

# GENERAL SAFETY

## Introduction

The following sections provide general safety guidelines and procedures.

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## **Accident Reporting**

An accident is an unplanned occurrence that may result in damage to people, property, equipment, or the environment. When accidents are reported promptly, injured employees, students, and visitors receive timely medical care and unsafe conditions receive prompt corrective action. RMC investigates accidents to identify accident trends, determine the effectiveness of current safety programs, and prevent future accidents.

***IMPORTANT:***

*Report all accidents to your supervisor, the Department of Risk Management & Compliance (RMC) or the University Police Department, as appropriate.*

### **ACCIDENT/INJURY REPORTING PROCEDURE**

#### **I. Tarleton State University Employees**

Complete "Report of Accident/Illness" form and send original to RMC.

#### **II. Tarleton State University Students**

Complete the Tarleton State University Student Services "Accident Report". Send the original to Student Services and a copy to RMC

(See Attachment 2).

***EXAMPLE:***

*Report hazards, such as missing manhole covers or chemical spills, to RMC. Report accidents such as vehicle collisions to the University Police Department (UPD).*

Report unsafe conditions or potentially hazardous situations to RMC as quickly as possible. RMC will then contact other departments and outside agencies as appropriate.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act**

Tarleton State University complies with the requirements and guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This means that new facilities and renovations to existing facilities are designed to provide accessibility for handicapped people.

Handicapped parking and wheelchair ramps must remain accessible at all times. Do not block these areas or tamper with other accessibility equipment. In addition, do not remove Braille tabs on elevator buttons or other signs.

Report accessibility violations such as blocked wheelchair ramps and blocked handicapped parking to RMC or the University Police Department.

Contact RMC for more information on accommodating handicapped individuals or making your workplace more accessible.

## **Asbestos**

Asbestos is a mineral fiber that causes cancer and various respiratory illnesses. Older buildings constructed prior to 1980 may contain asbestos. Asbestos is commonly found in older appliances, insulation, shingles, siding, putties, and caulking. Generally, it is not a problem unless the material that contains it crumbles or flakes.

The Texas Asbestos Health Protection Rules do not require building owners to conduct inspections and identify all asbestos locations. Inspections are required, however, prior to renovation or dismantling activities.

***NOTE:***

*Call the Physical Plant before performing work on campus that will disturb building fixtures, walls, or ceiling (e.g., installing computer cables in the ceiling). The Physical Plant will help ensure that the work does not affect asbestos containing materials.*

***IMPORTANT:***

*Do not handle asbestos or suspected asbestos or try to remove it yourself.*

Tarleton State University has an ongoing Asbestos Management Program that strives to eliminate the potential hazards associated with asbestos. A copy of the Tarleton State University Asbestos Management Program is available from RMC. Depending on the size of the project, either the Tarleton State University Facilities Planning & Construction or the Physical Plant handles contracts for consultation and/or abatement. Direct any questions about identifying or removing asbestos to the Physical Plant. Address any safety related questions to RMC.

## **Dress Code**

Dress in a manner that does not impair safety. Loose clothing, long hair, dangle jewelry, and sandals may be dangerous around moving equipment.

Always wear clothing that is appropriate for your job. Refer to the chapters on Personal Protective Equipment and Office Safety for more information.

## Hearing Conservation Program

Excessive noise levels may permanently or temporarily damage a person's hearing. Whenever possible, employees should reduce noise levels to an acceptable level.

**Hearing loss can be permanent---wear protective equipment when noise levels are high.**

Before using personal protective equipment, such as ear plugs or muffs, to reduce noise exposure, try to reduce noise levels by changing work procedures. Maintenance practices such as the following can reduce noise levels:

- Replacing worn or loose machine parts
- Performing high-noise operations during hours when people are less likely to be affected
- Maintaining and lubricating equipment to eliminate rattles and squeaks

The following table illustrates various noise levels:

Whisper	10 dB
Quiet Office	30 dB
Street Sounds	70 dB
Factory	80-90 dB
Sander	85 dB
Subway	90 dB

Pneumatic Drill	100 dB
Artillery/Car Horn	120 dB

Engineering controls, such as the following, can also reduce noise levels:

- Replacing noisy materials
- Using large, low speed fans
- Considering the noise level of new equipment or processes before purchasing or implementing
- Placing heavy machines on rubber mountings
- Using sound-absorbing acoustical tiles or baffles
- Placing noisy machinery or operations in a separate area or room
- Enclosing noisy conveyors

Areas that may require hearing protection include machine shops, the central plant, etc. Observe all warning signs and wear hearing protection whenever necessary. Do not interfere with, remove, or modify noise abatement equipment. Keep all equipment properly maintained, and report any malfunctions immediately.

Direct all questions regarding hearing conservation to RMC. When requested and necessary, RMC monitors noise levels.

## **Heat Related Illness**

People may suffer from heat stress during hot, humid conditions. Because the climate at Tarleton State University is conducive to heat stress, people must take preventive measures to reduce their risk. To prevent heat stress, employees should limit strenuous physical activity during the hottest portion of the day, wear a brimmed hat when in the sun, take frequent breaks, and drink plenty of fluids.

Heat stress occurs in two forms: heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Heat exhaustion is usually caused by strenuous physical activity and hot, humid conditions. Because heat exhaustion is the body's response to insufficient water and salt, it should be treated as quickly as possible.

Signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion include the following:

- Exhaustion and restlessness
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Cold, clammy, moist skin
- Pale face
- Cramps in abdomen and lower limbs
- Fast, shallow breathing
- Rapid, weak pulse
- Falling body temperature
- Fainting

Take the following steps to administer first aid for heat exhaustion:

1. Have the victim lie down in a cool or shaded place.
2. If the victim is conscious, have him/her slowly

sip cool water.

If the victim is unconscious or is conscious but does not improve, seek medical aid as soon as possible.

3. If the victim is sweating profusely, have him or her sip cool water that contains one teaspoon of table salt per pint of water.

Heat stroke is usually caused by exposure to extreme heat and humidity and/or a feverish illness. Heat stroke occurs when the body can no longer control its temperature by sweating. Heat stroke is extremely dangerous and may be fatal if not treated immediately.

The signs and symptoms of heat stroke include the following:

- Hot, dry skin
- Headache
- Dizziness
- High temperature
- Strong pulse
- Noisy breathing
- Unconsciousness

Immediately take the following steps to administer first aid for heat stroke:

1. If possible, move the victim to a cool place.
2. Seek medical attention as soon as possible.
3. Remove the victim's clothing.
4. If the victim is conscious, place him in a half-sitting position and support the head and shoulders.

If the victim is unconscious, place him on the side with the head facing sideways.

5. Fan the victim and sponge the body with cool water.

## **Housekeeping**

Good housekeeping skills are essential for personal safety. Tarleton State University employees are responsible for reducing potential hazards and keeping their work areas safe and clutter-free. Good housekeeping guidelines include keeping aisles and stairways free from clutter, cleaning spills, minimizing combustibles in workplace and storage areas, and keeping all exits free from obstructions.

Maintain clear and unobstructed access to emergency equipment, such as fire extinguishers, pull stations, eye wash units, showers, etc.

For more specific information on housekeeping, refer to the section in this manual that corresponds to your workplace (i.e., Laboratory Safety, Office Safety, etc.)

## **Indoor Air Quality**

Indoor air quality refers to the condition of air within an enclosed workplace. The indoor environment of any building is based on several factors including location, climate, building design, construction techniques, building occupant load, and contaminants.

Four key elements are involved in the development of poor indoor air quality:

1. Multiple contaminant sources
2. Poor ventilation systems
3. Pollutant pathways
4. Building usage and occupant load

Outside sources for indoor air contaminants include pollen, dust, industrial pollutants, vehicle exhaust, and unsanitary debris near outdoor air intake vents. Other outdoor agents, such as underground storage tanks or landfills, may also affect indoor air quality.

Indoor contaminants are classified according to these categories:

- Combustion products (e.g., smoke)
- Volatile organic compounds (e.g., solvents and cleaning agents)
- Respiratory particulates (e.g., dust, pollen, and asbestos)
- Respiratory byproducts (e.g., carbon dioxide)
- Microbial organisms (e.g., mold, mildew, fungi, and bacteria)
- Radionuclides (e.g., radon)
- Odors (e.g., perfume, smoke, mold, and mildew)

Additional examples of indoor contaminants include dust, dirt or microbial growth in ventilation systems, emissions from office equipment, and fumes or odors from any source.

Tarleton State University follows recognized guidelines for new building ventilation systems and air quality control; however, employees are also responsible for the quality of their indoor air. Because indoor air often contains a variety of contaminants at levels far below most exposure standards, it is difficult to link specific health problems with known pollutants. Employees must minimize all contaminants to reduce the low-level pollutant mixtures that commonly cause health problems.

The following practices will help ensure optimum indoor air quality:

- Fix leaks and drips. (Moisture promotes microbial [i.e., mold and mildew] growth.)
- Clean mold and mildew growths with an antimicrobial to prevent regrowth.
- Ensure that indoor ventilation filters are changed regularly.
- Keep laboratory doors closed.
- Minimize chemical and aerosol usage. Ventilate your area when chemical or aerosol usage is required. (These compounds include paint, cleaning agents, hairspray, perfume, etc.)
- Do not block air ducts to control the temperature in your

office.

- Avoid smoking or cooking in enclosed areas. (Smoking is strictly prohibited within University facilities and vehicles.)
- If possible, open windows when it is cool and dry outside.

If you have any questions concerning indoor air quality, please contact RMC.

## **Lead Paint**

According to the Centers for Disease Control, lead poisoning is a leading environmental health risk. Lead accumulation in a person's system may lead to fatigue, sudden behavioral change, abdominal pain, anorexia, chronic headaches, joint aches, depression, anemia, impotence, and severe fetal damage in unborn infants.

Buildings that were constructed or painted prior to the early 1980's may contain lead paint. Because common sources of lead exposure include ingestion (lead paint) or inhalation (lead-containing dust), it is important to identify all areas that contain lead paint. If lead paint flakes or chips, it must be encapsulated or removed by qualified persons.

The following locations should also be inspected for lead paint:

- Areas where young children or pregnant women are present
- Areas with flaking or deteriorating paint
- Areas that were built or painted prior to the early 1980's (Lead testing is particularly important before beginning renovation on older buildings.)

Contact RMC if you have any questions about lead paint hazards.

## **Lifting**

All employees must use proper lifting techniques to avoid injury when lifting heavy objects. In general, employees should seek assistance when lifting objects that weigh 50 pounds or more. Use your good judgement to determine if you need assistance, a dolly, back support belt, or other tool to safely lift an object.

The back supports the weight of the entire upper body. When you lift objects or move heavy loads, your back has to support even more weight. If you exceed your body's natural limits, your back cannot support both your body and the extra load. The excess, unsupported pressure is transferred to the lower back, where injury is imminent. By using the muscles in your arms and legs and exercising proper lifting techniques, you can move loads safely and protect your back from possible injury.

Follow these guidelines to help avoid back injuries:

- Avoid moving objects manually. Plan jobs and arrange work areas so that heavy items may be moved mechanically.
- Keep in good physical condition. If you are not used to lifting and vigorous exercise, do not attempt difficult lifting tasks.
- Think before you act. Use proper lifting techniques and lifting aides such as back support belts, dollies, etc. Get help if you need it.

When lifting heavy objects, follow these steps and refer to the illustration on the following page:

1. Test the object's weight before handling it. If it seems too heavy or bulky, get assistance.
2. Face the object, place one foot behind the object and one foot along its side.
3. Bend at the knees.
4. Get a firm, balanced grip on the object. Use the palms of your hands, use gloves if necessary.

5. Keep the object as close to your body as possible. (Pull the load in close before lifting.)

6. Lift by straightening your legs and slightly unbending your back.

- If the object is too heavy or bulky, get help.
- Do not twist the back or bend sideways.
- Do not perform awkward lifts.
- Do not lift objects at arm's length.

7. When moving objects, proceed with caution through doors and around corners.

## **Preventing Slips and Falls**

It is easy to prevent falling accidents. Employees should always follow good housekeeping practices and pay attention to their environment to avoid slips and falls.

In addition, employees should follow these guidelines:

- Turn on office lights. Ensure that passageways are adequately lighted.
- Avoid horseplay.
- Avoid unnecessary haste. Do not run in work areas.
- Use ladders or step-stools to reach high places. Never climb onto a chair, drawer, or shelves.
- Keep hallways and stairwells neat and free of obstacles.
- Remove items that may pose a potential slipping hazard.
- Clean up spills as soon as they occur.
- Never obstruct your view when walking.
- Do not wear clothing that is too long or shoes that have slippery heels or soles.
- Hold the handrail when using stairs.
- Be careful when walking on wet surfaces or when entering a building while wearing wet shoes.
- Report uneven surfaces, such as loose or missing floor tiles,

to the Physical Plant for repair.

## **Visitor Safety**

Employees must take special care to ensure visitor safety. This is particularly important when bringing visitors to potentially hazardous areas such as construction sites or laboratories.

***IMPORTANT:***

*Office visitors should be escorted; worksite visitors should be escorted, supervised, and monitored. Do not bring children to the workplace.*

If a visitor is injured, be sure to report the occurrence to RMC after attending to the injury.