling that the employer is providing for exposed individuals.
12. An explanation of the signs, labels, and/or color-coding required. An opportunity for interactive questions and answers with the person conducting the training sessions. The

person conducting the training is knowledgeable in the subject matter covered by the elements contained in the training program as it relates to Public Health work hazards.

All training shall be documented by recording the training session subject(s), date, attendees, and providing a copy of the outline for the training session.

All training records are retained for 3 years by the Safety Representative.

Accident Investigation

Accident investigation will be performed by the immediate supervisor of the employee involved. If two or more employees were separately involved in the accident, the supervisor of each will perform independent investigations. Any accident involving death, permanent disability, temporary disability, hospitalization, medical treatment, loss of time from work by county employee, damage to or destruction of any property or injury to a visitor will be investigated. Any accident involving five or more persons or a fatality needs to be reported immediately to the Safety Coordinator and Director of Human Resources. The purpose of accident investigation is to prevent the recurrence of accidents by identifying contributing causes, determining corrective measures necessary to eliminate causes and to identify and remedy causes. The accident report will be presented to the Safety Committee for review.

Self-Inspections

The purpose of self inspections is to identify hazardous work conditions and materials or methods that may result in an accident, so that these hazards can be corrected. All facilities will be inspected at least annually, including all worksite job functions. The department director is responsible for preparing an inspection schedule for all activities for his/her department. The department director will also designate inspectors for their department and inspections checklists should be used to record findings. Upon completion of the inspection checklists, recommendations will be furnished to the department director and safety coordinator. The department director will take whatever corrective action deemed appropriate, maintain a record of completion of such corrective action, and furnish the safety coordinator a record of completion.

First Aid

First aid is the immediate emergency treatment provided for injury or sudden illness before professional medical care is available.

Never minimize the seriousness of an injury or illness. If in doubt seek medical attention.

In the event of an emergency, immediately call for emergency services.

DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RENDER FIRST AID UNLESS YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING OTHERWISE INJURIES MAY BE AGGRAVATED.

First Aid Kits should be available for treatment of minor cuts and scratches in all facilities and County vehicles.

First Aid Kits:

1. Departments shall determine the contents of first aid kits based upon the department's operations and professional medical advice when appropriate.
2. Departments should dispense only medicines, etc. that are medically necessary for administering basic first aid.
3. The availability of first aid kits is not a substitute for obtaining medical treatment. Routine administration of first aid for other than minor cuts and scratches must be performed by "certified" (by the American Red Cross of NC Office of Emergency Medical Services) or licensed medical personnel.
4. The first aid provider, to protect against infectious disease, must use universal precautions. (*See Bloodborne Pathogens Standard pg. 22*)
5. All First Aid Kits must be inspected by the Safety Representative (or designee) in each department monthly for expired or used items for replacement needs.

Safety Bulletin Board and Safety Suggestion Box

Each department is suggested to have a safety bulletin board and safety suggestion box. This would be placed in common areas of county facilities. All suggestions will be discussed at the departmental meetings.

GENERAL SAFETY PROCEDURES

The following general safety procedures apply:

- Report all personal injuries, no matter how minor, to the immediate supervisor as soon as possible. An "*Employee On-The-Job Accident/Injury/Illness Report Form*" (*Appendix 1*) must be completed and forwarded to the Director of Human Resources within 24 hours after the accident/incident. This must be done whether the injury resulted in lost time from work or required medical attention or not. Prompt reporting of accidents is a requirement under the Workers' Compensation Law.
- The County does not expect any employee to take any unnecessary chances or to work under hazardous conditions. Learn the right and safe way to do a job. If there is not a thorough understanding of the job, ask a supervisor for further instructions.
- Substance abuse on the job or during working hours is prohibited. Any employee reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs during working hours shall be subject to disciplinary action. (*Reference Personnel Policy*)
- Use the handrails on stairs or on elevated places to avoid falls.
- Jumping from an elevation such as a table, bench, or platform can result in injury.
- Always inspect tools and equipment before use. Report defects to supervisor and other potential users. Do not use tools and equipment that are defective.

- Obey warning signs and tags. They are posted to point out hazards.
- Operate only the equipment and machinery you have been trained and/or authorized to use.
- Never operate equipment or machinery with guards missing or broken.
- Report to work in appropriate clothing suitable for the type of work performed.
- Maintain good housekeeping practices in all work areas.
- Wear all protective equipment as required. If broken or lost, report to immediate supervisor.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING INCIDENTS

An accident is an undesired event that results in personal injury or property damage. A near miss is an undesired event that could potentially result in an injury or property damage under slightly different circumstances. Examples of accidents include personal injury, exposure to toxic or biohazardous material, fire, explosion and chemical spills. While no report is currently required for accidents involving property damage only, the Director of Human Resources and immediate supervisor should be informed. In the event of an accident or near miss, the supervisor should investigate and determine if actions are necessary to prevent future occurrences.

Accidents occurring at work must be reported within 24 hours to the immediate supervisor. The supervisor must report the accident to the Department Director and to the Director of Human Resources with 24 hours. Employees must be seen by a Workers' Comp physician if medical services are required. NOTE: Handbooks are available in each section. Key Risk Management determines if the claim is work related; upon approval, claim is paid by Workers' Compensation.

Biohazard Accidents

1. Accidents involving exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials should be reported immediately to the supervisor.
2. Accidents involving sharps should be reported immediately to the supervisor.

Reporting Process

1. All accidents occurring at work should be reported within 24 hours, no matter how insignificant the injury may seem at the time.
2. It is the responsibility of the person who had the accident, resulting in a physical injury, to report the details of the accident by completing, or assisting to have completed, the "Graham County Employee On-The-Job Accident/Injury/Illness Report Form" (*Appendix I*). This form is obtained from the Safety Representative or Back-up representative.
3. It is the responsibility of the Department Head, Safety Representative or Director of Human Resources to complete the "Employer's Report of Employee's Injury or

Occupational Disease to the Industrial Commission” Form 19 (*Appendix 2*). This form is to be submitted to Director of Human Resources.

For Graham County Employee Send Form To:
Director of Human Resources
Kim Crisp
County Manager’s Office
828-479-7960

4. Per County policy, the injured employee is required to take a drug test within 24 hours of the time of the incident. Call the County Manager’s office for instruction (479-7960).
5. It is to be determined by the Department Director and the injured employee, if the employee should obtain medical evaluation/treatment. In the event of a serious injury consult a physician or mid-level provider.
6. If the injury involves a transmission of body fluids and occurs between two people, either or all of the following blood tests may be required: HIV, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C.
7. The employee may be transported by: self, another employee, friend/family or ambulance (call 911), whichever is most appropriate.
8. If there are any questions concerning the accident for follow-up treatment/care the following telephone #'s are available: CDC 1-800-232-4636; National Clinical Providers Post Exposure Prophylaxis hot line (“PEP” line) 1-888-448-4911.
9. Graham County has a preference that all employees injured on the job go to Tallulah Health Center located at 409 Tallulah Road, Robbinsville, North Carolina, phone 828-479-6434 to be seen for any injury. Graham County does not limit an employee to this facility only, thus an employee may go to a facility that they feel will provide the best treatment.

OFFICE

SAFETY/ERGONOMICS/PHYSICAL/ELECTRICAL/CHEMICAL

There are certain safety precautions and requirements which apply to those working in the office areas.

Office Safety

1. Open only one file drawer at a time to prevent tipping of entire cabinet.
2. Keep desk and file drawers closed when not in use.
3. Do not open file or desk drawers above or behind someone without warning them.
4. Avoid overhead storage except on approved shelves.
5. Use only step stools and ladders (do not climb on counters or desk chairs).
6. Push chairs up to desk when not sitting in them.
7. Keep walking surfaces clear of paper clips, rubber bands, pencils, etc., which could cause falls.

8. Do not carry loads that obstruct your view, that are too heavy, or without a prepared place to set them down.
9. Report any injury to your supervisor.
10. Get help when moving heavy objects.
11. Maintain good housekeeping at all times. Wipe up all spills immediately.
12. Do not place extension cords or phone cords across walking areas on floor.
13. Approach blind corners cautiously.
14. Keep fingers clear when closing file drawers.
15. Report defective furniture or equipment to your supervisor.
16. Know location of emergency exits and keep aisles clear to them.
17. Operate only those pieces of equipment you are authorized to use. Turn off when not in use.
18. Never attempt to repair or adjust any electrical equipment.

Ergonomics

With the increased use of computers in every line of work, it is important to review your computer workstation setup. If you spend the majority of your time in front of a computer, then you should be aware of some basic ergonomic principles that will help improve your comfort and minimize stress caused from repetitive motion and poor posture. See ***Computer Workstations Ergonomics (Appendix 3)***.

Back and Lifting Safety

Many injuries have occurred in the process of handling materials. These injuries can be avoided by taking a little time to plan ahead, by using mechanical equipment whenever possible, by thinking about the proper way to do the task, and by using the proper tools.

One of the most important preventative safety measures an employee should keep in mind is the four step lifting process:

- **Get Ready**-Size up the load. If it is too heavy or bulky, get help. Know where the load is going and where you are going to put it down. Be sure the path you take is clear of obstacles.
- **Pick it up**- Get a firm stance and good balance; have your feet about shoulder width apart. If the load is below waist level, bend your knees to get into position. Keep your back as straight as possible. Grip the load firmly and lift the object to carrying position, keeping it close to the body. Let your leg and arm muscles do the work.
- **Carry it carefully**-Be sure you can see where you are going. When changing directions, be careful not to twist your body. Turn your body with changes of the position of your feet. Use extra caution in tight places so as not to mash your fingers or hands.

- **Put it down**-If the receiving surface is about waist high; use the edge to take part of the load; then push the load forward. If you lower the load to the floor, bend your knees; keep your back as straight as possible and the load close to your body.

If you are using either a hand cart or a conventional cart to move materials, do not stack materials high enough to block vision.

See *Appendix 4* for Graham County's ***Back and Lifting Safety Policy***.

Physical/Electrical/Chemical Safety

Physical Safety

Physical hazards are substances or situations that have the potential to cause an accident.

1. Never leave a flame unattended.
2. When using flammable liquids or gases, remove all ignition sources.
3. Wear safety glasses in required areas, at all times.
4. Promptly clean up all broken glassware and discard in appropriate container.
5. Fill empty file cabinets from bottom to top to prevent tip over.
6. Use physical ergonomics in executing all physical activities.

Electrical Safety

1. Extension cords should:
 - a. Be as short as possible.
 - b. Never be used in areas where they will be stepped on or tripped over.
 - c. Never be used on work benches or floor when any liquids are present.
 - d. Used for a maximum of three months.
 - e. All extension cords shall be plugged directly into a surge protector.
2. Never attempt to repair or adjust any electrical equipment unless authorized.
3. Do not use faulty or malfunctioning equipment unless the nature of the fault or malfunction is fully understood and is known not to be hazardous.
4. All electrical equipment must have an equipment ground, be double insulated or safety approved.
5. Pull on the plug, not the cord, when unplugging a cord from the power source. Electric wires should never be used as supports.
6. Report any damaged or frayed cords.
7. Do not use portable electrical equipment if standing on a wet surface or if hands are wet.
8. Do not block access to electrical control panels in the halls.
9. Fans and electrical heaters should not be used except in an emergency.

Chemical Safety

Introduction

These ten (10) factors constitute the most frequent causes of laboratory and worksite accidents:

1. Improper handling of concentrated acids and bases
2. Flammable liquids
3. Explosive gases
4. Poisonous fumes
5. Dangerous chemicals
6. Broken glassware
7. Electrical hazards
8. Wet floors
9. Radiation hazards
10. Infectious specimens

It appears from the prevalence of chemical causes in the list that many employees are unaware of the hazardous nature of the chemicals with which they work. It is hoped that the following discussion on chemical hazards in the workplace will bring awareness to some of these hazards and provide employees with a sufficient understanding to instill caution as they handle hazardous chemicals in their work.

Refer to the *Graham County Hazard Communication Program in Appendix 6* for a detailed Plan.

Working Alone

No one shall be allowed to perform chemical work unless a second person is on the premises and within calling distance.

Personal Protective Equipment

Proper personal protective equipment must be worn when working in potentially hazardous areas or duties. This equipment should be appropriate for the task being performed. Employees should ask their supervisor if they have questions regarding the use of personal protective equipment.

Personal protective equipment includes:

- proper clothing and shoes
- protective apparel (i.e. hooded coveralls, shoe covers, lab coats)
- eye protection
- protective gloves

Please see the Exposure Control Plan for more detailed information.

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)

Material Safety Data Sheets contain information provided by the manufacturer or supplier under the OSHA Hazard Communication Rule. This form provides much information about the chemical including a complete chemical description, health hazards, physical characteristics, handling and storage, and special precautions. The Safety Representative for the department keeps a notebook containing MSDS for all chemicals used in any Graham County Department. This notebook is updated whenever new chemicals are received. A sample of a MSDS is shown in the *Appendix 5*.

Chemical Labeling

1. Label all chemicals accurately. The label should include as a minimum the following information: the exact name and concentration of the chemical, the date the chemical was received or prepared, and its shelf life.
2. Other information such as flammability or biohazard potential is also necessary to assure safe handling of a chemical.
3. Labels should be durable (no wax pencils on glass or water soluble ink on tape).

Chemical Hazard Signs

Danger Signs - Red

Danger signs must be posted to warn of specific dangers or radiation hazards. Danger signs must be RED, BLACK, and WHITE and all danger signs must be of the same design.



Caution Signs - Yellow

Caution signs should be used only to warn against potential hazards or to caution against unsafe practices. Caution signs must have a yellow background with a black panel with the word "caution" in yellow. Any letters on the yellow background must be black.



Safety Instruction Signs - Green

White background and a green panel with white lettering. Provide general instructions and suggestions relative to safety measures.



Safety Notice Signs - Blue

A blue header with black printing on a white background.



National Fire Protection Association Hazardous Materials Classification

Storage and Handling of Chemicals

Employees should always be familiar with the proper storage and handling of all chemicals they are working with and follow the correct storage and handling procedures recommended by the manufacturer. If unsure about the proper procedures ask your Supervisor. Make sure storage areas have the proper ventilation and use proper protective equipment to enter storage and in handling.

ERROR: stackunderflow
OFFENDING COMMAND: ~

STACK: