
WELLNESS & SAFETY PLAN

Strafford



REGIONAL PLANNING
C O M M I S S I O N

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Adopted: January 20, 2017
Revised: January 19, 2018
Revised: January 18, 2019
Revised: April 3, 2020
Revised: February 16, 2021

The SRPC Executive Committee adopted these policies at its regularly scheduled meeting on January 20, 2017. A revision for 2021 was accepted at the Executive Committee meeting on February 19, 2021.

SRPC Chairperson

Date

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I. WELLNESS & SAFETY OBJECTIVES

Strafford Regional Planning Commission's most valuable resource is the people who work for the Commission. As such, the Commission is dedicated to providing a safe and healthy environment to protect its employees and preserve Commission assets and resources.

This Wellness & Safety Plan will assist the Commission and its employees in managing hazards and risks in order to minimize injuries and protect Commission property. It is the responsibility of all Commission employees to follow the policies and procedures outlined in the plan.

A. DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director of the Commission is responsible for enforcing and implementing these policies and procedures. The Executive Director will report any management issues to the Executive Committee, which will discuss recommendations and implementation strategies. The Executive Director is also responsible for addressing and notifying the appropriate parties of any concerns pertaining to building safety.

The Executive Director will review workplace accidents, injuries, and health data; identify hazards in the workplace and find solutions; keep records of accidents and injuries; and ensure that the appropriate employees attend safety training.

Each year, the Executive Director will appoint at least two employees to act as wellness coordinators. These appointments will be announced to the Commission employees by the Executive Director.

COMMISSION EMPLOYEES

All employees must adhere to this plan. Employees will address safety issues as they arise, reporting any unsafe machinery, conditions, or hazardous acts to the Executive Director. Employees will be responsible for attending safety training, as required.

Employees will adhere to safe work habits and adopt a positive attitude about safety in the workplace both in and out of the office.

WELLNESS COORDINATORS

Wellness coordinators will serve as Commission employee representatives to assist the Executive Director in promoting a healthy and safe work environment. They will serve terms of one calendar year, from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31.

The coordinators will directly work with the HealthTrust wellness coordinators to stay current with all HealthTrust benefits and resources offered. The coordinators are responsible for distributing resources and information to employees regarding wellness benefits and opportunities.

Each year, the coordinators will develop a minimum of one campaign to promote wellness in the workplace. Campaigns must be designed to promote health, wellness, or safety. They will cover such topics as physical activity, nutrition, stress management, and heart healthy habits.

The coordinators will help the Executive Director decide how HealthTrust campaign funds will be used. Campaign funds shall be used to purchase items in support of health campaigns or to promote healthier habits and lifestyles of Commission employees. These funds can be used for a single campaign or spent throughout the year. Campaign funds shall be fully expended by December 31st of each year.

The coordinators are responsible for reviewing section III of this plan with employees and for reviewing and updating this plan each year.

II. IDENTIFICATION OF SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS PRESENT

A. PHYSICAL STRESS ASSOCIATED WITH DESK WORK

The nature of the Commission's work requires employees to sit at their desks for long periods, which elevates their risk of developing musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).¹ Studies indicate that "MSDs are among the most frequently reported causes of lost or restricted work time."² The continuous use of computers and keyboards also puts employees at higher risk for eyestrain and carpal tunnel syndrome.

B. EMOTIONAL STRESS

Emotional stress is another hazard for Commission employees. Emotional stress can result from a heavy workload, infrequent breaks, long work hours, poor communication, poor social environment, conflicting or uncertain job expectations, job insecurity, lack of opportunity for growth, and rapid changes for which employees are unprepared.

C. FIELD WORK

Field work, especially the placement of traffic counting devices, places Commission employees at considerable risk. Numerous hazards are associated with setting and collecting traffic count devices, collecting culvert data, mapping trails, and performing other field work. They include the risk of being struck by a motor vehicle, injuries associated with traversing over rough or wet terrain, allergic reactions, insect bites, poison ivy, tick bites and Lyme disease, dehydration, and exposure to harsh conditions such as wind, rain, or sun. All field work staff must review and sign a mandatory safety protocol prior to beginning field work.

¹ Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). (2016). Prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders in the Workplace. Retrieved from: <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/ergonomics/>.

² Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). (2016). Prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders in the Workplace. Retrieved from: <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/ergonomics/>.

D. AUTOMOBILES & TRAVEL

Commission work requires employees to use their own vehicles to travel to and from meetings and to conduct fieldwork. In 2020 the Commission acquired a company vehicle for staff use. This vehicle will be used primarily for data collection efforts. Staff will still be required to use their personal vehicles when needed. Driving is inherently risky. The NH Division of Motor Vehicles processes over 40,000 crash reports a year; most crashes result from errors in driver judgment, rather than defective equipment or poor road conditions.³ Distracted driving due to cell phone use and texting can result in injury and loss of life. In 2014, 16 percent of all police-reported motor vehicle crashes in the country were caused by distracted driving.⁴

III. WELLNESS & SAFETY POLICIES

A. SMOKE-FREE WORKPLACE

Tobacco smoking has been clearly established as a preventable cause of illness in smokers and nonsmokers exposed to “secondhand” smoke. The Commission complies with New Hampshire’s Indoor Smoking Act to regulate smoking in enclosed workplaces. Smoking, including e-cigarettes, is not permitted anywhere in the Commission offices AND is allowed during lunch and break periods in designated areas outside the office building.

B. ALCOHOL & DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

The illegal or unauthorized use, sale, distribution, or possession of narcotics, drugs, or controlled substances while on the job—on or off Commission property—will result in immediate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. The same penalties apply to being under the influence of these materials while on the job on or off Commission property.

The consumption of alcohol on Commission property is also prohibited unless at an authorized social function sponsored by the Commission, in which case consumption must be reasonable and responsible. Consumption of alcohol during working hours, or reporting to work under the influence of alcohol, is strictly prohibited.

The use of controlled substances prescribed to an employee by a licensed physician or available over the counter is not prohibited by this policy. However, if a physician has prescribed medication that requires any accommodation or poses safety concerns, please notify your supervisor or the Executive Director to discuss what accommodations are necessary.

As allowed by state law, the Commission, at this time, does not allow medical marijuana on work premises.

The Commission encourages employees in need of assistance with a controlled substance to seek proper medical or mental health assistance. The Commission offers help through the Employee

³ Department of Safety Division of Motor Vehicles. State of New Hampshire Driver’s Manual. Retrieved from: <https://www.nh.gov/safety/divisions/dmv/forms/documents/nhdm.pdf>

⁴ Federal Communications Commission. The Dangers of Distracted Driving. Retrieved from: <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/dangers-texting-while-driving>

Assistance Program (EAP), Life Resources. This service is provided in partnership with HealthTrust and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For more information or to take advantage of EAP, contact Life Resources directly at 800-759-8122.

Non-compliance with this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

C. VIOLENCE-FREE WORKPLACE

The Commission is dedicated to nonviolent means of solving differences among employees or clients. All employees, commissioners, job applicants, contractors, clients, vendors, and business associates must be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. Employees are expected to refrain from conduct that may be dangerous to others.

Conduct that threatens, intimidates, or coerces another employee, customer, vendor, or business associate will not be tolerated. Commission resources, or personal resources used during work hours (i.e. personal cell phones), may not be used to threaten, stalk, or harass anyone at the workplace or outside of the workplace. Threats, threatening language, or any other acts of aggression or violence made toward or by any Commission employee will not be tolerated.

For the purposes of this policy, a threat includes any written, verbal or physical harassment or abuse, attempts to intimidate or to instill fear in others, menacing gestures, bringing weapons to the workplace, stalking, or any other hostile, aggressive, injurious, or destructive actions undertaken for the purpose of domination or intimidation. Weapons are prohibited on Commission premises unless such prohibition is restricted by applicable law.

Indirect or direct threats of violence, incidents of actual violence, and suspicious individuals or activities should be reported as soon as possible to the Executive Director. When reporting a threat or incident of violence, including a verbal statement or physical action suggesting violence, the employee should be as specific and detailed as possible. Employees should not place themselves in peril, nor should they attempt to intercede during an incident. All threats will be promptly investigated and appropriate remedial action will be taken by the Executive Director. No employee will be subject to retaliation, intimidation, or discipline as a result of reporting a threat under this policy.

Anyone, regardless of position or title, whom the Commission determines has engaged in conduct that violates this policy, including retaliation, will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

If you are threatened by an outside party, please follow the steps detailed in this section. It is important for the Commission to be aware of any potential danger in our workplace. Indeed, we want to take every precaution to protect everyone from the threat of a violent act by an employee or anyone else.

SRPC additionally maintains an Anti-Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedures within the Employee Handbook.

D. WORKPLACE WELLBEING

The Commission is dedicated to promoting the highest possible wellbeing of its employees. This policy outlines several steps that the Commission has taken to ensure employees work in an environment that is conducive to safety and health.

The Commission allows employees to take up to two 10-minute wellness breaks during the day. During these breaks, employees are encouraged to leave their workspace and move around, take some quiet time to de-stress and stretch, or take advantage of office break areas. Employees are eligible for an unpaid 30-minute lunch break.

The Commission encourages employees to adopt good ergonomics practices. Employees are encouraged to move around their workspace, keeping in mind that workspaces should be clean, tidy, and not blocking traffic areas. Information on good ergonomics and on how to prevent common MSDs will be posted next to the Health and Wellness Board in the production room.

The Commission also encourages employees to carpool or use alternate forms of transportation—such as walking, mass transit, or biking—to and from work. Alternate forms of transportation are not only good for the environment; they can also increase fitness and activity levels. The Rochester Community Center’s showers and changing facilities are available for employee use.

The Commission allows fulltime employees to use sick time for medical appointments and other matters related to their health. In addition, they may use medical leave to attend to an illness or health-related concern of a member of their immediate family or household. The Commission encourages employees to adopt healthy practices such as scheduling annual physical and frequent dental examinations.

The Commission allows employees—with the Executive Director’s approval—to work flexible schedules so they can exercise during work hours. Employees and the Executive Director can discuss taking longer lunch breaks for exercise by either coming in earlier or leaving later.

E. AUTOMOBILES AND TRAVEL

The Commission is committed to promoting safety on the road. When traveling to and from meetings, even when carpooling, Commission employees shall wear their seatbelts until they reach their destination.

Employees who drive during work time are prohibited from using a cell phone while operating a motor vehicle. Employees who need to communicate on any digital device should pull over to the side of the road and come to a complete stop or use voice command/handsfree technology. Any traffic violations due to using a digital device shall result in serious disciplinary action including possible termination.

During storms, the Executive Director may close the office, or close it before the end of normal business hours. When the Commission closes due to inclement weather, employees eligible to telecommute and who have work suitable to perform at home are encouraged to do so.

Decisions to close the office due to inclement weather are made at the Executive Director’s discretion. Every effort should be made to report to work; however, in emergencies such as severe

weather, fires, or power failures, if an employee believes that travel may put their safety at risk, the Executive director should be contacted.

F. FIELD WORK

Traffic count data collection requires field personnel to work within the roadway right-of-way (R.O.W.). Therefore, it is imperative that sound safety precautions be taken during field work. No safety protocol or procedure can take the place of common sense and where-with-all in the field. All field personnel should carry identification and, if necessary, move carefully to ensure safety. Two employees will make up one data collection team.

Below is a list of some critical safety precautions that Commission employees should take while conducting field work.

Safety Protocols- for safety protocols, please refer to the SRPC Safety Protocol

Traveling to and from Field Work Activities

When traveling to and from field locations, employees are required to adhere to this plan's Automobile and Travel Policy.

Accidental Injury

Injuries that occur at work must be reported immediately to the Executive Director or other designated administrative employee.

Municipal Police & Public Works Assistance

Commission employees should ask the local police to control traffic at sites they determine may be hazardous. These locations should be identified early in the field season so that arrangements for traffic control can be made well in advance. Similarly, municipal road agents and highway departments should be notified in advance of field work to minimize interference from their activities (i.e., street sweeping).

Posted – No Trespassing – Keep Out

Commission employees shall not navigate or step onto a site posted with no trespassing signs.

G. COVID-19 GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES

During the COVID-19 pandemic, SRPC is prioritizing the health and safety of commission employees and communities. While the office is available to staff as a resource, SRPC staff are encouraged to work from home and comply with government issued orders during work hours. The SRPC Guidance and Procedures for Response to COVID-19 document is subject to change contingent on the latest pandemic information, best practices, and updates to public health guidelines. Documents regarding guidance and procedures for the safety of commission employees, as well as reopening phases include the following and are available to all commission employees.

SRPC COVID-19 GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES

This document outlines the process for screening in-office employees, guidance for reducing exposure to COVID-19, in-office workspace and operational procedures, and cleaning and disinfecting guidelines.

COVID-19 PHASED RETURN MEMO

SPRC is currently in Phase 1 “Safer at Home” of the Phased Return Plan. Once appropriate, Phase 2 “Post State of Emergency” will be implemented.

STAFF TEAM OFFICE CALENDAR

To use the office as a resource while maintaining safety protocols, an in-office staff team calendar designates certain days of the week to certain commission employees if they need to physically work in the office.

HEALTH SCREEN FORM

The Health Screening Questionnaire is intended to minimize transmission of COVID-19 with a required self-health assessment for days commission employees work in the office.

IV. SAFETY PROCEDURES

To maintain federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards for safety and health, the Commission complies with mandates to post information and provide training on key aspects of workplace safety. These activities include arranging annual updates on emergency evacuation, fire safety, ergonomics, and nutrition.

A. FIRE SAFETY, REPORTING, & RESPONSE

The Commission is located on the first floor of the Rochester Community Center on Wakefield Street. The office has two exits. Fire extinguishers and emergency lighting are located on the wall in the copier/production room and the kitchen.

In case of fire, all employees are to immediately evacuate the office through the closest exit and call 911 from outside the building. To ensure that everyone is accounted for employees who were in or on the premises at the time of the evacuation will meet by the three flagpoles diagonally across the parking lot from the main office entrance.



Three Flagpoles



Main Office Entrance

B. ACCIDENTAL INJURY

Injuries that occur at work must be reported immediately to the Executive Director or other designated administrative employee. All injuries must be reported regardless of whether they are minor, require minimal first aid, or are more serious and require immediate attention from a health care provider.

The Executive Director is responsible for reporting all workplace injuries in accordance with the requirements of the New Hampshire Workers' Compensation Law. Failure to report workplace accidents is a serious matter that may preclude an employee's coverage under Workers' Compensation Insurance.

C. FIRST AID

The office first aid kit is kept in the labeled kitchen cabinet. A list of the kit's contents can be found inside the kit.

Emergency response telephone numbers—hospital, poison control, ambulance/rescue, and police—are kept in the first aid kit.

V. DISTRIBUTION & CONFORMITY OF WELLNESS & SAFETY PLAN

Upon adoption of this program by the SRPC Executive Committee, each employee will receive a copy of the Wellness & Safety Plan. A copy of the plan will be kept next to the financial consultant's work area. Every employee will be asked to sign a copy of the attached form acknowledging that they have received the Wellness & Safety Plan.

Each year, the Wellness Coordinators will review and update this plan. Employees will have the opportunity to discuss safety issues and make recommendations for procedures.

VI. STRAFFORD REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION WELLNESS & SAFETY PLAN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

This Wellness & Safety Plan has been prepared for your information and understanding of the policies and procedures as well as the practices and expectations of the Commission. PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY. Upon completion of your review of the plan, please sign the statement below and return it to the Executive Director.

I, _____, have received and read a copy of the Commission's Wellness & Safety Plan that outlines the SRPC's policies, procedures, and expectations for employees pertaining to workplace safety.

I have familiarized myself, at least generally, with the contents of this plan. By my signature below, I acknowledge, accept, and agree to comply with the plan provided to me by the Commission.

I understand that this plan is not intended to cover every situation that may arise during my employment, but is simply a guide to the policies and procedures, practices, and expectations of the Commission.

I also understand that the Wellness & Safety Plan is subject to change at any time the Commission deems appropriate.

Employee Signature

Date Received

Date Returned