

Safety Newsletter

Merced County Schools Insurance Group

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Integrated Germ Management

The California Department of Pesticide Regulation has released a new online training that would satisfy the mandated training requirement for school employees using pesticides. This requirement is tied to SB 1405 which states all school IPM coordinators and any school employee who may apply a pesticide at a school or child care center, must take a training approved by the Department of Pesticide Regulation.

The DPR defines pesticides as chemicals designed to be harmful to a target pest and purposely introduced into the environment to do their job of managing insects, bacteria, weeds, rodents or other pests. Thus pesticides include, but is not limited to disinfecting wipes, surface sanitizers, and weed-killers. Employees and unlicensed individuals using pesticides at a school or child care center must take a training course each year.

The DPR recently released a training course for **Integrated Germ Management- DPR 104**. This course is made for those who use antimicrobial pesticides. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) antimicrobial pesticides are substances used to destroy or suppress the growth of harmful microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses, or fungi on objects and surfaces. The most popular kind of antimicrobial pesticides are disinfectants and sanitizers. Those taking the DPR 104 course would be employees who do not participate in traditional pest management such as teachers, school nurses, food services workers, and office staff. The course concentrates on defining the difference between cleaning and sanitizing, how to properly read the pesticide label, and best practices for using antimicrobial pesticides around children and students. To access the DPR 104 training, and other approved DPR courses go to <https://online2.cce.csus.edu/dpr/login/index.php>

General Housekeeping

Effective housekeeping can help control or eliminate workplace hazards. Housekeeping is more than just cleanliness, Housekeeping entails organizing your work area, keeping walkways clear and maintaining a floor free of debris and spills preventing slip and trip hazards. General housekeeping also includes having adequate storage to organize your tools and accessories along with inspecting the areas for hazard control.

Maintain housekeeping order in your work area by integrating housekeeping protocols as a part of your workday routine.

- **Clean up during the shift-** not leaving tools, materials, or spills to linger. Clean-up messes immediately and put away tools that are not being used. Put up signs to notify others of hazards such as Caution, Keep Out, and Wet Floor.
- **Waste disposal-** garbage/debris should be disposed of and not left behind. Plastic wrap, tape, or dust and other debris can be a slip or trip hazard.
- **Removal of unused materials-** try to only bring what will be used. Unused material can quickly clutter up the work area and walk-ways. If necessary, invest in bins to hold extra materials and equipment so that the materials are contained and not laying all over the floor.
- **Conduct inspections** throughout the day to ensure housekeeping is maintained and the work area is organized.



Preventing Eye Injuries

Eye injuries can happen anywhere and anytime on the job. You should always take eye injuries seriously. What might seem like a minor eye injury could potentially be serious enough to impact your vision. Three of the most common conditions of eye trauma are:

1. **Corneal abrasion** or a scratched cornea. The cornea can also get scratched when you rub your eyes to hard or wearing dirty contact lenses. Corneal abrasions are usually accompanied with red and irritated looking eyes that may be painful to open and close.
2. **Foreign object in the eye** could include embedded material such as dust, debris, or a chemical splashed/sprayed in the eye.
3. **A blow to the eye** occurs when direct contact with an object causes trauma to the eye. This can have many causes such as being struck by a flying object.

As with any injury, prevention is key. Donning the correct type of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) can help prevent eye injuries. Safety glasses, goggles, or a face shield should be worn when performing potentially hazardous work to help minimize and reduce the risk of an eye injury. Ensure your eye protection is suitable. The following

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minimum requirements must be met by all eye and face protective devices:

- Your eye and face protection must comply with the ANSI Z87.1-1989.
- Should be designed for the type of hazard.
- Be reasonably comfortable when worn under the designated conditions.
- Fit snugly and be durable.
- Easily cleaned and disinfected



Make Fall Safety a Top Priority

It may come as a surprise that the third leading cause of unintentional injury-related death is falls. In 2015, nearly 33,381 people died in falls at home and at work – and for working adults, depending on the industry, falls can be the leading cause of death.

In 2014, 660 workers died in falls from a higher level, and 49,210 were injured badly enough to require days off of work. A worker doesn't have to fall from a high level to suffer fatal injuries. While half of all fatal falls in 2014 occurred from 20 feet or lower, 12% were from less than 6 feet.

Construction workers are most at risk for fatal falls from height – more than seven times the rate of other industries – but falls can happen anywhere, even at a "desk job":

- Wholesale trade: 14,360 injuries, 30 deaths
- Retail trade: 29,530 injuries, 34 deaths
- Transportation and Warehousing: 23,780 injuries, 43 deaths
- Professional and business services: 23,140 injuries, 94 deaths
- Education and health services: 51,150 injuries, 21 deaths
- Government: 69,530 injuries, 41 deaths

Falls are 100% Preventable

Whether working from a ladder, roof or scaffolding, it's important to plan ahead, assess the risk and use the right equipment. First, determine if working from a height is absolutely necessary or if there is another way to do the task safely.

- Discuss the task with coworkers and determine what safety equipment is needed
- Make sure you are properly trained on how to use the equipment
- Scan the work area for potential hazards before starting the job and make sure you have level ground to set up the equipment
- If working outside, check the weather forecast; never work in inclement weather
- Use the correct tool for the job, and use it as intended
- Ensure stepladders have a locking device to hold the front and back open

- Always keep two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand on the ladder
- Place the ladder on a solid surface and never lean it against an unstable surface
- A straight or extension ladder should be 1 foot away from the surface it rests on for every 4 feet of height and extend at least 3 feet over the top edge. Securely fasten straight and extension ladders to an upper support
- Wear slip-resistant shoes and don't stand higher than the third rung from the top
- Don't lean or reach while on a ladder, and have someone support the bottom
- Never use old or damaged equipment; check thoroughly before use

Millions of people are treated in emergency rooms for fall-related injuries every year. A fall can end in death or disability in a split second, but with a few simple precautions, you'll be sure to stay safe at work.

Lifting - It's Really About Ergonomics

Ergonomic injuries are disorders of the soft tissue, specifically of the muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints, cartilage, blood vessels and spinal discs caused by:

- Excessive lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, reaching or stretching
- Repetitive motion
- Working in awkward positions
- Sitting or standing for prolonged period of time
- Using excessive force
- Vibration, resting on sharp corners or edges

Ergonomic injury is cumulative. Symptoms can include everything from posture problems and intermittent discomfort, to tendonitis, chronic pain and disability.

Overexertion can be Prevented

Regular exercise, stretching and strength training to maintain a strong core all are beneficial in preventing injury. Following are some additional tips for work and home:

- Plan a lift before you begin, keep your back straight and lift with your legs
- Limit the amount of time you spend doing the same motion over and over
- Take frequent breaks from any sustained position every 20-30 minutes
- If you work at a desk, move frequently used items close to you, use a footrest and adjust the height of your computer
- Report pain, swelling, numbness, tingling, tenderness, clicking or loss of strength to your doctor before it becomes a full-blown injury

