

(Effective August 1, 2024)

WAC 246-366A-020 Responsibilities—General. (1) Responsibilities of school officials. School officials shall:

(a) Maintain conditions within the school environment that will not endanger health and safety.

(b) Identify, assess, and mitigate or correct environmental health and safety hazards in their school facilities, establish necessary protective procedures, use appropriate controls, and take action to protect or separate those at risk from identified hazards, consistent with the level of risk presented by the specific hazard, until mitigation or correction is complete.

(c) When conditions are identified that pose an imminent health hazard:

(i) Take immediate action to mitigate hazards and prevent exposure;

(ii) Promptly notify the local health officer; and

(iii) Promptly inform school facility staff, students, and parents about the conditions and actions taken in response.

(d) Retain for at least six years, unless otherwise required by other state or federal laws, records pertaining to:

(i) Health and safety inspections of the school facilities, including the final report findings, correction schedules established in consultation with the local health officer, and recommended actions;

(ii) Imminent health hazards identified under this section and WAC 246-366A-190, and actions taken in response;

(iii) Site assessment, review, and approval as required under WAC 246-366A-030;

(iv) Construction project plan review and approval as required under WAC 246-366A-040; and

(v) Playground plan review and approval as required under WAC 246-366A-150.

(e) Have the records described in this subsection available to the public, except where otherwise provided by applicable public disclosure law.

(f) Prepare a report to the public and the school board at least annually about environmental health and safety conditions in the schools. The report must include an explanation of:

(i) Variances obtained from the local health officer regarding requirements of these rules;

(ii) Dates of environmental health and safety inspections conducted under requirements of these rules and any deficiencies not corrected within the time frame established by the local health officer in accordance with subsection (2) of this section;

(iii) Any imminent health hazards identified; and

(iv) A method for school officials to receive public comment about the report.

(2) Responsibilities of the local health officer.

(a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, the local health officer shall:

(i) Periodically conduct an environmental health and safety inspection of each school facility within his or her jurisdiction. Beginning one year after the effective date of this section, those inspections must be conducted at least once each year.

(ii) Notify school officials at the time of discovery or immediately following the inspection if conditions that pose an imminent

health hazard are identified, and recommend actions to mitigate the hazards and prevent exposure.

(iii) Consult with school officials upon completion of the inspection about findings and recommended follow-up actions and, if necessary, develop a correction schedule. Approaches and timelines used to address noncompliant conditions will depend on the level of risk to health and safety presented by the condition, and may include consideration of low-cost alternatives.

(iv) Develop draft and final inspection reports, in consultation with school officials, within sixty days after conducting an inspection. The report must include inspection findings related to this rule and any required correction schedule.

(v) Confirm, as needed, that corrections are accomplished.

(vi) Retain for at least six years, unless otherwise required by other state or federal laws, records pertaining to:

(A) Health and safety inspections of the school facilities performed by the local health officer, including, but not limited to, the final inspection report and correction schedules; and

(B) Imminent health hazards identified under this section and WAC 246-366A-190, and local health officer actions taken in response.

(vii) Have the records described in this subsection available to the public, except where otherwise provided by applicable public disclosure law.

(b) The local health officer may allow a school official or qualified designee to conduct a required inspection under a program approved by the local health officer not more than two out of every three years. The program must include provisions for:

(i) Assuring that the school official or designee conducting the inspection has attended training in the standards, techniques, and methods used to conduct an environmental health and safety inspection;

(ii) Completing a standardized checklist at each inspection;

(iii) Providing a written report to the local health officer about the findings of the inspection;

(iv) Notifying the local health officer regarding any identified imminent health hazards and coordinating with the local health officer to mitigate hazards and prevent exposure; and

(v) Consulting with the local health officer on follow-up and corrective actions needed to address noncompliant conditions that do not pose an imminent health hazard.

(3) Responsibilities of the department.

(a) The department shall:

(i) Report to the state board of health once every three years. The report must include a summary of:

(A) Variances granted by local health officers; and

(B) Status of local rule implementation.

(ii) Make technical assistance and training available to local health jurisdictions, educational service districts, school districts, and school personnel for implementation of these rules, including:

(A) Inspection techniques and procedures;

(B) Inspection materials and checklists;

(C) Variance request evaluations; and

(D) Model environmental health and safety programs for schools and local health jurisdictions.

(b) The department, at the request of the local health officer, may assist in investigating environmental health and safety incidents at schools.

(c) Establish a school rule technical advisory committee to help promote consistent statewide interpretation and implementation of these rules.

[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, and 23-16-005, § 246-366A-020, 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, and 7/19/23, effective 8/1/24.]