

**DIOCESE OF ERIE AND INDIVIDUAL PARISHES, SCHOOLS, AGENCIES  
ACCIDENT AND ILLNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**PREFACE**

As a self-insured employer operating in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Diocese of Erie, its affiliated parishes, schools, agencies, and groups are required to maintain an accident and illness prevention program. Parameters of the program have been established by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Director of the Facilities and Risk Management Office is responsible for assuring that our accident and illness prevention program continuously meets or exceeds the requirements set forth in Article X of the Pennsylvania Workers Compensation Act. The Facilities and Risk Management Office is part of the diocesan administration and can be reached at 814-824-1112.

The following information is a summary of the policies, procedures, and goals of our safety program.

**SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT**

The Diocese Erie and all entities who purchase Workers Compensation Insurance from the Diocese are committed to providing as safe and healthy a workplace as possible. However, safety in the workplace is everyone's responsibility. By operating with care and following safety guidelines, injury due to negligence or carelessness can be prevented.

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

Each location covered by the Diocese of Erie Plan is required to have assembled a comprehensive plan detailing how employees are to respond to the development of potentially hazardous conditions. Emergency procedures should be briefly and clearly written out and posted in a conspicuous place. The postings should include instruction and telephone numbers for contacting non-emergency personnel including police, fire and medical.

All employees or advised to call 911 in the event of an emergency.

Each employee should be aware of the location and availability of a first aid kit and or provider.

**SAFE WORK PRACTICES**

In case of accident, obtain first aid or medical care as necessary.

Proper lifting techniques are very important. Lifting accidents often result in long term injuries:

- Use mechanical aids (hand trucks, dollies, etc.) as necessary
- Assistance should be requested when moving heavy objects
- Use proper lifting techniques

Defective equipment and unsafe conditions should be reported; replacement or repair should be made promptly.

Make sure all work areas are well lighted; burned out bulbs should be replaced immediately.

Work areas must be kept free of unnecessary obstructions/hazards.

Tables or chairs should not be used as ladders.

Employees should understand the safest way to perform a task and should use the proper tools including protective equipment. When in doubt consult your supervisor.

Practical jokes are inappropriate and unacceptable.

### **HAZARD IDENTIFICATION -MITIGATION**

The Diocese of Erie in conjunction with its insurance service provider regularly conducts formal lost control risk inspections of our facilities covered by the insurance plan to identify and relieve the hazards present at each location. Due to the number of facilities affiliated with Diocese a significant amount of time can pass and hazards can develop between formal inspections. Employees are encouraged to recognize potentially hazardous conditions and to request that corrective measures be taken.

### **OPEN DOOR POLICY**

While each employer has established a more formal employee problem resolution procedure, we realize you, at times, may wish to speak directly with someone in management who can properly resolve an issue you are facing.

We encourage you to bring your questions, suggestions, and complaints to the attention of your supervisor. The administration of your organization will carefully consider each of these in their continuing effort to improve operations.

### **INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE**

Industrial hygiene is the study of the effect the workplace environment has on the worker.

Given the typical static workplace environment provided most of the employers covered under the Diocesan plan, it is anticipated that any adverse condition(s) experienced by an employee is a direct result of a local circumstance. Consequently, it would be foreseeable that a perceived problem can be rectified at the local level by identifying and modifying the problematic circumstance.

Should an employee suspect he/she is being exposed to or is experiencing symptoms from suspected exposure to potentially harmful chemicals, physical or environmental conditions he/she is expected to report the cause for concern and/or symptoms to his/her supervisor. The supervisor is to document and preliminarily evaluate the employee's concerns. Hopefully, the cause for

concern is readily identified and easily rectified. Should this approach be impractical, proved to be ineffective or conditions/symptoms are considered severe, the Facilities and Risk Management Office is to be notified. Appropriate industrial health services will be promptly provided.

Under no circumstances is an employee to be precluded from initiating contact with his/her supervisor or the facility administrators regarding problems or concerns with their work environment.

### **INDUSTRIAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Industrial health services are the means by which potential hazards are identified and corrective actions are determined to control or prevent exposures.

Industrial health services are available through the Facilities and Risk Management Office. Every reasonable effort will be made to identify and assist remediation of the problematic conditions. Resources available to do so include, but are not limited to, consultation with insurance service providers, consultation with a certified industrial hygienist, consultation with professional service providers including medical practitioners and environmental surveying/sampling.

To obtain industrial health services, contact the Facilities and Risk Management Office at 814 - 824 -1112.

Under no circumstances is an employee to be precluded from initiating contact with his/her supervisor or the facility administrators regarding problems or concerns with their work environment.

### **CONTROL OF EXPOSURE TO BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS**

Bloodborne pathogens are microorganisms such as viruses or bacteria that are present in human blood and can cause disease in humans.

Universal precautions are the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) required method of control to protect employees from exposure to human blood and other potentially infectious materials (OPIM). The term "universal precautions" refers to a concept of blood borne disease control which requires that all human blood and certain human body fluids are treated as if known to be infectious for HIV, HBV, and other bloodborne pathogens.

HBV means Hepatitis B Virus

HIV means Human Immunodeficiency Virus

Decontamination means the use of physical or chemical means to remove, inactivate, or destroy bloodborne pathogens on a surface or item to the point where they are no longer capable of transmitting infectious particles and the surface or item is rendered safe for handling, use or disposal.

Anytime there is blood to blood contact with infected blood or OPIM, there is a potential for transmission of blood borne pathogens. Unbroken skin forms a generally good barrier against

bloodborne pathogens. However, infected blood and OPIM can enter your system through open injuries, existing cuts or breaks in the skin and mucous membranes. Consequently, employing the concept of universal precautions and using personal protective equipment is recommended whenever contact with blood or OPIM is anticipated and/or possible.

In the event of exposure and after removal of personal protective equipment, areas of potentially contaminated skin should be immediately washed using antibacterial soap and hot running water. Equipment and surfaces which may have become contaminated should be D contaminated with an appropriate disinfectant (at least 10% chlorine bleach solution or equivalent) as soon as possible.

Contaminated clothing should be treated as soon as possible with an antibacterial/viral solution (at least 10% chlorine bleach solution or equivalent) for at least 10 minutes prior to laundering.

Should an employee incur an exposure incident, it should be reported to the appropriate supervisor who has the responsibility to maintain applicable records and in turn will inform the director of facilities and risk management office. The Director of the Facilities and Risk Management Office will coordinate post exposure evaluation and treatment in accordance with the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogen Standard 29 CFR 1910.1030.

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

The Diocese of Erie and all entities covered under the workers compensation plan recognize that alcohol and drug abuse can adversely affect the physical and emotional health of a person as well as the community in which the person resides. As such all entities covered under the plan operate as a drug and alcohol-free workplace. The use, possession, distribution, sale, or manufacture of illegal drugs on diocesan property is prohibited. Reporting to work or working under the influence of alcohol and or illegal drugs will not be tolerated. Likewise, the abuse of prescriptions or other legal drugs, regardless of how, from whom, or why you obtain them, will not be tolerated. Those who do so will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. If you have a drug and or alcohol dependency, you are expected to seek professional help.

## **PROGRAM GOAL AND OBJECTIVES**

The Diocese Erie and all entities who purchase Workers Compensation Insurance from the Diocese are committed to providing as safe and healthy a workplace as possible. In the interest of accident prevention, the Diocese of Erie and all entities covered under the workers compensation insurance plan support a safety program that will actively reduce the number and severity of injuries. Work rules and safety guidelines have been established, all staff are expected to become familiar with and follow them. By adhering to these rules and guidelines, the probability of workplace accidents should be significantly reduced