NJEA School Health and Safety Checklist

Comprehensive Walk-through

Every school employee and student has the right to a safe and healthy learning environment. Use this checklist to evaluate overall health and safety in your school.

School: _____

Date: _____ Conducted by: _____

Circle item if attention is needed. Note locations of problems.

Health and Safety Procedures

- District commitment to prevention and control of school hazards, including staff and student training
- Procedures to respond quickly and fairly to questions, concerns, complaints, incidents or reports of illnesses or injuries
- Joint labor-management health and safety committee
- Public Employee Occupational Safety and Health (PEOSH) poster displayed; PEOSH injury and illness records maintained

Ventilation and Temperature

- Ventilation on, air flowing
- Interior air vents open, clean, clear of boxes, books, papers, furniture and other obstructions
- Exterior air vents open, clean, clear of debris; no contamination with pesticides or herbicides
- Filters fit properly, changed regularly, drain pans cleaned, other maintenance performed
- Windows, window shades operable
- No recirculation of air from kitchen, cafeteria, gyms, locker rooms
- Temperature 69 to 78 degrees Fahrenheit
- An individual responsible for compliance with the PEOSH Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Standard has been designated by the district

Toxic Materials

- Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), describing toxic properties of all chemically-based products, are available for review
- Toxic markers, art materials replaced with least toxic and least odorous
- Personal Protective Equipment (goggles, gloves, aprons) available in variety of sizes
- Additional local exhaust ventilation in place where chemicals are used – shops, labs, darkrooms, art rooms, print shops, duplication areas
- Visual inspection shows no peeling or flaking lead paint, or damaged asbestos

- Tests show no radon hazard
- Written Hazard Communication ("right to know") plan and training in place
- Written Chemical Hygiene Plan in place for laboratories
- Treated wood in playgrounds sealed to prevent leeching pesticides

Biohazards

- Fish tanks, animal cages clean, located away from air vents
- Bird and animal droppings cleaned up promptly and safely
- Hepatitis B vaccinations given to those possibly exposed to blood or other potentially infectious materials
- Written bloodborne pathogens employee exposure control plan in place, practiced

Mold and Moisture

- Roof free of debris and standing water
- Roof and plumbing leaks repaired
- Downspouts drain away from building; ground sloped so rain runs away from building
- Water intrusion through foundation, walls corrected
- Water-damaged carpet, ceiling tiles, books, and furniture discarded
- No damp, musty smell

Housekeeping

- Building is clean; regular cleaning schedule
- Barrier walk-off mats at all outside doorways, vacuumed daily
- Least toxic cleaning materials, floor strippers, finishes
- High-efficiency vacuum cleaners or bags used; changed regularly

Pest Control

- Written Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Policy in place and practiced
- No routine use of pesticides or herbicides
- No food scraps, dirty lunch boxes left overnight
- Trash cans large enough, placed everywhere needed
- Baseboards intact without gaps; no structural gaps; no broken windows
- No signs of insect, animal, or bird infestation
- Playing fields and grounds maintained without herbicides
- Staff, students, parents prenotified of any pesticide, herbicide applications

Sanitation

- Sinks, fountains, toilets in working order, no leaks, drain quickly
- Soap, paper towels, toilet paper, warm water available at all times
- Drain traps filled with water monthly to prevent sewer gas entry
- Bathrooms have operating exhaust fan

Electrical Safety

- Refrigerators, microwaves, water coolers, computers, printers, copiers, portable tools have three-prong grounded plug and grounded receptacle
- Extension cords are heavy-duty type, do not run under rugs, carpeting

Lighting

- Fixtures intact, working
- Blinking fluorescent tubes replaced

Emergency Preparedness

- Written emergency response plan in place and practiced quarterly
- Fire exits marked, not blocked, provided with emergency lighting
- Fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, sprinkler systems inspected, maintained
- Proper storage of combustible and flammable materials

Safety

- Railings, shelving, blackboards securely fastened
- Steps have no-skid surfaces
- Loose carpeting, tiles, and floor boards repaired
- Guards on dangerous machinery

NJEA School Health and Safety Checklist

Mold Walk-through

Mold thrives where water and moisture are present. Mold can be visible or hidden. Certain factors raise the risk of mold growth. Use this checklist to evaluate mold in your school.

School: _____

Date: _____ Conducted by: _____

Circle item if attention is needed. Note locations of problems.

Sources of Water and Moisture

- High outdoor humidity (5 months a year in New Jersey)
- Roof leaks
- Plumbing leaks
- Overflowed toilets
- Overflow water fountains
- Shower rooms
- Swimming pools
- Carpet cleaning
- Foundation leaks
- Standing water around foundation
- Walls leaks
- Window leaks
- Condensation on cold pipes
- Spills

Presence of Risk Factors

- Carpet cleaning before period of closure
- No ventilation during period of closure
- Variable Air Volume (VAV) ventilation system that provides ventilation only when temperature is out of range
- No air conditioning
- Flat roof
- Standing water on roof

- Downspouts that do not direct water away from building
- Grading around foundation that does not direct water away from building
- High water table
- Underground streams
- Damp basement
- Damp slab
- Insulation inside ventilation ductwork
- Pipe insulation that lacks a nonporous vapor barrier
- Carpeting, curtains, upholstered furniture, other porous surfaces
- Cellulose ceiling tiles
- Bowed ceiling tiles

Dampness, Water Stains, Discoloration

- Ceilings
- Ceiling tiles (bowing indicates dampness)
- Walls (bubbling paint, peeling wallpaper)
- Window sills
- Wood floors
- Tile floors
- Carpeting

Odors

- Damp
- Earthy
- Musty
- Moldy

Visible Mold

- Ceilings
- Ceiling tiles
- Walls
- Window sills
- Wood floors
- Tile floors
- Carpeting

Hidden Mold

- Behind walls
- Above ceilings
- Carpet backing, padding
- Undersides of desks
- In books and papers
- In files, file cabinets
- Inside ventilation ductwork, mixing chambers, drip pans, on filters
- In mechanical room
- In basement
- On roof
- Under sinks
- In window wells
- In crawl spaces

NJEA School Health and Safety Checklist

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Walk-through

The IAQ walk-through should include both an exterior and interior inspection. Use this checklist to look for the five essential criteria of good IAQ: dryness, cleanliness, comfortable temperature, pollutant control, and adequate ventilation.

School: _____

Date: _____ Conducted by: _____

Circle item if attention is needed. Note locations of problems.

Dryness

- Visible mold
- Damp, moldy, musty smell
- Wet ceilings, carpet, books, furniture
- Dripping pipes
- Condensation on cold pipes, ducts, surfaces
- Condition of roof; standing water
- Downspouts discharge away from building
- Landscaping slopes away from building
- Dampness in crawlspaces
- Exhaust ventilation in mold-prone areas such as swimming pools, showers, locker rooms, and kitchens
- Mold-friendly building materials like carpeting, acoustical ceiling tiles, or wallboard subject to water damage

Cleanliness

- Level of cleanliness
- Walk-off mats at all entryways
- High-efficiency vacuum cleaners; bags changed regularly
- Wet or static dusting and mopping instead of dry
- Signs of insect, animal, or bird infestation

Comfortable temperature

- Type, age, condition of heating systems
- Type, age, condition of air conditioning systems
- If present, can radiators be controlled
- Thermostats read 68 to 78 degrees Fahrenheit
- Staff temperature logs
- Window shades

Pollutant control

- Chemical smells
- Least toxic pest control
- Least toxic cleaning chemicals
- Excessive lab chemicals
- Disturbed asbestos, fiberglass, lead paint
- Toxic construction products (paints, coatings, adhesives, carpeting, roofing materials)
- Sewer gas traps filled with water
- Pollution sources near outdoor air intakes
- Vehicles on school grounds

Adequate ventilation

- Air flowing from supply vents
- Air flowing into return vents
- Blockage of vents
- Windows operable
- Air flow from clean to dirty (kitchen, cafeteria, gyms, locker rooms) areas

NJEA School Health and Safety Checklist

Construction and Renovation

Construction, demolition, and renovation work is disruptive, dusty, noisy, smelly, and potentially dangerous. And learning and construction do not co-exist comfortably. Use this checklist to evaluate construction and renovation safety and health issues in your school.

School: _____

Date: _____ Conducted by: _____

Circle item if attention is needed. Note locations of problems.

Information Flow

To get a full picture of construction and renovation activities, you should ...

- Identify the players: Schools Development Authority (SDA) Regional Director and Project Officers, Project Management Firm (PMF), General Contractor (GC), subcontractors, and those in district responsible for managing construction
- Obtain plans for free-standing new schools, new additions, and rehabilitations/renovations of existing schools
- Obtain timetables for the beginning, end, and major steps in each project
- Request an initial meeting with all parties before projects begin, followed by update meetings

Resolving Complaints

Negotiate with school administration for:

- A formal procedure to notify staff, parents, and students about how and where to report problems
- Adoption of a complaint form
- Designation of district staff to receive complaints
- An up-to-date complaint log, with dates, investigation records, and outcomes
- Investigation of complaints promptly with an onsite inspection and by talking with staff
- Documentation of findings and recommendations

Construction In, Students and Staff Out

- Request that potentially dangerous projects be scheduled when school is not in session

Quality Temporary Space

Temporary "swing" space to house staff and students — whether in a school, commercial building, or Temporary Classroom Unit (TCUs, which are buildings pre-manufactured in factories) — should:

- Be free of asbestos, lead, mold, bird or animal droppings, formaldehyde or other toxic substances.
- Feature a mechanical heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC) system that provides 15 cfm of fresh air per person and maintains temperatures in the range of 69 to 78 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Be located as far from construction activities as possible to safeguard children and staff who suffer from asthma, allergies, or other special health concerns.

Isolate Hazardous Work

- There should be fencing or other secure physical barriers between construction areas and areas used by the school population.
- Open gates should be guarded.
- Construction areas should be well-marked with signs and color-coding.
- A specific stairwell and/or elevator should be assigned for construction workers to use.
- No construction traffic should be allowed during arrival and dismissal.
- Tools and machinery should be secured when not in use.

Asbestos, Lead and Other Hazardous Substances

- Asbestos, lead, mold, bird/animal droppings, and other hazardous substances should be identified and removed from buildings undergoing renovations before they are disturbed.
- Removal should be isolated so no dust can escape.
- State and federal regulations for removal and re-entry should be complied with for lead and asbestos and guidelines followed for mold and bird/animal droppings.

Dust Control

- All dusty work should be performed either by wetting or with local exhaust ventilation that captures dust at the point where it is produced.
- All dusty work should be isolated with floor to ceiling plastic sheeting and dust and debris confined to those areas.
- Central ventilation systems should be shut down and vents covered to prevent spreading dust.
- All dust should be thoroughly cleaned up using vacuuming and wet moping/wiping before staff and students reoccupy any area.

Toxic Vapors and Gases

- Use least toxic paint, varnish, thinners, caulk, sealants, carpet, carpet adhesive, furnishings, and partitions specified and used.
- Store liquids outdoors.
- Clean spills immediately.
- Avoid use of combustion equipment indoors.
- Manufactures' Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) – providing information about chemicals used in products, as well as health effects and safety information – should be maintained at the site and available for review and copying.
- New materials that may give off toxic gases should be "aired out" before installation.

Fires and Emergencies

- Proper operation of fire alarms, extinguishers, and smoke/fire detection equipment should be ensured during construction.
- Review emergency plans to address construction-related emergencies such as fire, explosion, structural collapse, spill or other unplanned chemical release, or serious injury or illness.
- Drills should be held to familiarize staff and students with any temporary exits and revised emergency procedures.

Preoccupancy and Occupancy

- Newly renovated/constructed areas should be "flushed-out" for 14 days before occupancy and the outdoor air supply increased for the initial 60 days of occupancy to minimize harmful vapors.
- Engineers should test building performance before occupancy to ensure that the building is constructed well and performs as designed.
- Each ventilation system should be tested, balanced, and verified for each mode of operation.
- Staff and parents should have the opportunity for a walk-through inspection to confirm that new and renovated areas are clean, odor-free, and that ventilation, heating and cooling, plumbing, lighting, electrical, security, and fire protection systems are all working properly.
- Be alert to problems that may occur in the first several months of occupancy.