

# Safety Circular

November 2019

## Key Elements to Injury Prevention

In order for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to prevent accidents and injuries from occurring, four (4) key elements are crucial to the agency's safety program:

- Worksite Analysis/Hazard Identification
- Accident/Injury Reporting
- Safety and Health Training
- Management Commitment/Employee Involvement

### IDENTIFYING WORK AREA HAZARDS

The TDCJ shall emphasize a safe environment for all employees and offenders, to include providing a workplace free of known hazards.

The TDCJ shall maintain its facilities in good operating order and safe repair. Every employee bears the responsibility to identify and report facility deficiencies, especially hazards which pose a threat to the safety, security and well being of TDCJ staff, offenders, or visitors. Being aware of your surroundings in your work area is the first step to identifying hazardous conditions. Whether in an office, a cell block or dorm, or a warehouse, unsafe conditions can occur. Employees and offenders should be trained on proper safety precautions.

### REPORTING HAZARDS

By reporting all safety concerns, employees help management in its efforts to keep the workplace safe. If management is notified they can fix the problem prior to an injury happening. Co-workers should also be made aware of problems to keep themselves and offenders from becoming injured. Most workplace injuries could have been avoided if the hazard was made aware of to management.

### UNIT PROCEDURES

The **AD-10.20** Representative in each unit department shall identify deficiencies such as burned-out light bulbs, clogged toilets, drains and sinks, damaged or malfunctioning cell doors, leaking pipes and showerheads, inoperative equipment, safety and health hazards, facility and perimeter structural concerns and any other similar deficiencies.

The **AD-10.20** Representative for each area of responsibility shall conduct one (1) inspection each workday to record deficiencies or safety and health hazards. The Department Supervisor shall conduct a weekly inspection of their area as a follow-up to the daily inspections to ensure action has been taken to identify and correct deficiencies.

### NON-UNIT PROCEDURES

The **AD-10.20** Representative shall identify safety and health hazards and deficiencies such as burned-out light bulbs, clogged toilets, drains and sinks, damaged or malfunctioning doors or inoperative equipment. Deficiencies shall be reported to the Maintenance Department on the Inspection Log and the Yearly Work Order Log.

For leased facilities refer to the TDCJ Office of Space Management (**OSM**) Tenant Manual for Leased Administrative Office Space (to include Warehouses) or contact your lease representative listed in the manual for reporting requirements.

### CONTROLLING HAZARDS

Methods of controlling hazards in the workplace fall into three (3) categories:

**Engineering Controls** - may require substitution, replacing, altering, renovating, or making new additions to TDCJ structures, facilities, or grounds. (Remove the Hazards)

**Administrative Controls** - TDCJ or departmental policies that outline specific procedures and processes for accomplishing employee or offender job duties. These controls shall be the responsibility of the proponent for the particular work area where the hazard has been identified. (Control access to Hazards)

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** - equipment designed to protect the wearer's body from injury (Place a barrier between individual and hazard)

## ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

An accident occurs when a person or object receives an amount of energy or hazardous material that cannot be absorbed safely. The energy or hazardous material is the direct cause of the accident.

The purpose of accident/injury investigations is to determine the sequence of events leading to a failure, identify the root cause of an accident, and find methods to prevent reoccurrence of the accident or injury.

Accident investigations are to be fact finding, not fault finding. Establishing the root cause of an incident helps identify effective corrective action to prevent future occurrence.

## INJURY REPORTING

Timely notification of injuries is crucial to an accident investigation process. Staff should never be afraid of reporting injuries and hazards to their supervisor, even those accidents that did not result in a physical injury, often referred to as "near miss." Failing to do so can put others safety in jeopardy.

Injuries shall be reported using the **RM-03** Supervisor's Investigation of Employee/Offender Injury Form.

Offenders must be evaluated by medical and staff shall be offered medical treatment if available.

Investigation should be done by a supervisor with coordination from the Risk Management department.

## TRAINING

There are four (4) types of training that shall be accomplished:

- Orientation
- Initial
- Monthly or Continuous
- Specific needs training

## ORIENTATION SAFETY TRAINING

New-hire employee safety orientation training shall be conducted in conjunction with **PD-97**, "Training and Staff Development" requirements. Orientation training shall reinforce the premise "Safety is an individual responsibility."

Offenders receive orientation training during the intake process as well as through the unit classification orientation.

## SAFETY TRAINING

All employees and offenders shall be properly trained prior to starting their job assignment. This training should include a demonstration of the job tasks. The initial training should be documented with an acknowledgement signed by the employee or offender being trained.

This documentation should be kept on file in the employee or offender workplace.

Initial job training provided to employees and offenders shall, at a minimum, include the following:

- Sequence of basic job steps
- Hazards and potential hazards associated with each step of the job/task
- Safe operating procedures

Initial job training shall be documented to include, at minimum, the following:

- Training topic
- Acknowledgement of demonstration and understanding
- Trainee's signature
- Trainer's signature
- Training date

## MONTHLY SAFETY TRAINING

These training sessions shall relate to the work being performed and general safety requirements for all assigned personnel.

Monthly training shall be documented to indicate training topics, trainee's signature, date of training and signature of trainer.

The supervisor in the staff member or offender's workplace shall maintain this record. A summary of monthly training is reported to the Unit Risk Manager for unit departments.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS TRAINING**

Often issues come up within the agency that would require special instruction to safeguard employees. TDCJ employees shall receive annual training concerning fire preparedness procedures.

At a minimum, fire preparedness training shall include the following: fire prevention, unit/facility fire plan, evacuation plan, areas of safe refuge, fire drill procedures and use of available fire suppression systems.

Specialized instructions on a specific operation or machine shall be directed only to those personnel involved.

Specialized training is not intended to replace initial or monthly safety training but is conducted to increase job efficiency and reduce accident exposure.

Without management commitment, employees will not follow. Without employee involvement, management's desires for an effective employee safety and health program are unfulfilled.

In an effective program, employee safety and health are fundamental values of the organization, and therefore management vigorously supports the program. Employee involvement means safety and health protection for all employees.

Employees are expected to take ownership in supporting a safe work environment by following all safe work policies, procedures, and practices, especially when it comes to the area of hazard identification and notification. The most crucial element to an employee's safety is themselves especially with regards to their safety awareness.

### **MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT AND EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION**

TDCJ Executive leadership has demonstrated its commitment to employee safety through its comprehensive policies and procedures and charging responsibility for a progressive safety program with the highest level of leadership.

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