

**TO: ALL COUNTY PERSONNEL**  
**FROM: VERDENIA C. BAKER**  
**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**  
**PREPARED BY: RISK MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT**  
**SUBJECT: SAFETY POLICY**  
**PPM #: CW-O-005**

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**ISSUE DATE**  
**April 29, 2025**

**EFFECTIVE DATE**  
**April 29, 2025**

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**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this Safety Policy is to provide an overview of the elements of an effective safety program, as well as, the roles and responsibilities that the employees of Palm Beach County have in making safety every employee's responsibility.

**UPDATES:**

Future updates to this PPM are the responsibility of the Director of Risk Management.

**AUTHORITY:**

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 29CFR 1910, as may be amended
- Standards for Hazardous Air pollutant (NESHAPS), as may be amended
- Florida Workers Compensation (Florida Title XXXI, Chapter 440), as may be amended
- Florida State Fire Marshal (Chapter 69A-62), as may be amended
- Florida Administrative Code, Firefighter Employment Standards, National Emission, as may be amended
- Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners Merit Rules and Regulations, as may be amended
- PPM # CW-O-004-Vehicle Safety Program, as may be amended
- PPM # CW-O-007-Accident/Incident Reporting (Excluding Employee Injuries), as may be amended
- PPM # CW-P-021-Employee Injury/Illness Reporting and Management, as may be amended

## **SCOPE:**

This PPM applies to all Departments under the Board of County Commissioners of Palm Beach County (BCC).

## **POLICY:**

It is the policy of the BCC to provide safe and efficient services by providing:

1. A safe and hazard free working environment for employees; and
2. County facilities and properties that are not a safe and health risk to the residents of Palm Beach County, contractors, and vendors.

The elements of an effective safety program are outlined below.

## **GUIDELINES:**

- I. The essential elements of The Palm Beach County Safety program include:
  - A. **Leadership Commitment:** Department Directors within the BCC demonstrate commitment to health and safety goals and programs by ensuring that their operations are conducted with attention and compliance with employee safety and health requirements. This is demonstrated by supporting a variety of activities including: Safety Committee/toolbox talks (e.g. morning/beginning of shift); work area safety meetings and safety site inspections; correction of safety / health issues; thorough accident investigations and corrections; encouraging employee participation in Safety Committee meetings, safety trainings and safe work practices.
  - B. **Organization and Resources:** Support of Risk Management safety programs by providing the necessary human and financial resources to comply with policies, ensure that appropriate safety procedures, programs, processes are in place.
  - C. **Safety Committees:** Safety Committee activity is essential to improve performance within an organization (e.g., each Department/Division). Essential elements of effective Safety Committees include:
    - i. Committee membership should be comprised of management and non-management members (including more non-management members);
    - ii. All membership should be voluntary;
    - iii. Alternate committee members should be available to participate if the primary member cannot;
    - iv. Upper management should actively participate or review committee agendas

and/or minutes.

v. The Safety Committee meeting should consist of:

- Membership
- Vision Statement
- Committee Goals
- Decision making process (majority, consensus, etc.)
- Established meeting dates and times (scheduled at least quarterly)
- Minutes/notes (detail and who will take the notes)
- Communications of meeting results; and

vi. Safety Committee meeting agendas may include but are not limited to:

- Reading and adoption of the minutes of the last meeting
- Old business
  - Follow up to last meetings issues and assignments
  - Inspection findings and corrective actions
- New business:
  - Review of accidents/investigations/corrective actions
  - Procedure review and drafting (e.g. work procedures)
  - Employee training (tracking, needs assessment)
  - Employee complaints
  - Safety audits/inspections/observations/ scheduling
  - Communications (newsletter, posting, suggestion box/link)
  - Job Hazard Assessments (JHA'S)
  - Safety incentives
  - Process reviews
  - Rules
  - New Issues
- Next meeting date

D. **Planning**: Planning should include establishing goals and targets for health and safety concerns support activities to achieve the goals/targets, work towards risk reduction, improvements in the safety and health of the workplace, and dedicate financial and technical resources as required. Planning for new facilities should utilize all interested parties including Engineering, Facilities and Operations personnel.

E. **Accountability**: All employees must be held accountable to perform their tasks in a safe manner in accordance with the established safety policies, rules, procedures, and recommendations. Supervisors must ensure that work is done safely by their employees, and the proper equipment/tools are used. Supervisors must ensure that the applicable personal protective equipment is worn, and adequate training is provided to accomplish the task without taking unnecessary

risk.

- F. **Assessment, Prevention, and Control:** These safety measures are the cornerstone of an effective safety and health program. Safety and health risks are assessed through on-site inspections and audits. Prevention and control strategies must be in place to mitigate risks. Risks are defined as poorly managed or unmanaged hazards. Risks are materials, processes, activities, and/or conditions that if not properly managed can result in an injury, illness, environmental impact, or regulatory non-compliance. Control strategies include: administrative controls, engineering controls, and personal protective equipment. Documentation of these requirements is best accomplished by conducting JHAs. Scheduled preventive maintenance on equipment and facilities is also an important aspect of controlling hazards within the workplace.
- G. **Employee Medical Programs:** The OHC conducts employee medical screenings in accordance with accepted practice and regulatory requirements. Medical screenings that are provided to the employees consist of: pre-employment physicals, hearing conservation, respirator protection, CDL licensing screenings, chemical exposures, etc. The OHC also provides medical treatments/referrals and management for occupational related injuries and illnesses.
- H. **Emergency Planning and Response:** Emergency evacuation training is available to all employees via online training, as well as, emergency evacuation drills at select locations. Operations that have greater than normal risks associated with them (e.g., SPCC :spill prevention control and countermeasures), designated areas and other areas that have hazards that present a greater than normal risk (e.g. confined space entry, chemical releases, etc.) must plan for emergencies appropriately. This planning may include written procedures, drills, pre-planning meetings, etc.
- I. **Education and Training:** Safety training is provided through Risk Management Department- Division of Safety & Casualty to employees of the BCC on an ongoing basis. Training on various safety topics is provided on an as needed basis. The requirements, target audience, refresher periods, etc. are defined in the County's Training and Education Database (TED).

Also, each Division/Department is responsible for conducting relevant job specific training that is crucial and an integral part of the employees overall safety training program. Job specific training can be formal (classroom), informal (toolbox meetings), or online training through the County's online safety training program, Litmos.

- J. **Communications:** Effective communication of the County's health and safety goals to employees is essential. Communications to employees in the following areas should be considered:

- i. Performance goals, activities, and accomplishments;
- ii. Reporting such incidents as: injuries, illnesses, spills, etc.;
- iii. Rules and procedures;
- iv. General information and awareness; and
- v. Safety Committee activities
  - Communications can take the form of:
    - Toolbox meetings
    - Scheduled meetings with management and non-management
    - Newsletters and other publications
    - Bulletin boards, signs, etc.
    - Employee feedback, concerns and suggestions should be part of the communication activities.

K. **Inspections and Audits:** are a vital part of the County's injury/illness prevention plan. Inspections and audits help to identify, prevent, and correct hazards in the workplace and on county properties. Three types of inspections/audits are necessary to adequately identify and address safety concerns. Inspections mainly identify physical or chemical hazards. Audits are more comprehensive, which help to identify inadequate employee work practices, processes, and procedures, as well as unsafe conditions.

- i. Type 1: Public Access Areas: Area supervisors shall ensure walkthrough inspections are conducted on a regular basis at all areas that are accessible to the public. Loss Control staff is available to provide help in establishing the scope and frequency of these inspections. The purpose of these inspections is to identify, prevent, and correct hazards that can result in injuries or illnesses to the public and employees, which can lead to Workers' Compensation claims and third-party lawsuits. Risks/hazards should be identified and corrected as soon as feasible. If they cannot be corrected immediately, adequate barriers should be in place and warning signs should be posted.

The scope of these inspections should include, but not be limited to the following areas:

- Walking and working surfaces, including stairs, railings and sidewalks;
- Electrical equipment and hazards;
- Building components requiring repair;
- Lighting (interior and exterior);
- Hazardous materials;
- Evacuation routes and signage;

- Fire protection equipment; and
  - Prevention of public access to locations that may be hazardous
- ii. Type 2: Employee Work areas (no Public Access). Supervisors shall ensure that work areas are inspected on a frequent basis to identify hazards in the workplace. Loss Control staff is available to provide assistance in establishing the scope and frequency of these inspections. Unsafe conditions shall be corrected as soon as practical. When appropriate, equipment shall be tagged out of service. Audit emphasis areas are dependent on the type of work and equipment utilized. This inspection shall be performed by a supervisor or a designated safety team who is trained in hazard recognition, or with the assistance from a Loss Control Specialist.
- iii. Type 3: Risk Management or a team including Risk Management (as established by the Department/Division) will conduct inspections/audits of all major areas within the County on an ongoing basis. These inspections/audits will identify:
- Physical hazards
  - Areas of concern that may require a more intensive approach (e.g., Industrial Hygiene, Ergonomic Assessments, Job Hazard Analysis, etc.)
  - Procedure Review
    - Written procedures
    - Observation of work
    - Injury and incident experience
    - Interviews

Continual attention must be given to the recognition and control of risks.

- L. **Corrective Action:** Findings and deficiencies identified through audits, inspections, or other means (e.g., visual observations) must be abated in a timely manner. Department budgets must be sufficient to be able to address routine findings. Financial planning must also address the need for costly long-term corrective actions. If significant cost is involved, the hazard must be controlled adequately in the interim, and funding and corrective measures pursued.
- M. **Incident Reporting and Investigation:** Three major areas that require incident reporting and effective investigation are:
- i. Employee injuries and illnesses (Workers' Compensation)
  - ii. Vehicle Accidents
  - iii. 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Liability incidents (injuries/property damage involving the Public)

Current forms to report and record investigation data appear on the County Intranet website under Countywide Forms-Risk Management. Pursuant, to; PPM CW-O-007, PPM CW-P-021as may be amended, all reports shall be completed as soon as possible (within 24 hours) and forwarded to Risk Management. If additional information is obtained, an amended report shall be prepared and forwarded to Risk Management.

Employee injury and illness investigations must identify the root cause(s) of the incident and the corrective actions to be implemented to prevent recurrence. Serious employee injuries/illness shall be reported to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) as soon as possible. Near miss incidents shall be investigated to prevent future incidents. Summaries of incidents are recorded to track performance and establish goals.

Supervisors are required per PPM # CW-O-004 & PPM # CW-O-007 to ensure that all accidents, involving County owned vehicles, are thoroughly investigated and reported to the County Warning Point (EOC) at the time of occurrence.

Any occurrence/incident in which County owned property is damaged or lost, or private property is damaged due to the possible negligence on the part of the County, and/or a County employee must be reported to Risk Management via e-mail to Risk-Casualty Report per PPM # CW-O-007 and /or PPM # CW-O-004

- N. **Workers' Compensation Management:** The management of Workers' Compensation cases is the responsibility of Risk Management and Department Directors to ensure that:
- i. Documentation of the injury/illness is completed by Department supervisors in accordance with the accident investigation principles.
  - ii. Departments will assist Risk Management in the investigation of situations where injuries and illnesses are questionable to determine if the root cause of the injury/illness is applicable and covered under Workers' Compensation or the health benefit program.
  - iii. Employees/Department supervisors must follow guidelines on appropriate time off for Workers' Compensation activities (e.g. Medical appointments, rehabilitation, etc.).
  - iv. Departments will provide light duty work as soon as feasible in accordance with any physician restrictions.

- O. **Liability Avoidance:** The avoidance of excessive liability is the responsibility of all employees and management. This is largely accomplished by conducting facility inspections of all areas that allow for Public access. The practice of effective defensive driving techniques, identification and correction of physical hazards, and good accident investigation practices are tangible ways to avoid excessive liability exposures to the County.

## II. **Goals and Objectives**

### General

The ultimate goal of the County's Safety Program is the prevention of workplace injury and illness to employees, harm to the Public, and property losses to the County. This is supported by the guidelines, goals, procedures, objectives and responsibilities outlined in this PPM, as well as other PPMs developed by Risk Management including, but not limited to:

- i. Adherence to all safety directives and established safety programs;
- ii. Conduct regular safety inspections and audits by the Department and Risk Management in order to identify and control hazards;
- iii. Develop and provide training programs to employees on a variety of safety topics;
- iv. Conduct employee "toolbox" training by supervisors of all "field/trades" employees;
- v. Develop effective safety procedures at the organization level;
- vi. Utilize adequate control measures including personnel protective equipment;
- vii. Conduct effective accident investigations identifying root causes and corrective actions;
- viii. Report and investigate all job related injuries and illnesses (Worker's Compensation); and
- ix. Maintain all facilities, tools, and equipment to further the County's safety goals.

## III. **Responsibilities:**

### A. **Risk Management:**

- **PPM's:** Employee Safety Loss Control (ES/LC) will develop, maintain, and implement applicable PPMs for various hazardous workplace conditions and safety programs. These topics include, but are not limited to:



- i. Vehicle Safety
- ii. Hazardous Waste Management and Spill Cleanup
- iii. Hazard Communication
- iv. Respiratory Protection
- v. Personal Protective Equipment
- vi. Asbestos Management
- vii. Hearing Conservation
- viii. Indoor Air Quality
- ix. Permit Required Confined Space Entry
- x. Lockout / Tagout
- xi. Trenching and Shoring
- xii. Accident/Incident Reports
- xiii. Electrical Safe Work Practices
- xiv. Twenty-Four Hour Vehicle Assignments
- xv. Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation Procedures
- xvi. Chain Saw Operation
- xvii. Automated External Defibrillators and Severe Bleed Kits
- xviii. Hot Work-Control of Fires and Explosions
- xix. Off Road Vehicles, Powered Industrial Trucks and Watercraft
- xx. Prescription Safety Glasses
- xxi. Safety Footwear
- xxii. Fall Protection Policy
- xxiii. Confined Space Entry Procedures
- xxiv. Vehicle Safety-"How is My Driving"? Program
- xxv. Workplace Violence Prevention and Response

- Inspections and Audits: Safety inspections and audits are conducted on a regular basis. Inspections may be part of Departmental tasks or conducted solely by ES/LC. Supervisors and Safety Committees may receive training on conducting in-house inspections as required.
- Training: is provided to employees to help enhance their knowledge in hazard recognition, adhering to proper workplace safety procedures, and to help increase safety awareness in the workplace.
- Records: ES/LC compiles data from accident/incident reports to perform trending and analysis for Department management.
- Accident Investigation: Vehicular and Workers' Compensation accidents are investigated /reviewed to determine the root cause and to assure effective corrective actions are taken for future prevention. Workers' Compensation incidents are reviewed to determine if further investigation may be needed to prevent recurrence.
- Consultative services: Consultative services are provided upon request to departments for any safety/health or loss control issue.

- Administration of other health and safety programs.
- Industrial Hygiene assessment and program administration.
- Participate and function as a resource for Departmental Safety Committees.
- Review internal Departmental procedures affecting safety policy issues.
- Manage other programs as defined in the Countywide PPM.

**B. Occupational Health Clinic:**

The Occupational Health Clinic (OHC) will:

- Provide medical screening/testing as dictated by job position and tasks as required.
- Document employee injury/illness statements and conditions from employees
- Refer to Employee Safety any injuries and illnesses where it may appear that:
  - The claim is questionable; or
  - The circumstances of how, what, when, or where the injury/illness occurred requires further investigation to ensure that a recurrence does not occur.

**C. Department/Division Head:**

Each Department/Division Head is responsible for ensuring the success of the Palm Beach County Safety Program by supporting the safety policy elements as detailed in this PPM by:

- Developing a department specific safety policy, supporting the overall policy stated in this PPM;
- Ensuring that operations conducted within their department comply with Safety and Health requirements;
- Supporting the activities of Safety Committees;
- Establishing goals and targets for Safety and Health performance;
- Ensuring participation of all interested parties (e.g. Engineering, Operations, etc.) in the planning of new facilities and processes;
- Holding supervisors and employees accountable to follow safe work practices, utilize applicable safety equipment, and use proper control measures to limit occupational exposures. Failure to utilize safety equipment, processes, and controls should be enforced by the Department through established

disciplinary procedures;

- Supporting inspections/audits by providing needed resources to include staff time, budget to correct/modify deficiencies, etc.;
- Ensuring that all incidents are adequately investigated (e.g., root cause analysis) and promptly reported to Risk Management with appropriate corrective actions identified;
- Reviewing all incidents and reports to concur with investigating supervisors' findings; and
- Establishing "modified/light duty" work to support worker's compensation management of claims by getting employees back to work as soon as possible.

#### **D. Supervisors:**

Supervisors will support the safety policy by:

- Establishing procedures and engage in activities that support the Safety Policy including safety leadership by example;
- Ensuring that operations conducted within their area comply with all safety and health requirements;
- Supporting the activities of Safety Committees by participating or encouraging other employees to participate;
- Engaging in activities designed to support established goals and targets for safety and health performance;
- Participating/facilitating the teamwork of all interested parties (e.g. Engineering, Operations, etc.) in the planning of new facilities and processes;
- Holding employees accountable to follow safe work practices, utilize applicable safety equipment, and use proper control measures to limit occupational exposures. Failure to utilize safety equipment, such as personal protective equipment (PPE) , adequate processes, and controls should be enforced by the Department through established disciplinary procedures;
- Advising employees of workplace safety and increasing safety awareness. ES/LC can be contacted to provide technical advice on any health and safety concern;

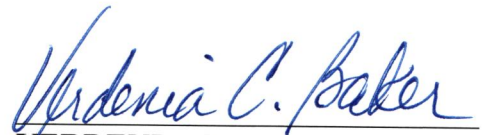
- Supporting inspections/audits by providing needed resources including staff time, budget to correct/modify deficiencies, etc.;
- Conducting regular safety inspections of the area for which they are responsible to prevent injuries and illnesses to employees and the public;
- Ensuring that all incidents are adequately investigated (e.g., root cause analysis) and promptly reported to Risk Management with appropriate corrective actions identified and concurrence of upper management;
- Establishing “modified/light duty” work to support worker’s compensation Management of claims by returning employees back to work as soon as possible;
- Ensuring that employees attend all required safety training;
- Conducting “toolbox” or other job specific training with employees on a periodic basis;
- Ensuring that all facilities, tools, and equipment are maintained in a satisfactory condition to prevent a safety hazard;
- Ensuring proper PPE is available and being worn as necessary. In order to select the proper PPE, the following must take place:
  - The work area must be assessed and/or a JHA has performed prior to selecting/wearing PPE.
  - The proper PPE should be selected based on the JHA, Safety Data Sheet (SDSs) or other hazard assessments.
  - Employees shall be trained on the proper usage (e.g., don, doff, adjust, and wear), maintenance, and storage.
- Ensuring all damaged PPE is removed from service immediately and employees are given replacement equipment prior to additional work being performed.

**E. Employees:**

Employees will support the Safety Policy by:

- Ensuring that work is performed in a safe manner and if unsure contact the appropriate level of supervision for information;

- Utilizing all Safety Control measures and equipment available;
- Informing supervision of any unsafe conditions that are observed in the work area;
- Informing supervision of any work related injury/illness as soon as possible;
- Following all safety directives and rules;
- Attending all required safety and job specific training;
- Wearing appropriate PPE as required; and
- Reporting to supervision any damaged or defective PPE.



**VERDENIA C. BAKER**  
**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

**Supersession History:**

1. PPM # CW-O-005, effective 07/01/1988
2. PPM # CW-O-005, effective 07/01/2007
3. PPM # CW-O-005, effective 12/17/2012
4. PPM # CW-O-005, effective 02/06/2018