

New Hanover County Safety Handbook

Dear Fellow Employees,

The County is sincerely concerned with the safety and welfare of its employees and the public it serves. It acknowledges an obligation as an employer to provide the safest possible working condition for employees and a safe environment for the public that uses our services.

The primary purpose of this booklet is to acquaint you with the general safety rules and policies. It reflects the efforts of many people to establish reasonable, practical and safe work practices to prevent accidents. Our approach to accident prevention cannot be simple or basic; it is complicated by the wide variety in tasks performed and the differences in work environments.

We can and we must perform the tasks of government operations and public services without accidents. It is the responsibility of all County employees to contribute to that goal.

Sincerely,

Bruce Shell
County Manager

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
<hr/>	
I. County Safety Policy	4
II. Purpose and Objectives	5
III. Responsibilities.....	6
A: Safety Officer	6
B: Department Heads	7
C: Supervisors.....	8
D: Employees.....	9
IV. County Safety Committee.....	10
V. General Safety Rules	11
VI. Office Safety	12
VII. Housekeeping.....	13
VIII. Fire Safety	14
IX. Emergency Evacuation.....	15
X. Vehicle Safety	16
XI. Vehicle Accident Reporting.....	17
XII. Reporting Job-Related Injuries	18
XIII. Workplace Violence Statement	19
XIV. Drug-Free Workplace Statement	20

Policy

Employees of New Hanover County are the organization's most valuable resource, and for that reason, their health and safety are of paramount concern. New Hanover County's Safety Program is designed to comply with the Occupational Safety and Health Act of North Carolina and all other applicable Federal, State and Local laws and regulations. This program embodies a positive attitude toward safety and accident prevention on the part of all County employees and the Board of Commissioners. The program is designed to provide not only a safe physical working environment, but also an atmosphere of safety awareness through safety education, training and employee involvement. The participation and earnest cooperation of all employees of New Hanover County is actively encouraged.

PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

It is the policy of New Hanover County to establish for its employees a safe and healthful work environment. A safety program for all employees has been instituted to accomplish that goal.

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of the Safety Program are:

- A: To provide employees with the necessary instruction in safe work practices, procedures and behavior.
- B: To ensure compliance with all Federal, State and Local laws and regulations pertaining to safety.
- C: To promote accident prevention and safety programs.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS:

The general elements of the safety program are designed:

- A: To develop and promote an accident prevention plan.
- B: To implement a regular safety inspection program.
- C: To designate accountabilities for promoting, instructing, training and managing the safety program.

RESPONSIBILITIES

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY OFFICER

PURPOSE

The Director of Human Resources shall designate an Occupational Safety Officer who will establish, maintain and promote the County's Safety Program.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- A: Ensure that Federal, State, and Local laws, regulations, codes and ordinances are followed.
- B: Develop accident prevention methods, procedures and programs.
- C: Conduct investigations of accidents and hazardous conditions and make recommendations for corrective actions.
- D: Conduct inspections of all County facilities.
- E: Conduct or coordinate safety training.
- F: Assist in the formation and activities of safety committees.
- G: Assist in the maintenance of records and reports concerning safety issues.
- H: Establish and maintain all County safety policies and procedures.
- I: Maintain the County's Workers' Compensation Program in compliance with Federal and State laws.

DEPARTMENT HEADS

Department Heads shall be responsible for establishing a Safety Program within their department to promote safe and healthful working conditions and practices for employees under their supervision.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- A: Establish departmental safety guidelines.
- B: Ensure that safety procedures pertinent to their department's activities are developed and enforced.
- C: Ensure the department's representation on the County Safety Committee.
- D: Call upon the Safety Officer for needed assistance.

SUPERVISORS

Due to their constant contact with employees, supervisors must take a primary role in the prevention of accidents and the safety of employees under their supervision.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- A: Provide adequate job training and instructions for their employees.
- B: Provide continuing safety instructions while issuing daily work assignments.
- C: Observe and evaluate working conditions and procedures for unsafe conditions or practices and report or correct any found.
- D: Promptly investigate all accidents and complete required reports.
- E: Encourage employees to report all unsafe conditions and practices.
- F: Check and ensure that tools, equipment and protective devices are in place, properly maintained and used.
- G: Be familiar with and enforce all safety procedures and practices applicable to their work.

EMPLOYEES

All employees are responsible for exercising care and good judgment in preventing accidents. Employees shall adhere to and follow all safety rules and practices as set forth in this handbook.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- A: Employees shall become familiar with and observe established safe working procedures and practices for their work activities.
- B: Where prescribed by Departmental and/or OSHA guidelines, employees will properly wear and/or use all safety equipment.
- C: Immediately report all work related accidents and injuries to their supervisor.
- D: Report all unsafe conditions and practices to their supervisors.
- E: Employees may also report to the Safety Officer, either orally or in writing, circumstances where unsafe practices or conditions exists. Confidentiality of all reports is stressed.

COUNTY SAFETY COMMITTEE

The County Safety Committee shall consist of employees representing County departments. Committee members shall serve a one-year term and may be reappointed.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- A. Create and maintain a high level of interest in and awareness of safety among all employees.
- B. Develop safety policies and procedures for the County Employee Safety Handbook.
- C. Identify unsafe work practices and conditions and suggest appropriate remedies.
- D. Assist in the development and implementation of an effective safety-training program.
- E. Encourage feedback from all employees in every area of the County with regards to problems, ideas and solutions related to safety.
- F. Inform employees about new safety policies, training programs and other safety or safety-related matters

GENERAL SAFETY RULES

Unsafe conditions and procedures must be identified before they can be corrected. Consequently, every employee shall be responsible for immediately reporting unsafe conditions or procedures. Safety is an individual commitment to incorporate safe work practices into every area of job operations.

The following rules are established for all County employees:

- A: Report all job-related injuries, no matter how minor, to your immediate supervisor as soon as possible. Prompt reporting of accidents and injuries are required by Federal and State OSHA laws and Workers' Compensation regulations.
- B: If you are not sure of a task assigned to you, ask your supervisor for further instructions.
- C: Do not engage in horseplay or practical jokes on the job.
- D: Use the handrails on steps and other elevated areas.
- E: Always inspect tools and other equipment before use. Report defects to supervisor and other potential users. Do not use defective equipment or tools.
- F: Obey warning signs and tags. They are posted to point out hazards.
- G: Operate only the equipment and machinery you have been trained and/or authorized to use.
- H: Never operate equipment or machinery with guards missing or broken.
- I: Never reach over moving parts of equipment or machinery.
- J: Report to work in appropriate clothing suitable for the type of work you perform.
- K: Maintain good housekeeping practices in all work areas.
- L: Wear all protective equipment as required.
- M: Common sense is an invaluable tool, USE IT.

OFFICE SAFETY

Office environments are more hazardous than commonly assumed and many accidents occur during office routines.

The following suggestions are offered for office safety:

- A. Each employee shall be responsible for keeping his/her desk and /or work area clean and orderly. Good housekeeping is a key to office safety.
- B. Keep an eye open for loose or uneven floor coverings.
- C. Be cautious when approaching a door that can be pushed towards you. Take it easy when pushing a door open and slow down when approaching a blind corner.
- D. Haste when walking between desks can result in bruises and falls.
- E. Keep all electrical cords out of aisles and walkways.
- F. All file, desk and table drawers should be closed when not in use. Never open more than one drawer at a time.
- G. Never overload the top drawer of a file cabinet. If unfamiliar with the cabinet, test the drawers and be careful not to pull them out too far.
- H. Furniture such as tables, chairs and desks should be free of sharp corners, projecting edges and wobbly legs.
- I. Tilting chairs can be hazardous when improperly used. Learn the limits.
- J. Never use chairs, desks or other office furniture as a makeshift ladder.
- K. Keep your hands clear of equipment parts while they are moving.
- L. Check to see that electrical cords are in good condition. If a machine shocks you, unplug it and report it.
- M. Report any and all unsafe conditions to your supervisor immediately.

HOUSEKEEPING

Aside from the accident prevention benefits, good housekeeping contributes to efficient performance. When tools, equipment and materials are returned to the proper place after use, they are easier to find and inspect for damage and wear.

The following suggestions are offered for good housekeeping:

- A: Keep work areas and storage facilities clean, neat and orderly.
- B: All aisles, stairways, exits and access ways should be kept clear.
- C: Do not place supplies on top of lockers, boxes or other movable containers at a height not visible from the floor.
- D: When piling materials for storage, make sure the base is level and firm.
- E: Lay extension cords and hoses in such a way as to minimize tripping hazards or obstructions to traffic.
- F: Clean up spills immediately to avoid hazards. In the event of clean up delay, the area must be appropriately guarded, posted or roped off.
- G: Sharp or pointed objects should be stored to prevent persons from coming in contact with them.
- H: All packing material should be disposed of immediately.
- I: Wastebaskets should be emptied into approved containers.
- J: Oily or greasy rags should be placed in a metal container designed for that purpose only.
- K: Adequate lighting should be installed in obscure areas for the protection of both employees and the public.
- L: All switches or drives on machinery should be shut down, locked out and properly tagged before cleaning, oiling or repairing.
- M: Electrical panels and fuse boxes should be kept closed at all times and the surrounding area kept clear.

FIRE SAFETY

One of the most fearsome and damaging events that can occur in a work place is fire. Potential fire hazards exist in all work areas. Most fire can be prevented through orderly planning, good housekeeping and common sense.

The following suggestions are offered for fire protection:

- A: Fire extinguishing equipment shall be prominently displayed, labeled for usage and kept clear for easy access at all times.
- B: Know the location of extinguishers and how to use them.
- C: Do not use water type extinguishers on electrical fires due to the risk of electrocution.
- D: Keep flammable material a safe distance from heating vents, portable heaters and other sources of heat.
- E: Cleaning solvents shall be kept in U.L. listed containers if they are flammable.
- F: "NO SMOKING" shall be enforced in all areas where hazardous materials are stored or used and where smoking is prohibited.
- G: Exit doors shall not be blocked or locked so as to prevent exit from any County facility.

EMERGENCY EVACUATIONS

New Hanover County strives to provide its employees with a safe and healthful work environment. In an effort to do this, the County has put into place the following emergency evacuation procedure. This procedure is such that it may be used in any emergency which may require the emergency evacuation of a County facility.

- A. If the need to evacuate a building is without question, the person causing the evacuation shall announce audibly the cause for evacuation such as "Fire - Fire."
- B. The second step is to dial 9-911 to report the incident or immediately activate the building's fire alarm system. This will automatically notify the fire department and get help on the way. If you are in a building without an alarm system, dial 911 from a safe location.
- C. If the fire is small enough, attempt to extinguish it by use of an extinguisher.
- D. Doors and, if possible, windows should be closed as the last person leaves a room or area.
- E. The public in each area must be directed by staff to the proper exits.
- F. Upon evacuation from a building, all staff should proceed to a designated meeting area where head counts can be taken.
- G. Never re-enter a building without the permission of the fire department.

VEHICLE SAFETY

County vehicles are easily identified as such and thus constitute a traveling advertisement in the community. By demonstrating safe, courteous and considerate driving habits, we build good public relations. The principles of defensive driving should be practiced at all times.

The following vehicle safety procedures shall be established:

- A: All employees are responsible for safety checks of all County vehicles they are assigned to drive. The check shall include:
 - 1) lights
 - 2) horn
 - 3) turn signals
 - 4) brakes
 - 5) tires
 - 6) windshield wipers
- B: Report any unsafe condition to your supervisor before operating the vehicle.
- C: Position all adjustments for safe driving before putting the vehicle in gear such as the seats and inside/outside mirrors.
- D: Never take strong medication or other controlled substances before driving a vehicle.
- E: All individuals who DRIVE or RIDE in a County vehicle or a personal vehicle being used on County business shall wear the installed seat belt. Supervisors shall ensure that employees are utilizing seat belts.
- F: Stay within the posted speed limit. When conditions warrant, slow down.
- G: Signal intentions well in advance, including changes in lanes and actual changes in direction. Avoid sudden braking.
- H: Maintain an appropriate distance behind other vehicles to prevent tailgating accidents.
- I: Turn on low beam headlights during dark periods of the day such as rain storms and fog. Headlights should be "on" a half hour before sunset and a half hour after sunrise.

VEHICLE ACCIDENT REPORTING

In the event of an accident involving a County vehicle, the following procedures shall apply:

- A: Render first-aid, if qualified to do so, and arrange for medical help if necessary.
- B: Notify law enforcement officials immediately. Unless it is necessary for safety sake, the vehicle should not be moved until authorized by the investigating officer.
- C: Exchange names, driver's license numbers, vehicle description and tag number with the other person(s) involved. Obtain names and addresses of any witnesses to the accident.
- D: Offer no information regarding the responsibilities for the accident or what should have been done to avoid it.
- E: The driver of the County vehicle shall report the accident to their supervisor as soon as possible.
- F: In cases where privately owned vehicles being used on County business is involved in an accident, the Safety Officer shall be notified.

REPORTING JOB-RELATED INJURIES

The reporting of an on-the-job-injury and the completion of required forms are mandated by Federal, State and Workers' Compensation laws. The following guidelines establish the procedure to follow in the event of job-related injuries.

- A: Employees are to notify their supervisors as soon as possible in the event of a job-related injury.
- B: Once a supervisor is made aware that an injury has occurred, it shall be the supervisor's responsibility to complete an Industrial Commission Form 19 within two working days and forward it to the Safety Officer in the Human Resources Department. It is recommended that a form 19 also be completed for needle stick injuries to medical personnel. Any untyped or incomplete Form 19 submitted will be returned to the supervisor for completion.
- C: When an employee is injured and is unable to report for their next scheduled work day, the supervisor will contact the Safety Officer in Human Resources and advise him/her of the injured employees inability to work.
- D: All medical bills or physician statements received by the employee concerning medical treatment, prognosis, or the ability to return to work shall be given to the supervisor as soon as possible. The supervisor shall forward all information to the Safety Officer for processing.
- E: All fatalities shall be reported to the Safety Officer in Human Resources immediately.
- F: If you have any questions concerning how, why or when to report an on-the-job injury, contact the Safety Officer.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM

POLICY STATEMENT

New Hanover County recognizes the need for a violence-free environment for all employees and the public visiting its facilities. New Hanover County will not tolerate violence in the workplace and will make every effort to prevent violent incidents from occurring.

New Hanover County requires prompt and accurate reporting of all violent incidents, including verbal or physical threats as well as intimidation such as sexual harassment or abusive language. New Hanover County will not discriminate against victims of workplace violence.

ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE IN THE WORKPLACE

It is New Hanover County's desire to protect its employees and the public by maintaining a healthy and safe work environment. The County is committed to developing and administering a fair and consistent policy to promote and maintain a drug and alcohol free work environment, as required under the Drug -Free Workplace Act.

This policy delineates the County's position with regards to the presence of drugs and alcohol in the workplace and the influence of these substances on employees during working hours and on applicants seeking employment. It is designed to prohibit the use of drugs and alcohol by employees while at work and during times which result in impairment during work hours.

The presence of drugs and alcohol in the workplace and the influence of these substances on employees during working hours are grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

A more in-depth explanation of the County's policy regarding drugs and alcohol abuse can be found in the County's Personnel Policy Manual under Article IV, Section 11.