

Southern Plains Health and Safety Annual Notification 2023-2024

Southern Plains Education Cooperative is committed to providing a healthy and safe environment for all employees, students, and public citizens utilizing the school facilities. The Cooperative maintains a Board approved Health and Safety Program that lists and documents the procedures and plans for maintaining a safe and healthy environment. The Health and Safety Program also helps the Cooperative maintain compliance with the numerous state and federal regulations and laws governing health and safety issues in the Cooperative. As a part of that compliance, each year the Cooperative notifies the Cooperative employees and parents of the following ongoing programs.

1. Presence of Asbestos within Cooperative Buildings

Southern Plains Education Cooperative has continued to respond to asbestos present in our school buildings through monitoring and maintenance. Asbestos, most often found contained in thermal pipe insulation, is a mineral fiber associated with increased levels of disease when inhaled.

Since the implementation of the Asbestos Management Plan in 1989 the Cooperative has continued with its ongoing asbestos operations and maintenance program, including periodic surveillance every six months in each of the Cooperative's buildings. During periodic surveillance, damage to material containing asbestos is noted and repaired following strict procedures. Asbestos is dangerous only when it is broken loose from building material into fine, dust-like fibers and inhaled. When this condition becomes a possibility, asbestos is removed.

This past year the Cooperative conducted the periodic surveillance as required by the Asbestos Management Plan. These inspections are done to maintain asbestos-containing materials in a safe condition in all areas of the buildings where asbestos is present.

The detailed Asbestos Maintenance Plan and updated information for each building in the cooperative is open to public review. You can find the Asbestos Management Plan located in the custodial office of the building. If you have any further questions about asbestos or other safety related issues, please contact the Cooperative's Safety Coordinator, Timothy Harbo, at (507) 351-5495 or the Cooperative Office.

2. Integrated Pest Management

Southern Plains Education Cooperative, as part of the Cooperative's Health and Safety Program, has an Integrated Pest Management Program. This program establishes procedures on the use of pesticides in and around the Cooperative's Buildings.

Southern Plains Education Cooperative utilizes a licensed, professional pest control service firm for the prevention and control of rodents, insects, weeds, and other pests in and around the Cooperative's building. Their program consists of

1. Inspection and monitoring to determine whether pests are present, and whether any treatment is needed;
2. Recommendations for maintenance and sanitation to help eliminate pests without the need for pest control materials;
3. Utilization of non-chemical measures such as traps, caulking, and screening;
4. Application of EPA registered pest control materials when needed after regular school hours or when school is not in session.

Pests can sting, bite, cause contamination, damage property, and spread disease, therefore we must prevent and control them. The long-term health effects on children from the application of such pest control

materials, or the class of materials to which they belong, may not be fully understood. All pest control materials are chosen and applied according to label directions per Federal law.

In addition, school cooperative personnel may apply pest control materials inside or on school grounds as needed. Pest control materials are registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and are selected and applied according to label directions.

An estimated schedule of interior pest control inspections and possible treatments is available for review or copying at each school office. A similar estimated schedule is available for the application of herbicides and other materials to school grounds. Parents of students may request to receive, at their expense, prior notification of any application of a pest control material, should such an application be deemed necessary on a day different from the days specified in the schedule.

3. Air Quality

The Cooperative maintains a comprehensive program for Air Quality in the school buildings. The purpose of this program is to maintain optimum air quality in the Cooperative buildings. Throughout the year air quality is monitored and air handling systems are maintained on an established schedule to ensure good air quality. The Cooperative will continue to monitor, maintain, and address air quality issues. If you have any questions or concerns regarding air quality and the Air Quality Management Program please contact David Oltman, Buildings and Grounds, or the Cooperative Office.

4. Emergency Procedures

The Cooperative has developed detailed plans for emergency procedures such as fires, tornadoes, or other crisis issues. Some of those plans have building specific procedures which will be provided by the building administration at the start of the school year. Plans can be found in each office.

5. Employee Right To Understand

The Health and Safety Program provides detailed information on chemicals and conditions determined to pose potential hazards to employees who work with these chemicals. Affected employees receive annual training and the Cooperative maintains safety data sheets on these chemicals and conditions. For more information on this program, contact the Cooperative Office.

6. Lead

Southern Plains Education Cooperative, as part of the Cooperative's Health and Safety Program, has collected water samples from all fixtures used for drinking and/or cooking. Samples are taken and analyzed for lead content by a MDH certified laboratory every 5 years. Samples were last collected by employees of Institute for Environmental Assessment, Inc.(IEA) and analyzed by Minnesota Valley Testing Laboratories(MVTL). Results are available for review at the Cooperative's office. Southern Plains Education Cooperative is making every effort to eliminate or reduce building occupant's exposure to lead through the drinking water. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this issue, you may contact Tim Harbo, 507-351-5495.

7. Safety Committee

The Cooperative has an employee/administration safety committee that meets quarterly during the school year to address safety concerns and issues. Please feel free to contact Timothy Harbo at the Cooperative Office if you have concerns or issues relating to health and safety in the Cooperative.

Timothy Harbo
Environmental Coordinator