

**Chapter 246-366 WAC  
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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**WAC 246-366-001 Introduction.** These rules and regulations are established as minimum environmental standards for educational facilities and do not necessarily reflect optimum standards for facility planning and operation.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-366-001, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; Order 55, § 248-64-210, filed 6/8/71.]

***(Effective September 1, 2025)***

**WAC 246-366-005 Purpose.** The purpose of this chapter is to maintain minimum environmental health and safety standards for school facilities until legislative action allows for full or partial implementation of chapter 246-366A WAC. To the extent the legislature funds or otherwise allows for its implementation, chapter 246-366A WAC is intended to replace or supersede this chapter.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 10-01-174, 10-12-018, 11-10-080, 13-09-040, 15-09-070, 17-14-055, 19-14-107, 21-14-056, 22-14-021, 23-16-005, and 24-14-089, § 246-366-005, filed 12/22/09, 5/21/10, 5/3/11, 4/11/13, 4/15/15, 6/28/17, 7/2/19, 7/1/21, 6/24/22, 7/19/23, and 6/28/24, effective 9/1/25.]

**WAC 246-366-010 Definitions.** The following definitions shall apply in the interpretation and the enforcement of these rules and regulations:

(1) "School" - Shall mean any publicly financed or private or parochial school or facility used for the purpose of school instruction, from the kindergarten through twelfth grade. This definition does not include a private residence in which parents teach their own natural or legally adopted children.

(2) "Board of education" - An appointive or elective board whose primary responsibility is to operate public or private or parochial schools or to contract for school services.

- (3) "Instructional areas" - Space intended or used for instructional purposes.
- (4) "New construction" - Shall include the following:
- (a) New school building.
  - (b) Additions to existing schools.
  - (c) Renovation, other than minor repair, of existing schools.
  - (d) Schools established in all or part of any existing structures, previously designed or utilized for other purposes.
  - (e) Installation or alteration of any equipment or systems, subject to these regulations, in schools.
  - (f) Portables constructed after the effective date of these regulations.
- (5) "Occupied zone" - Is that volume of space from the floor to 6 feet above the floor when determining temperature and air movement, exclusive of the 3 foot perimeter on the outside wall.
- (6) "Site" - Shall include the areas used for buildings, playgrounds and other school functions.
- (7) "Portables" - Any structure that is transported to a school site where it is placed or assembled for use as part of a school facility.
- (8) "Health officer" - Legally qualified physician who has been appointed as the health officer for the city, town, county or district public health department as defined in RCW 70.05.010(2), or his authorized representative.
- (9) "Secretary" - Means secretary of the Washington state department of health or the secretary's designee.
- (10) "Department" - Means Washington state department of health.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 92-02-019 (Order 225B), § 246-366-010, filed 12/23/91, effective 1/23/92; WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-366-010, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; WSR 82-07-015 (Order 225), § 248-64-220, filed 3/9/82; Order 131, § 248-64-220, filed 8/5/76; Order 55, § 248-64-220, filed 6/8/71.]

**WAC 246-366-020 Substitutions.** The secretary may allow the substitution of procedures or equipment for those outlined in these regulations, when such procedures or equipment have been demonstrated to be equivalent to those heretofore prescribed. When the secretary judges that such substitutions are justified, he shall grant permission for the substitution in writing. Requests for substitution shall be directed to the jurisdictional health officer who shall immediately forward them, including his recommendations, to the secretary. All decisions, substitutions, or interpretations shall be made a matter of public record and open to inspection.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-366-020, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; Order 55, § 248-64-230, filed 6/8/71.]

**WAC 246-366-030 Site approval.** (1) Before a new school facility is constructed, an addition is made to an existing school facility, or an existing school facility is remodeled, the board of education shall obtain written approval from the health officer that the proposed development site presents no health problems. The board of education may

request the health officer make a survey and submit a written health appraisal of any proposed school site.

(2) School sites shall be of a size sufficient to provide for the health and safety of the school enrollment.

(3) Noise from any source at a proposed site for a new school, an addition to an existing school, or a portable classroom shall not exceed an hourly average of 55 dBA (Leq 60 minutes) and shall not exceed an hourly maximum (Lmax) of 75 dBA during the time of day the school is in session; except sites exceeding these sound levels are acceptable if a plan for sound reduction is included in the new construction proposal and the plan for sound reduction is approved by the health officer.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-366-030, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; WSR 89-20-026 (Order 333), § 248-64-240, filed 9/28/89, effective 10/29/89; Order 88, § 248-64-240, filed 10/3/73; Order 55, § 248-64-240, filed 6/8/71.]

**WAC 246-366-040 Plan review and inspection of schools.** (1) Any board of education, before constructing a new facility, or making any addition to or major alteration of an existing facility or any of the utilities connected with the facility, shall:

(a) First submit final plans and specifications of such buildings or changes to the jurisdictional health officer;

(b) Shall obtain the health officer's recommendations and any required changes, in writing;

(c) Shall obtain written approval from the health officer, to the effect that such plans and specifications comply with these rules and regulations.

(2) The health officer shall:

(a) Conduct a preoccupancy inspection of new construction to determine its conformity with the approved plans and specifications.

(b) Make periodic inspections of each existing school within his jurisdiction, and forward to the board of education and the administrator of the inspected school a copy of his findings together with any required changes and recommendations.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-366-040, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; Order 55, § 248-64-250, filed 6/8/71.]

**WAC 246-366-050 Buildings.** (1) Buildings shall be kept clean and in good repair.

(2) Instructional areas shall have a minimum average ceiling height of 8 feet. Ceiling height shall be the clear vertical distance from the finished floor to the finished ceiling. No projections from the finished ceiling shall be less than 7 feet vertical distance from the finished floor, e.g., beams, lighting fixtures, sprinklers, pipe work.

(3) All stairway[s] and steps shall have handrails and nonslip treads.

(4) The floors shall have an easily cleanable surface.

(5) The premises and all buildings shall be free of insects and rodents of public health significance and conditions which attract, provide harborage and promote propagation of vermin.

(6) All poisonous compounds shall be easily identified, used with extreme caution and stored in such a manner as to prevent unauthorized use or possible contamination of food and drink.

(7) There shall be sufficient space provided for the storage of outdoor clothing, play equipment and instructional equipment. The space shall be easily accessible, well lighted, heated and ventilated.

(8) Schools shall be provided with windows sufficient in number, size and location to permit students to see to the outside. Windows are optional in special purpose instructional areas including, but not limited to, little theaters, music areas, multipurpose areas, gymnasiums, auditoriums, shops, libraries and seminar areas. No student shall occupy an instructional area without windows more than 50 percent of the school day.

(9) Exterior sun control shall be provided to exclude direct sunlight from window areas and skylights of instructional areas, assembly rooms and meeting rooms during at least 80 percent of the normal school hours. Each area shall be considered as an individual case. Sun control is not required for sun angles less than 42 degrees up from the horizontal. Exterior sun control is not required if air conditioning is provided, or special glass installed having a total solar energy transmission factor less than 60 percent.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-366-050, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; WSR 82-07-015 (Order 225), § 248-64-260, filed 3/9/82; WSR 79-08-078 (Order 183), § 248-64-260, filed 7/26/79; Order 124, § 248-64-260, filed 3/18/76; Order 55, § 248-64-260, filed 6/8/71.]

**WAC 246-366-060 Plumbing, water supply and fixtures.** (1) Plumbing: Plumbing shall be sized, installed, and maintained in accordance with the state building code. However, local code requirements shall prevail, when these requirements are more stringent or in excess of the state building code.

(2) Water supply: The water supply system for a school shall be designed, constructed, maintained and operated in accordance with chapter 246-290 WAC.

(3) Toilet and handwashing facilities.

(a) Adequate, conveniently located toilet and handwashing facilities shall be provided for students and employees. At handwashing facilities soap and single-service towels shall be provided. Common use towels are prohibited. Warm air dryers may be used in place of single-service towels. Toilet paper shall be available, conveniently located adjacent to each toilet fixture.

(b) The number of toilet and handwashing fixtures in schools established in existing structures, previously designed or utilized for other purposes shall be in accordance with the state building code. However, local code requirements shall prevail, when these requirements are more stringent or in excess of the state building code.

(c) Toilet and handwashing facilities must be accessible for use during school hours and scheduled events.

(d) Handwashing facilities shall be provided with hot water at a maximum temperature of 120 degrees Fahrenheit. If hand operated self-

closing faucets are used, they must be of a metering type capable of providing at least ten seconds of running water.

(4) Showers:

(a) Showers shall be provided for classes in physical education, at grades 9 and above. An automatically controlled hot water supply of 100 to 120 degrees Fahrenheit shall be provided. Showers with cold water only shall not be permitted.

(b) Drying areas, if provided, shall be adjacent to the showers and adjacent to locker rooms. Shower and drying areas shall have water impervious nonskid floors. Walls shall be water impervious up to showerhead heights. Upper walls and ceiling shall be of smooth, easily washable construction.

(c) Locker and/or dressing room floors shall have a water impervious surface. Walls shall have a washable surface. In new construction, floor drains shall be provided in locker and dressing areas.

(d) If towels are supplied by the school, they shall be for individual use only and shall be laundered after each use.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 92-02-019 (Order 225B), § 246-366-060, filed 12/23/91, effective 1/23/92; WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-366-060, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; WSR 82-07-015 (Order 225), § 248-64-270, filed 3/9/82; WSR 79-08-078 (Order 183), § 248-64-270, filed 7/26/79; Order 124, § 248-64-270, filed 3/18/76; Order 55, § 248-64-270, filed 6/8/71.]

**WAC 246-366-070 Sewage disposal.** All sewage and waste water from a school shall be drained to a sewerage disposal system which is approved by the jurisdictional agency. On-site sewage disposal systems shall be designed, constructed and maintained in accordance with chapters 246-272 and 173-240 WAC.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 92-02-019 (Order 225B), § 246-366-070, filed 12/23/91, effective 1/23/92; WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-366-070, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; WSR 82-07-015 (Order 225), § 248-64-280, filed 3/9/82; Order 55, § 248-64-280, filed 6/8/71.]

**WAC 246-366-080 Ventilation.** (1) All rooms used by students or staff shall be kept reasonably free of all objectionable odor, excessive heat or condensation.

(2) All sources producing air contaminants of public health importance shall be controlled by the provision and maintenance of local mechanical exhaust ventilation systems as approved by the health officer.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-366-080, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; WSR 80-03-044 (Order 192), § 248-64-290, filed 2/20/80; WSR 79-08-078 (Order 183), § 248-64-290, filed 7/26/79; Order 124, § 248-64-290, filed 3/18/76; Order 88, § 248-64-290, filed 10/3/73; Order 75, § 248-64-290, filed 7/11/72; Order 55, § 248-64-290, filed 6/8/71.]

**WAC 246-366-090 Heating.** The entire facility inhabited by students and employees shall be heated during school hours to maintain a

minimum temperature of 65 degrees Fahrenheit except for gymnasiums which shall be maintained at a minimum temperature of 60 degrees Fahrenheit.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-366-090, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; WSR 82-07-015 (Order 225), § 248-64-300, filed 3/9/82; Order 55, § 248-64-300, filed 6/8/71.]

**WAC 246-366-100 Temperature control.** Heating, ventilating and/or air conditioning systems shall be equipped with automatic room temperature controls.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-366-100, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; WSR 82-07-015 (Order 225), § 248-64-310, filed 3/9/82; Order 55, § 248-64-310, filed 6/8/71.]

**WAC 246-366-110 Sound control.** (1) In new construction, plans submitted under WAC 246-366-040 shall specify ventilation equipment and other mechanical noise sources in classrooms are designed to provide background sound which conforms to a noise criterion curve or equivalent not to exceed NC-35. The owner shall certify equipment and features are installed according to the approved plans.

(2) In new construction, the actual background noise at any student location within the classroom shall not exceed 45 dBA (Leq<sub>x</sub>) and 70 dB (Leq<sub>x</sub>) (unweighted scale) where <sub>x</sub> is thirty seconds or more. The health officer shall determine compliance with this section when the ventilation system and the ventilation system's noise generating components, e.g., condenser, heat pump, etc., are in operation.

(3) Existing portable classrooms, constructed before January 1, 1990, moved from one site to another on the same school property or within the same school district are exempt from the requirements of this section if the portable classrooms meet the following:

(a) Noise abating or noise generating features shall not be altered in a manner that may increase noise levels;

(b) The portable classrooms were previously in use for general instruction;

(c) Ownership of the portable classrooms will remain the same; and

(d) The new site is in compliance with WAC 246-366-030(3).

(4) In new construction, the maximum ambient noise level in industrial arts, vocational agriculture and trade, and industrial classrooms shall not exceed 65 dBA when all fume and dust exhaust systems are operating.

(5) The maximum noise exposure for students in vocational education and music areas shall not exceed the levels specified in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
MAXIMUM NOISE EXPOSURES PERMISSIBLE

Duration per day (hours)	Sound Level (dBA)
8 hours	85
6 hours	87

Duration per day (hours)	Sound Level (dBA)
4 hours	90
3 hours	92
2 hours	95
1-1/2 hours	97
1 hour	100
1/2 hour	105
1/4 hour	110

Students shall not be exposed to sound levels equal to or greater than 115 dBA.

(6) Should the total noise exposure in vocational education and music areas exceed the levels specified in Table 1 of subsection (5) of this section, hearing protectors, e.g., ear plugs, muffs, etc., shall be provided to and used by the exposed students. Hearing protectors shall reduce student noise exposure to comply with the levels specified in Table 1 of subsection (5) of this section.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 92-02-019 (Order 225B), § 246-366-110, filed 12/23/91, effective 1/23/92; WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-366-110, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; WSR 89-20-026 (Order 333), § 248-64-320, filed 9/28/89, effective 10/29/89; Order 124, § 248-64-320, filed 3/18/76; Order 88, § 248-64-320, filed 10/3/73; Order 55, § 248-64-320, filed 6/8/71.]

**WAC 246-366-120 Lighting.** (1) The following maintained light intensities shall be provided as measured 30 inches above the floor or on working or teaching surfaces. General, task and/or natural lighting may be used to maintain the minimum lighting intensities.

	Minimum Foot - Candle Intensity
General instructional areas including: Study halls, lecture rooms and libraries.	30
Special instructional areas where safety is of prime consideration or fine detail work is done including: Sewing rooms, laboratories (includes chemical storage areas), shops, drafting rooms and art and craft rooms.	50
Kitchen areas including: Food storage and preparation rooms.	30
Noninstructional areas including: Auditoriums, lunch rooms, assembly rooms, corridors, stairs, storerooms, and toilet rooms.	10
Gymnasiums: Main and auxiliary spaces, shower rooms and locker rooms.	20

(2) Excessive brightness and glare shall be controlled in all instructional areas. Surface contrasts and direct or indirect glare shall not cause excessive eye accommodation or eye strain problems.

(3) Lighting shall be provided in a manner which minimizes shadows and other lighting deficiencies on work and teaching surfaces.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-366-120, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; WSR 82-07-015 (Order 225), § 248-64-330, filed 3/9/82; Order 124, § 248-64-330, filed 3/18/76; Order 55, § 248-64-330, filed 6/8/71.]

**WAC 246-366-130 Food handling.** (1) Food storage, preparation, and service facilities shall be constructed and maintained and operated in accordance with chapters 246-215 and 246-217 WAC.

(2) When central kitchens are used, food shall be transported in tightly covered containers. Only closed vehicles shall be used in transporting foods from central kitchens to other schools.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 92-02-019 (Order 225B), § 246-366-130, filed 12/23/91, effective 1/23/92; WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-366-130, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; Order 55, § 248-64-340, filed 6/8/71.]

**WAC 246-366-140 Safety.** (1) The existence of unsafe conditions which present a potential hazard to occupants of the school are in violation of these regulations. The secretary in cooperation with the state superintendent of public instruction shall review potentially hazardous conditions in schools which are in violation of good safety practice, especially in laboratories, industrial arts and vocational instructional areas. They shall jointly prepare a guide for use by department personnel during routine school inspections in identifying violations of good safety practices. The guide should also include recommendations for safe facilities and safety practices.

(2) In new construction, chemistry laboratories shall be provided with an eyewash fountain and a shower head for flushing in cases of chemical spill and clothing fires. If more than one laboratory is provided, one of each fixture will be adequate if the laboratories are in close proximity.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-366-140, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; Order 55, § 248-64-350, filed 6/8/71.]

**WAC 246-366-150 Exemption.** The board of health may, at its discretion, exempt a school from complying with parts of these regulations when it has been found after thorough investigation and consideration that such exemption may be made in an individual case without placing the health or safety of the students or staff of the school in danger and that strict enforcement of the regulation would create an undue hardship upon the school.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 91-02-051 (Order 124B), recodified as § 246-366-150, filed 12/27/90, effective 1/31/91; WSR 82-07-015 (Order 225), § 248-64-360, filed 3/9/82; Order 55, § 248-64-360, filed 6/8/71.]

***(Effective September 1, 2025)***



**WAC 246-366-160 Severability.** If any provision of this chapter or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the chapter or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.20.050. WSR 10-01-174, 10-12-018, 11-10-080, 13-09-040, 15-09-070, 17-14-055, 19-14-107, 21-14-056, 22-14-021, 23-16-005, and 24-14-089, § 246-366-160, filed 12/22/09, 5/21/10, 5/3/11, 4/11/13, 4/15/15, 6/28/17, 7/2/19, 7/1/21, 6/24/22, 7/19/23, and 6/28/24, effective 9/1/25.]