

# ESASD SAFETY NEWSLETTER



## Make Safety Matter

WOW! Summer really seemed to fly by. Here we are at the beginning of another new school year. The beginning of a new year presents us with many opportunities for growth, personally and professionally. Regardless of the position you hold at ESASD, everyone has already had or will be having opportunities to focus on workplace safety.

Each year, a sense of newness brings with it anticipation, excitement, and change. When we start a new year, there are, undoubtedly, many new ideas for creating an exciting and fulfilling experience for students, parents, community members, and colleagues. As you think about myriad of opportunities that lies ahead, do you find yourself including the opportunity to be an important component in school and workplace safety? If the answer to this question is yes, thank you and we look forward to continue working with you as an essential part of our safety team. If the answer is no, the members of the ESASD District Safety committee and administration encourages you to stop for a few (or more) moments and think about how important you are to helping us maintain a safe learning and working environment.

Each and every employee of the East Stroudsburg Area School District is essential to creating and maintaining a safe environment as each person brings a different perspective to the table and, perhaps most importantly, knows and can identify many of the hazards associated with their job.

## Fall 2022

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Keeping this in mind, you are always encouraged to make your supervisor aware of potential safety issues. Additionally, you are encouraged to assist in maintaining the safety of others by increasing their awareness of unsafe or potentially unsafe practices.. Increasing safety awareness for your colleagues by pointing out unsafe practices or actions may not be something that everyone is comfortable with, but is certainly something that can save others from unanticipated expenses, loss of work, and increased stress and anxiety on the part of your families.

Discussed further will be situations and practices that you are encouraged to think about how you could help maintain a safe area for all.

## Common Mistakes that Lead to on the Job Injuries

**1. Wearing inappropriate Footwear.** Many employees are rushing in the morning to get ready and leave for work and in their hurry, may slip on the closest pair of footwear. Please remember that all footwear must be secured at the heel with a strap, with heels no more than 3 1/2 inches. Certain positions/classifications may further stipulate specific footwear for health and safety reasons. If you are not certain if your position requires a specific type of footwear, please see your supervisor.

**2. Inappropriate lifting.** Back injuries can happen very easily, but the causes of back injuries on the job can often be avoided by appropriate lifting. If you have an item that is very heavy or too big for one person to lift, please have someone assist you or use appropriate tools for lifting. Remember the appropriate and safe lifting techniques. Keep a wide base of support, squat down, bending at the knees only, keep good posture, slowly lift by straightening your hips and knees (not your back, and hold the load as close to your body as possible, at the level of your belly button.

**3. Not being aware of your surroundings.** Slips, trips, and falls continue to be a common cause of workplace injuries. Many of these slips, trips, and falls can be avoided by wearing the footwear appropriate for the weather, being aware of your surroundings, not rushing, using ladders or step stools appropriately, cleaning up spills immediately, placing signage where there are wet floors, taking short steps on slippery surfaces, walking in well lit areas, ensuring that all furniture, cords, and objects do not interfere with traffic patterns in your work area, using stairs and handrails, caring large items at your waist so as not to obstruct your view, and keeping all walkways clear of clutter.

**4.Storage of heavy items high.** Storing heavy items above your head can lead to injuries in a variety of ways. Trying to move the item may lead to back injuries, shoulder strains, and repetitive motion injuries. Additionally, heavy items stored high can fall resulting in a struck by injury. Make sure any heavy items are stored on lower level shelves.

**5. Not utilizing proper de-escalations techniques.** If you know you are in a position that may result in being injured by a child, be sure you have received appropriate training for de-escalating an aggressive child. As always, physical restraints is an absolute last option, used if the child's or other's safety are at risk. Verbal de-escalation is always the first line of defense. When working with an aggressive student, respect the child's personal space. By allowing at least 1 1/2 feet between you and the child, you can decrease being hit while also decreasing the child's anxiety. If possible, have another staff member to assist with the de-escalation and to be your eyes on the child to warn you of any potential danger. Work with your colleagues to develop a strategy, this includes how to move objects that can be thrown.

**6. Careless handling of sharp objects.** Cuts and other injuries from sharp objects most frequently occur due to rushing and not focusing on the task at hand. Whenever using sharp tools such as knives, remember to cut away from your body and ensure no one else is in the way of the knife. Additionally, focus on what you are doing and don't use sharp objects if you don't have the time to make safety a priority.

## How Attitude Impacts the Work Environment

As we begin a new year, everyone is encouraged to work towards maintaining a positive attitude. Not only does a positive attitude/mindset impact you and your physical and emotional health, but it also has a great impact upon your co-workers. Gossip, negative comments, a lack of mutual respect, and workplace conflicts can all affect employee morale and engagement which can, in turn, impact each employee's focus and work performance. Additionally, workplace exclusion and lack of collaboration is not only associated with high turnover and job dissatisfaction, but can also lead to increased anxiety, mental health issues, stress, anxiety, and physical symptoms such as migraines and muscle pain. By not addressing problems that lead to the physical and mental health issues, not only is productivity impacted, but employee attendance is as well.

Improving workplace morale is not the job of just one person, but of each and every person in the workplace. Changes will not occur overnight, but by making small daily changes, a positive environment will emerge over time. What are some of these changes that each person can make? They are few and simple, but take each person's commitment to making them.

First, all change begins with ourselves. Be honest with yourself. Do you find yourself complaining a lot at work or during training? Do you tend to be an Eeyore by projecting a "glass half-empty" attitude much of the time? Only you can change you! Start by becoming more cognizant of what you are saying, how you are reacting, and even what your body language is projecting. Work to identify one small thing that you can work on changing. It may just be to smile more, make it a goal to say at least one thing positive to each person you come into contact with, focus on what is amazing in your life, or focus on what is in your control. Remember, small steps can lead to great adventures!

Another way in which you can help to project a positive work environment is by steering clear of negative conversations or getting caught up in a cycle of complaints. When this happens, it is important that you distance yourself from the conversation. Distancing oneself can be by either walking away or by redirecting the negative conversation to a positive one.

Lastly, feed your mind with positive thoughts. One effective way of taking the power out of negativity is by giving more attention to the opposite. Again, a change in mindset will not happen right away, but little by little, you and those around you will begin to sense the change,

**have a happy, sparkling,  
full of promise,  
safe and brand spankin'  
new year!!**

