



Spotlight on Policy

Policies and Regulations You Probably Never Knew Existed

Procedures must be followed for Workers' Comp Benefits

Tough break! Being injured on the job is a tough break. An even tougher break is being injured and not receiving Worker's Compensation Benefits. Don't let this happen to you.

If you are unfortunate enough to be injured on the job, make sure you receive the benefits you deserve. Under the Virginia Workers' Compensation Act, you are entitled to compensation for accidents incurred in the line of duty.

Norfolk Public Schools is self-insured for workers' comp claims. This means the School Board puts aside a certain amount of money each year to pay benefits rather than pay premiums to insurance companies. This saves NPS money, but means the Administration sets many of the procedural rules to obtain benefits. The school system has strict guidelines for reporting and filing claims when accidents occur. **Failure to follow the procedures could result in the school system's denial of payment for treatment you may receive.**

The Workers' Compensation Guidelines for (reporting) work related injuries are usually distributed by principals in September and/or is in your school handbook. With the deluge of other "important" information distributed at the beginning of the school year, many employees often set aside these guidelines — to be read later. More often than not, they are forgotten.

Make it your business to find a copy and read it carefully. The procedure clearly states that it is the burden of the injured employee to follow through in reporting accidents. **Specifically, you should report even minor accidents to your immediate supervisor (usually the principal) and to the Office of Risk Management and Safety, 628-3856.**

ALSO FILE WITH THE STATE WORKERS COMPENSATION COMMISSION

In addition to notifying your employer, you should as soon as practical (**and within two years**) file a claim with the Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission. *A report to the school system does not equate to a claim for benefits.*

The regional office is located at 281 Independence Boulevard in Virginia Beach. The phone number is 552-1117. The Web site is www.vwc.state.va.us. An informational brochure and a claim form can be downloaded or you may

request a copy by mail or in person.

The only time an employee does not have to file a claim personally with the Workers' Compensation Commission is when Norfolk Public Schools issues the employee a signed agreement acknowledging responsibility for medical costs and lost wages.

wages.

Workers compensation matters can be very complex. Be sure to seek advice from the Workers' Compensation Commission or the EAN office.

VOLUNTARY WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Although Norfolk Public Schools encourages employees to participate in wellness activities such as after school volleyball, softball, etc., Workers Compensation insurance benefits *are not* provided if an employee is injured during the activity. Risk Management considers such activity to be *voluntary* and beyond the scope of coverage.

