

Department of Public Works General Field Safety Policy

Reissued: January 2024

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Department of Public Works to provide a safe and secure work environment for all employees. We are committed to minimizing employee exposure to injury, risk or hazard by:

- Providing new hire orientation and annual training to employees on safety practices and protocols;
- Ensuring that all DPW field and office workers understand all aspects of their job responsibilities;
- Encouraging employees to know their limitations, avoid situations that are not within their area of responsibility or expertise;
- Allowing employees to postpone or delay a task when they feel that their personal safety is in jeopardy; and,
- Encouraging employees to share ideas and/or suggestions with their supervisors, safety staff, or other appropriate personnel that could result in safety or process improvement.

This general Field Safety Policy applies to all DPW employees who perform field work in connection with their employment. Division specific policies, protocols, and/or work rules will be developed to address division specific circumstance. DPW's general Field Safety Policy and any relevant division specific policy, work rule or protocol will be distributed and reviewed during new employee orientation. Annual reviews shall also be conducted by Safety Staff within the Department of Public Works.

Roles and Responsibilities

Managers and Supervisors:

All DPW managers and supervisors will respond to and address field safety concerns of employees in a timely manner. In addition they are responsible for:

- providing and enforcing safe work practices among all employees,
- provide the necessary equipment or supplies to promote field safety,
- educating and training employees regarding safe work practices,
- investigating and addressing employee safety needs and priorities,
- securing the assistance of police and other law enforcement officials in the investigation and resolution of concerns,
- documenting and following up on necessary interventions and reports,
- creating the appropriate protocol for employees to follow when requesting assistance to address a field safety concern, and
- facilitating or referring employees to support and counseling services as necessary.

Safety Staff:

DPW's safety staff is responsible for serving as a resource to employees and supervisors in addressing field safety questions and concerns. In addition safety personnel will:

- train and educate employees regarding safe work practices,
- enforce safety policy and practices as needed,
- investigate and provide reports on safety related incidents,
- assemble and examine data to determine trends or identify areas where action is required.

Employees:

It is the responsibility of every DPW employee to recognize the importance of being aware of his/her surroundings and to avoid situations that may pose a safety risk in the field. Employees are also expected to use prudent judgment when working in the field and are confronted with a suspicious situation. Employees are responsible for:

- understanding and complying with DPW’s general and division specific field safety policies and protocols;
- wear and/or use required personal protective equipment and uniforms or other items of clothing such as safety vests in accordance with departmental requirements;
- reporting incidents that pose a safety threat;
- Inform supervisors of changes in schedule or route;
- removing themselves from a dangerous situation; and,
- cooperating in the investigation and resolution of safety concerns.

All employees must comply with the City’s policy prohibiting employees from carrying or possessing a firearm or dangerous weapon while acting in the course and scope of their employment for and on behalf of the City of Milwaukee. Employees should also notify their supervisor when a “buddy” system is required to safely perform a particular task or on a “visit” to a work site so that action can be taken without delay.

General Procedures

Employees are required to report all incidents and safety concerns to management or Safety Personnel as soon as practical. The form or procedure to be used to report such incidents is determined by DPW management. Incidents for purposes of this policy include any unsafe, threatening, unruly, illegal actions or behaviors observed or witnessed by employees when performing work in the field. If the employee is hurt as a result of an incident, a Worker’s Compensation claim or Injury Report shall be filed within 24 hours of the incident.

Crisis Management, Grief Counseling and Peer Support:

How employees respond and recover from experiencing a stressful event or incident is unique to each individual and that individual’s life experiences. The City of Milwaukee offers a variety of resources to help employees and their families deal with the stress and anxiety of violent or stressful incidents.

- 1) Departments may wish to consult with the City’s *Employee Assistance Program (EAP)* Coordinator, Cris Zamora, for supportive incident response options that may include:
 - a. Group Defusing or Debriefing
 - b. Individual Debriefing
 - c. On-site EAP Office Hours
- 2) Departmental *Peer Support Teams* and/or *Safety Teams*. Management may wish to coordinate supportive interventions with their respective response teams during and following an incident, if available. Fire and Police department Peer Support Teams may be available to assist upon request.
- 3) The EAP has available on-demand written material specific to trauma, stress, and management during a crisis (<http://city.milwaukee.gov/der/EAP/MgrSupvrToolbox#.WRMSjk2GNeU>). Distributing these materials to those impacted is often very helpful.
- 4) United Health Care’s *Care24* program. This program is available to employees and family members with United Health Care as their insurance carrier. Benefit contact number is found on the back of UHC insurance card (**800-942-4746**). It offers access to:
 - a. Registered nurses
 - b. Master’s-level counselors
 - i. Immediate telephonic support 24/7 and referrals to local outpatient mental health counselors for up to **three FREE** visits.
 - c. Legal and financial professionals
 - d. Community resources

Workplace Clinic. Located at 841 N. Broadway, Milwaukee (Zeidler Municipal Building). The clinic is **FREE** for all City of Milwaukee employees, their spouses and domestic partners. To make an appointment, call **414-777-3413**.

Fast Clinic is available for employees, spouses and dependents (ages 6 and older) with the City of Milwaukee's UHC health insurance. See link for locations.

https://city.milwaukee.gov/ImageLibrary/Groups/derAuthors/Benefits1/CityofMilwaukeeFastCareFlyer-FAQ_Final.pdf