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1.0 Message from the Commissioner

1.1 Message

The safety of our employees is a responsibility that demands our continual attention. While we can calculate the costs of workers' compensation, we can only speculate on losses due to decreased productivity and human suffering. On behalf of the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), I strongly endorse a safety and loss prevention program that provides for a safe workplace and conserves the state's resources.

As State of Alaska employees we must minimize hazards in the workplace and train our employees in safe work practices. Because safety is a condition of employment, all employees are expected to comply with the program outlined in this handbook.

The obligation of loss prevention is a great challenge. DHSS is a vast department with employees scattered from Barrow to Ketchikan. This heightens the need for us to establish a focused and comprehensive policy that all our employees can follow. I look forward to working with you as we strengthen our commitment to safety.

Karleen K. Jackson, Ph.D.
Commissioner Department of Health and Social Services

Signature



2.0 Introduction to the Safety Program

2.1 Overview

This manual describes the safety standards that governs work to be performed at DHSS worksites.

At each location, every practicable effort will be made to sustain the integrity of DHSS's Health and Safety Program commensurate with maintaining the Commissioner's commitment to safety.

Section 3 details the specific safety safe work practice responsibilities of all DHSS employees. Our employees are expected to familiarize themselves with these safety responsibilities.

Accident and incident investigation is a very important part of any safety program because all available information and circumstances leading up to an accident or dangerous situation must be systematically evaluated to prevent recurrences. Section 5 describes the requirements of an accident /incident investigation.

Safety and health inspections are outlined in Section 9. This area describes how we recognize and report hazards.

Section 10 describes our Hazard Communication Management Program and outlines how we communicate these hazards to our employees.

Appendix A contains general safety standards and policies that serve as guidelines employees can follow to ensure safe work practices.

2.2 Purpose and Expectations of Manual

The purpose of the Safety and Loss Prevention Manual is to provide:

1. A practical system of policies, procedures and practices for the prevention and elimination of:
 - (a) Injuries and health hazards; and
 - (b) Negative environmental impacts.
2. Sufficient information which will assist and enable all workers to work at minimal risk to themselves, fellow workers and the public.
3. Line management with reliable information to successfully accomplish their health and safety obligations and responsibilities.

4. A consistent approach to health and safety throughout the Department of Health and Social Services.

The expectations for the use of the Safety Plan are for employees to:

1. Provide opportunities to know the health, safety and injury prevention information contained within the plan;
2. Implement and comply with the health and safety practices and procedures;
3. Provide input and feedback to improve the manual on an ongoing basis.

3.0 Program Responsibilities

3.1 Personnel

A. Safety Officer

1. Administer the safety program for DHSS;
2. Deal directly with division directors and safety committee representatives on safety issues;
3. Help directors develop safety training programs for their divisions;
4. Review work-related injuries.
5. Investigate work-related fatalities and overnight hospitalization cases.

B. Central Safety Advisory Committee Members

1. Assist in informing DHSS divisional employees about new and ongoing safety policies.
2. Recommend new and revised safety rules and procedures for adoption by management.
3. Promote accident prevention and safe job performance in their work areas.
4. Evaluate and respond to employees' safety suggestions and problems.

C. Division Directors

With the assistance of the Safety Officer will:

1. Ensure that safety training is conducted for division employees.
2. Ensure that safety rules and procedures are carried out in their division.

3. Evaluate division managers' and supervisors' safety performance through regular performance evaluations.
4. Prepare an annual training plan (non-office employees).
5. Ensure that each location (with 10 or more employees) has an emergency action plan and that training is provided.
6. Ensure that all employees who come in contact with hazardous materials as part of their employment are:
 - (a) provided necessary tools, equipment, training and information concerning safe work practices; and
 - (b) comply with safety practices, procedures and regulations pertaining to hazardous materials.

D. Employees

1. Observe established safety policies and procedures.
2. Notify supervisor of any unsafe conditions they discover.
3. Use personal protective equipment where required.
4. Attend required training or orientation to increase safety awareness.
5. Promptly report all job-related injuries or illnesses to supervisor.
6. Complete required workers' compensation forms within 24 hours of any work-related injury or illness.
7. Familiarize themselves with the information in the safety plan and participate in site safety meetings.
8. Provide input and feedback on the safety plan.
9. Abide by all regulations relating to hazardous materials and participate in required training.

E. Director Designees/Site Supervisors

1. Enforce the safety rules and procedures of this plan and any others that apply to their work.
2. Ensure that safety training activities are carried out according to training plan designed by their division director.

3. Promptly investigate all accidents and ensure corrective action is taken to eliminate cause of accidents.
4. Perform annual safety inspection to identify workplace hazards or unsafe behavior and ensure corrective action is taken.
5. Respond to employees' safety concerns and problems.
6. Make sure all required accident forms are completed in a timely fashion.
7. Keep records of safety meetings.
8. Be responsible for ensuring that safety materials are presented, and be available to employees.
9. Discuss at safety meetings the following: unsafe acts or practices, recent injuries or near misses, first aid and emergency procedures, safety audits and pertinent scientific reports or findings.
10. Conduct safety orientation with all new employees before they begin work and get Safety Orientation Checklist Form signed.
11. Attend training on accident investigation, dealing with combative clients (if applicable) and hazard recognition skills.
12. Develop and record a lesson plan for each safety training session.
13. Maintain up-to-date records on health and safety training for each employee and retain for three years.
14. Complete General Safety Inspection Form at least annually.
15. Ensure the OSHA 300a Form is obtained from EEO Services, 240 Main Street, Juneau, AK ZIP, and that it is posted from February 1st through April 30th every year.
16. Ensure that safety plans are available and up to date.

4.0 Safety Training and Communications

4.1 Policy Standard

The objective of the safety training and communication element is to provide all employees with consistent safety information, education, instruction and training sufficient for them to develop the awareness to protect themselves and others from injury.

4.2 Distribution of DHSS Written Safety Plan

DHSS's written safety plan (i.e., safety manual) will be made available to every worksite location. This information will be kept in a location that is known and accessible to all workers.

4.3 DHSS Central Safety Advisory Committee

A Central Safety Advisory Committee will be established for the following purposes:

1. Promotion of accident prevention concepts to improve the department's overall safety performance;
2. Reviewing accidents/incidents and developing plans to prevent recurrence;
3. Presenting safety topics, literature, and/or videos which will enhance and maintain safety awareness;
4. Providing a forum for participation, feedback and teamwork;
5. Keeping current on safety issues;
6. Establishing and maintaining a uniform and consistent approach to the DHSS safety and loss prevention program.

4.4 Safety Meetings—General

The purpose of safety meetings is to acquaint employees with pertinent safety topics that relate to their work activities.

Safety meetings should be conducted within each division. Safety meetings provide an important communication link to each employee. Records of these meetings should be recorded on the DHSS Safety Meeting Lesson Plan.

Topics of discussion should pertain to safety items only. However, it would be reasonable for a supervisor to schedule the safety meeting before or after a regularly scheduled staff meeting.

4.5 Safety Meetings—Director Designee/ Site Supervisor

The division director will be responsible for ensuring that safety meetings are conducted for all non-office related employees and will give guidance to director designees/site supervisors as to which topics will be presented. The director designee will then be responsible for ensuring that the material is presented to employees. He/she shall:

1. Bring forward for discussion unsafe acts, practices or conditions that have been observed;
2. Review recent injuries and near miss incidents. Discuss why they happened and what can be done;
3. Encourage employee suggestions and discussion;
4. Review first aid and emergency procedures;
5. Use the results of safety audits as a source of discussion items;
6. Share contents of recent scientific report or findings that relate to employee safety;
7. Feel free to utilize written and audio visual aids. The Safety Officer in Juneau will collect and maintain a library of safety videos. These are intended to be loaned out to divisions per their needs. For more information call the Safety Officer at 465-4734.

4.6 New Employee Safety Orientation

All newly hired employees need to receive a general safety orientation before they begin work. This orientation includes a review of applicable safety rules, practices and procedures. During this review items discussed will be marked on the Safety Orientation Checklist form. An example of this form can be found in Appendix B. The employee will then sign the checklist and it will become part of his personnel file. The director designee/site supervisor will be responsible for conducting the orientation.

The general safety orientation is as follows:

1. Advise all personnel that working safely at all times is a condition of employment. It needs to be emphasized that DHSS is genuinely concerned about their safety.
2. Review all on-site physical layout as it pertains to emergency assembly and evacuations. A review of on-site physical layout includes the identification of the following:
 - (a) emergency site exits
 - (b) emergency assembly areas (for emergency evacuation head counts)

- (c) first aid facilities
 - (d) lunchrooms
 - (e) washrooms
 - (f) telephone locations
 - (g) interim storage areas
 - (h) roadway systems
 - (i) traffic logistics; and
 - (j) restricted areas
3. Advise employees where safety handbooks and manuals are kept.
 4. Explain accident/incident reporting procedures.
 5. Identify the steps which must be taken.
 - (a) Recognize potential hazards;
 - (b) Eliminate potential hazards;
 - (c) Control potential hazards; and
 - (d) Minimize exposure to hazards.
 6. The proper selection, care and use of protective equipment (if applicable).
 - (a) hard hats;
 - (b) safety glasses;
 - (c) safety footwear;
 - (d) eye protection/face shields;
 - (e) respiratory protection;
 - (f) hearing protection;
 - (g) gloves; and
 - (h) protective vests.
 7. The location of fire extinguishers and hoses.
 8. Reviewing the maintenance of tools, equipment and vehicles.
 9. Housekeeping standards for work areas.
 10. A review and demonstration of manual lifting procedures — Bend your knees!!
 11. A review of special mechanical lifting procedures (if applicable).
 12. A review of DHSS's Hazardous Communications Program and employees' right to know about hazardous substances to which they may be exposed.
 13. Instructions for emergency response situations.
 14. Specific instructions or procedures for dealing with combative clients (if applicable).

4.7 Training (Non-Office Workers)

4.7.1 Director Designee/Site Supervisor

Director designees/ site supervisors are the key players in a successful safety program. They must promote the program directly to their employees. To accomplish this, the following training may be made available to them.

1. Accident Investigation Skills
2. Dealing with Combative Clients, (if applicable)
3. Hazards Recognition Skills

4.7.2 Employee

Safe work performance is a condition of employment within DHSS. Training requirements for non-office related employees will be determined and identified by division directors. The content of the training will address the specific hazards or needs relating to the employee's worksite. Director designees/site supervisors are responsible for presenting the material to their non-office designated employees

4.7.3 Training Lesson Plans

Careful planning and organization is required to present effective safety training. In order to fulfill DOL-OSHA expectations for training, a lesson plan will be developed for each training session. The DHSS Safety Meeting Lesson Plan form can be used for recording lesson plans. An example of this form can be found in Appendix B. Examples of completed lesson plans for topics such as back safety, slips and falls and video terminal ergonomics can be obtained by calling the Safety Officer.

A lesson plan should serve as a blueprint for training. A good lesson plan incorporates the following:

1. Presents material in proper order.
2. Emphasizes material in relation to its importance.
3. Keep classes focused and on schedule.
4. Encourages trainee participation.
5. Complies with OSHA expectations for safety training.

4.7.5 Defensive Drivers Training

A sizable percentage of DHSS employees must operate either state owned, leased, rented or personally owned vehicles to conduct state business. Considering the volume of this activity along with the frequent adverse weather conditions found in Alaska, it is important that the department help upgrade the basic level of competence. Defensive drivers training is intended to give employees the knowledge and tools to be better drivers. The areas covered in this training include:

1. Developing defensive driving skills;
2. Split-second decision making;
3. Backing-up;
4. Keeping safe distances;
5. Staying alert at intersections;
6. Driving in poor weather conditions.

Division Directors are encouraged to provide within their training budget an opportunity for employees who must drive frequently on state business to attend a defense driving class.

4.7.6 Training Records Retention

Up-to-date records must be kept of all health and safety training, including orientations for each employee. Training records must be retained for a minimum of three years. They should be readily available for review.

4.8 Safety Bulletin Boards

A safety bulletin board will be displayed in each DHSS facility that has 10 or more employees to provide employees with a centralized location for the posting of safety related information.

The following considerations should be made for bulletin boards:

1. Designate a specific bulletin board or portion of an existing board and reserved exclusively for safety material.
2. Place in a spot where there is the greatest employee exposure (lunchroom, break room, central part of facility);
3. Postings are arranged neatly;
4. Remove Posters, safety committee minutes and other information that is outdated;

Director designees/site supervisors will be responsible for the upkeep of bulletin boards.

The following items are to be posted:

1. OSHA 300a Summary (specifically during the period February 1st through April 31st);
2. OSHA 2003 Poster (Safety and Health Protection on the Job);
3. OSHA "It's Your Right to Know" Poster;
4. Emergency Telephone Numbers 8"x11".

5.0 Accident and Incident Investigation and Reporting

When an employee is injured on the job the employee is to complete the DOL Report of Occupational Injury and Illness form (ROI) (07-6101) and give it to his or her supervisor who in turn will forward it to:

ROI@admin.state.ak.us by email

Or

Fax to:

Employee Services
Division of Personnel
(907) 465-5850

The original form should be sent to:

Employee Services
Division of Personnel
240 Main Street, Suite 501
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Employee's supervisor is required to complete the Supervisor's Accident Investigation Report form and send it accompanying the ROI.

These two forms may be downloaded from the Department of Administration Risk Management Web page. (See Forms) at Web site as follows:

<http://www.state.ak.us/local/akpages/ADMIN/drm/riskinfo.html#forms>

5.1 Objective and Definitions

The objective of an accident/incident investigation is to determine the cause and to implement suitable corrective measures.

An investigation is a systematic process of examination, observation, and inquiry comprised of three parts including:

1. Description of accident/incident;
2. Cause of accident/incident (Why did it occur?);
3. Recommendations.

After the cause of accident/incident has been determined, recommendations to prevent recurrence should be prepared.

Below are key definitions relating to accidents and injuries:

1. Recordable Injury

- Any accident to an employee(s) that results in death or injury
- Any accident that results in a loss of consciousness, restriction of work or motion, transfer to another job, or medical treatment other than first aid

2. First aid Injury

- Is an accident to employee that results in one time treatment of minor cuts, scratches, bums, etc., which do not ordinarily require medical care
- Subsequent observation of said injuries.

3. Occupational Illness

- Is any abnormal condition or disorder caused by exposure to environmental factors that is associated with employment.
- Caused by inhalation, absorption, ingestion, or direct contact.

4. Exposure incident

- Is a specific eye, mouth, other mucous membrane, non-intact skin, or contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials that result from the performance of an employee's duties.

5.2 Accident Incident Investigation Procedures

5.2.1 Death or Overnight Hospitalization

Accidents involving the death or overnight hospitalization of a DHSS employee must be taken with extreme concern. It is the supervisor's responsibility to investigate and document all the circumstances related to employee accidents and take constructive action to prevent recurrences.

Immediately following an accident the supervisor must:

1. Complete the DOL Report of Occupational Injury and Illness form (ROI) (07-6101) and email it to: ROI@admin.state.ak.us

or

Employee Services
Division of Personnel
Fax: (907) 465-5850

Original form should be sent to:

Employee Services
Division of Personnel
240 Main Street, Suite 501
Juneau, Alaska 99811

It will also be necessary for the supervisor to complete the Supervisor's Accident Investigation Report form and send it accompanying the ROI.

8. The Alaska Occupational Safety and Health Administration Statute 18.60.058(a) states that in the event of an employment accident, which is fatal to one or more employees or results in the overnight hospitalization of one or more employees, the employer must report the accident to the Division of Labor Standards and Safety no later than 8 hours after receipt of information that the accident occurred.

In order to comply with Section 18.60.058 and avoid serious penalties, it is critical that death and overnight hospitalization cases be reported to the *Alaska Department of Labor 907 (269-4940)* immediately. This reporting requirement also applies to injuries where there has been a loss of consciousness. These accidents must also be reported to the DHSS Safety Officer.

5.2.2 Recordable and First Aid Cases

The Supervisor must:

1. Investigate the accident by talking with the injured employee and anyone else who may be able to offer information. If possible, go with the employee to the exact area where the injury occurred and ask him/her to describe how it happened. The questions, who, what, when, where, why and how can be used to establish baseline information. Ask more pointed questions that can help uncover the real causes of the incident. Once causation has been determined, look at ways the accident could have been prevented. Be willing to modify physical work locations, job procedures, protective equipment requirements or anything else that can help prevent recurrence.

2. Complete the DOL Report of Occupational Injury and Illness form (02-921) and distribute. It will also be necessary to complete the Supervisor's Accident Investigation Report form (02-932) and distribute. A copy of the Supervisors Accident Investigation form should be forwarded to the Safety Officer in Juneau.

6.0 Blood-borne Pathogens

6.1 Introduction

Blood or certain other body fluids may contain pathogenic agents, that is, microorganisms that cause disease. Among those pathogens that may be present are Hepatitis B and C viruses (HBV or HCV) or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which causes AIDS. If an individual has blood exposure to broken or injured skin, mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, mouth, or by needle stick or other injection, there is the potential of infection with any possible pathogen that might be present. To minimize the risk of infection, information and training must be provided to those who will likely be exposed; Hepatitis B vaccination is offered; protective measures in the work environment are instituted; and exposures are reported to ensure that proper medical evaluation and treatment can be provided. It is especially important that employees with potential exposure understand and follow the principle of "Universal Precautions" as required in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration standard. "Universal Precautions" is the infection control approach in which all blood and body fluids are treated as if they are infected and the necessary precautions are taken.

6.2 Scope and Application

State OSHA standards require a Blood-borne Pathogens Program for employees with job responsibilities which "reasonably expose" them to blood and certain other body fluids, unfixed human tissue or cell cultures. This program is intended to prevent infection with blood-borne pathogens. Under DHSS policy, the Blood-borne Pathogens Program applies to all individuals who may be exposed through department activities.

6.3 Program Description

6.4 Exposure Control Plan

Each department develops a written Exposure Control Plan indicating those job classifications and the tasks and procedures which involve potential exposure. The plan also includes an indication of the required engineering and work practice controls, personal protective equipment, housekeeping, labeling, training, and medical surveillance functions that will be instituted.

A. Training

Training must be provided initially at the time workers are assigned tasks involving exposure and annually thereafter. This training is provided by each division as needed with the support of the DHSS Safety Officer. Training content will include:

1. Material appropriate in content and vocabulary to the educational level, literacy and language of the staff
2. A copy of the regulatory text of 29 CFR 1910.1030 and an explanation of its contents
3. A general explanation of the epidemiology and symptoms of blood-borne diseases
4. An explanation of the modes of transmission of blood-borne pathogens
5. An explanation of the Exposure Control Plan and the means by which the staff can obtain a copy
6. An explanation of the appropriate methods for recognizing tasks and other activities that may involve exposure to blood and other potentially infectious material
7. 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
8. Information on the types, proper use, location, removal, handling, decontamination and disposal of personal protective equipment
9. An explanation of the basis for selection of personal protective equipment
10. Information on the Hepatitis B vaccine including information on its efficacy, safety, method of administration, benefits of being vaccinated, and that the vaccine and vaccination will be offered free of charge
11. Information on the appropriate actions to take and persons to contact in an emergency involving blood or other potentially infectious material
12. 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 must be made available
13. Information on the post-exposure evaluation and follow-up that will be provided
14. An explanation of the signs and labels and/or color coding required
15. An opportunity for interactive questions and answers with the person conducting the training

It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that workers complete initial and annual training.

B. Medical Surveillance

Those who are potentially exposed to blood-borne pathogens are offered the Hepatitis B vaccination at no cost to the individual. Although this vaccination is strongly recommended, an individual can choose not to accept it and sign a declination statement. Each division will make available a medical service provider who will administer the vaccination series and provide any necessary medical follow-up as a result of exposures at no cost to the employee.

6.5 Roles and Responsibilities

A. Department Manager

- Identify individuals at risk of exposure
- Develop a written departmental Exposure Control Plan as described above
- Review the plan on an annual basis or as exposure conditions change
- Ensure that employees complete the required initial and annual training
- Provide personal protective equipment and engineering controls to eliminate or reduce exposure
- Maintain current written Exposure Control Plan

B. Supervisor

- Ensure that those exposed complete the required training
- Ensure that those exposed have available and use the appropriate personal protective equipment and that "Universal Precautions" are followed
- Conduct or arrange for initial and annual training

C. Safety Officer

Provide assistance in meeting OSHA standard requirements and audit department programs periodically.

D. Individual

Complete the provided training and understand the risk associated with the job.

Consider seriously the offer of Hepatitis B vaccination.

Follow the appropriate practices and procedures established for the work environment to limit or prevent exposures, and adopt the principle of "Universal Precautions." Report any exposures to supervisory personnel and undertake the necessary medical review and treatment.

If you have questions relating to blood-borne pathogens please refer to your site specific Blood-borne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan at your facility.

