

SECTION II

HEALTH & SAFETY PLAN

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Rockingham Planning Commission is committed to the task of maintaining a healthy and safe workplace and making safety everyone's business. The agency expects each representative to share in this commitment. Supervisors shall be responsible for addressing specific safety matters that pertain to tasks and assignments under their control and, likewise, it is the responsibility of all representatives to report any injuries or unsafe situations to their supervisors or Committee Representative.

*** State Filing Procedures:

- a) A summary form available through the labor department or insurance carrier shall be filed biennially on January 1.

HEALTH & SAFETY PLAN

PREFACE/AGENCY DESCRIPTION

The Rockingham Planning Commission is one of nine regional planning commissions in New Hampshire established by RSA 36:45. Operating as a non-profit, local organization, the Commission serves in an advisory role to local governments in order to promote coordinated planning, orderly growth, efficient land use, and environmental protection. The Commission's professional planning staff provides an array of planning assistance to 27 communities which are active members.

The Commission consists of an appointed, volunteer board of directors (Commissioners), and a paid professional staff. Each member municipality appoints at least two representatives to the Board. The Commissioners meet monthly to adopt and oversee the annual work program and budget, to establish Commission policies on a variety of land use and planning issues important in the region, and to discuss current planning topics.

ARTICLE I Health and Safety Plan Initiatives

The Rockingham Planning Commission, in compliance with the 1994 Workers' Compensation Law, has prepared the following Health and Safety Program. This program is designed to promote a safe work environment and give guidelines for safety measures. Staff at the RPC has created a Joint Loss Management Committee whose primary function is to identify potential health and safety hazards in the workplace, create solutions to these hazards, and clearly specify emergency first aid and response procedures. This Committee is also charged with training personnel when new equipment or significant physical changes occur in the workplace. The Committee will also establish procedures to assure compliance with safety and health standards by subcontractors.

A. Joint Loss Management Committee

Employers with five or more employees are required to establish a "Joint Loss Management Committee" (JLMC) at each of the employer's primary places of employment. This Committee shall consist of at least two representatives, selected by employees and representatives of the major work activities of the employers. Any employee participating in committee activity must be paid his or her regular rate of pay for all time spent on such activities. Committee members will be cognizant of workplace hazard identification and accident/incident identification.

The Committee shall consist of at least two (2) staff members, one being the employee representative, one employer representative. Staff is advised to direct any questions or concerns to the Joint Loss Management Committee. (See Membership List below)

Membership List

Joint Loss Membership Committee

Employer Representatives

Glenn Greenwood, Assistant Director
Annette Pettengill, Business Manager/Chairman JLMC

Employee Representatives
Vacant
Roxanne Rines, Office Administrator

1. *Duties and Responsibilities of JLMC*

The JLMC shall meet on an “as needed” basis or at least once annually. Minutes shall be taken and made available to all employees and be on file in the Personnel Policies. A Chairperson shall be elected and a formal review of workplace accidents, injuries and health data shall be the main focus.

Minutes and biennial Summary Forms shall be made available for staff and Board of Commissioners. The JLMC shall establish specific safety programs as presented below.

B. Identification of Significant Hazards Present

Although the RPC is not a manufacturing plant or warehouse facility with the opportunity for obvious employee safety hazards, a business office is often home for other types of hazards, such as the following:

1. *Physical Hazards*

a) Computers & Keyboards (Office Equipment)

Due to the intense use of computers and keyboards in an office situation, great care has been taken to ensure comfortable and safe use of these items. Carpel tunnel syndrome is one potential hazard, along with eyestrain. Management has and will continue to take positive steps to assure that all office furniture, such as computer tables, and chairs, be of the correct height, placement, and quality to assure fewer injuries from prolonged computer work. Staff will receive informational pamphlets on ergonomics in the workplace and wristpads have been distributed for all keyboard users. Sufficient lighting and glare reduction shall also be considerations.

b) Posture & Ergonomics

Staff has been instructed on ways to relieve physical stress and muscle aches from prolonged equipment use. They have been told to leave their workspace occasionally, to stretch, and move around, in order to benefit muscles and posture and to improve circulation.

The office health care coverage (Harvard Pilgrim) contains programs to initiate lifestyle change through health screenings, health education programs, fitness challenges, and weight management programs. All of which aid personnel in achieving a better lifestyle and physical being. RPC staff has been informed and encouraged to participate in these programs at any time on an individual or group level. These programs have been proven to reduce back injuries and other work related disabilities, reduce absenteeism rates, improve employee morale and productivity, and decrease medical and worker’s compensation costs.

c) **Traffic Counting & Road Inventory Programs**

The use of traffic counting devices can place staff at considerable risk during the placement of the devices on roadways and highways. Precautionary safety steps are to be implemented at each site. Yellow and orange warning/slow signs and flags are to be placed well ahead of the counter location. All staff are required to wear bright safety vests for clear visibility by drivers, and to use extreme caution and awareness when working in the middle of roadways. Every site location that involves high speed lanes shall be additionally supervised by local police in order to slow traffic. Officers shall be notified in advance and asked to respond at the appropriate time and place.

Weather conditions shall always be taken into consideration in order to promote good visibility and adequate stopping distance for drivers, thus reducing the chance of accidents. Traffic Counter Checklists are on file for each count site.

2. *Emotional Stress*

Project management workshops, and audio management training are constantly made available to staff. Project management guidelines have recently been implemented in the office to relieve stress in the workplace by prioritizing crucial projects, and managing conflicting demands. These guidelines reduce pressure and promote the mastering of multiple tasks with confidence, which in turn relieve stress. Managing stress cause by the multiple demands on the employee is a strong factor in productivity and emotional stability.

Seminar and workshops on all types of work topics aimed at improving office relations and skills are constantly offered and available to all staff at no personal cost. Interpersonal communication skills, stress management, and supervisory skills for mangers and supervisors, are just a few of the many workshops offered.

The office health care policy (Harvard Pilgrim) also covers community mental health centers, psychiatrist, psychologists, pastoral counselors, and public psychiatric hospitals.

3. *Automobiles & Travel*

Mandatory use of seatbelts is required whenever RPC staff is traveling to and from meetings or performing any other necessary travel during work hours. Also, automobile headlight use is mandatory whenever required by law or when weather conditions warrant such use.

ARTICLE II Health Policies Currently in Effect

A. Smoking Policy

The RPC is a smokefree office. No smoking is allowed in the building. No smoking signs are posted at various locations.

B. Drug Free Policy

The RPC has adopted a Drug Free Workplace Policy. A "Notice to Employees" is posted in conspicuous locations. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance in the workplace is prohibited. Any employee who violates this policy shall be subject to the following actions as mandated by the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988 and adopted by the RPC Personnel Policies:

1. Demolition of regular employment status to probationary status;
2. Mandatory enrollment in an approved drug counseling/rehabilitation program at employee expense;
3. Evaluation of employee upon the completion of said program;
4. Renewal of regular employment status after six months probation, provided there has been no re-occurrence of the drug related problem; and
5. Termination of employment if: a) the employee refuses to enter drug counseling/rehabilitation program stipulated in #2 above; and b) the employee violated the Commission drug policy again within the probationary period.

ARTICLE III Training and Corrective Actions

Necessary training shall be carried out by the employee representative on the Joint Loss Management Committee and shall be performed on an "as needed" basis. Flagrant disregard for any safety information or training that has been provided shall be dealt with by the disciplinary policy below.

The disciplinary policy regard to violations of the health and safety policies or infringement of the safety and welfare of other personnel includes three levels of action: oral and written warning, job suspension for violation, and job termination policy for safety violations. This is a uniform policy for all employees and management.

1. Oral/written reprimand (determined by Executive Director and/or Executive Committee) [cc: employee and personnel file]
2. Suspension (determined by Executive Director and/or Executive Committee)
3. Termination (determined by Executive Director and/or Executive Committee)

ARTICLE VI Emergency Response and First Aid Procedures

A. Fire Safety

The RPC is located on the second floor of the Citizens Bank building. Access to the first floor, street or basement is available by stairway and by elevator. All exits are clearly marked.

Fire extinguishers are located in the kitchen area, both main hallways, near the elevator and in the conference room. Training in the use of these extinguishers has been given by the Employee Representative of the JLMC. A fire alarm is located in the entrance stairwell and is tied in directly to the Exeter Fire Department. Heat and smoke detectors are located throughout the office. Emergency lighting and exit signs always provide illumination.

A fire escape route and meeting place outside the building has been discussed with staff. Upon exiting the building in an emergency, all staff shall meet in the parking lot behind the building, near the cement wall.

B. Accidental Injury

Exeter is part of the Enhanced Rescue 911 response service. Staff has been instructed to use 911 for any emergency that arises.

If and when an injury occurs, personnel are required by law to report promptly to the employers any occupational injury or disease, even if deemed to be minor (Form No. 8aWCA Notice of Accidental Injury or Occupational Disease). Staff are entitled to the services of a physician. Medical treatment is to be sought right away. All claims and physician's medical bills shall be submitted to the employer worker's compensation insurance carrier at the time.

C. First Aid

An extensive first aid kit is located in the main reception area of the office and contains, among other supplies cold packs, bandages and antiseptic.

D. Office Security & Closing

The following "office closing procedure" is posted in the lunch room: 1) turn off all printers, copies, coffee pot, and lights; 2) turn down the heat at both thermostats; 3) lock Center Street and Water Street doors; 4) bring elevator to second floor and press stop button. Due to the office location above a bank, there is the possibility that an emergency situation could occur. There may be times we would be directed by emergency personnel to follow very specific instructions.

ARTICLE V Subcontractor Compliance

In order to comply with safety and health standards, all subcontractors shall provide copies of unemployment and worker's compensation certificates of insurance. The RPC shall examine protective equipment and examine safety procedures, when applicable.

ARTICLE VI Distribution, Adherence and Review of Safety and Health Plan

Upon the JLMC and Executive Committee's review and acceptance of this Health and Safety Program each staff member will be supplied with a copy of said Plan. The Plan will also be located with the Personnel Policies and be included in the Commissioner Handbook. Each employee will be required to sign an agreement sheet acknowledging that they have read and understand these policies.

As JLMC meetings occur, minutes of said meetings will be distributed to staff and future training and reminder notices will be made available on an "as needed" basis. A current copy of this Plan shall always remain with the Personnel Policies for reference.