



**HOWARD COUNTY**  
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

# **SAFETY GUIDELINES**

**For Renovation and Construction Projects**

This document outlines the steps taken by the Howard County Public School System during renovation and construction projects to support a safe and nurturing environment.



## Pre-Construction

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) makes the safety of students and staff, as well as minimal impact on the instructional program, a top priority for any construction project. Therefore, careful design and planning is essential.

### Design Phase

- Architects, Construction Managers, Department of Facilities staff, school-based staff, and community representatives work together to design the renovation or construction project in the most effective way to address the unique needs of the school.
- Selecting the most appropriate place to stage the construction area is an important safety consideration. Every effort is made to keep the construction staging area segregated from students and to ensure it does not interfere with traffic patterns for the school and community.
- Identifying the phases of the construction project is also an important safety and instructional consideration during planning. The planning committee works to ensure that the phases of construction minimize the movement of students, attempt to keep programs as close together as possible, and ensure that hazardous work, such as asbestos removal, is conducted during the summer.
- Design considerations also include the selection of materials and mechanical systems that meet or exceed code and support a safe and clean school environment.

- Each phase of construction must also adhere to fire code by considering egress and ensuring that fire exits are available.
- A representative from the Office of Safety, Environment, and Risk Management offers guidance during the design phase as part of the Planning Committee process to mitigate hazards and promote integrated pest management strategies.
- The design is reviewed by local officials to ensure that all county, state, and national codes are met. Permits are issued only upon compliance.
- An additional review by the Interagency Committee, a state construction review panel, also addresses safety issues related to the project design and plan.

## **Community Involvement**

- Representatives from the local Parent Teacher Association (PTA) serve on the Planning Committee and can bring any concerns about student safety to the group for discussion and resolution.
- Staff members from the Office of School Facilities conduct community meetings with the local PTA or neighborhood associations to present the design documents and address any questions by community members.
- Any community member who wishes to see the safety codes or specifications included in the bid documents is welcome to review the materials. These are public documents available on the Internet; however, an appointment can also be made through the Department of School Construction to view the documents.

## **Bid Process**

- Extensive documentation is produced when the renovation or construction project is bid. The bid specifications identify all of the safety requirements associated with any element of the construction project. Many of these specifications are based on federal, state, and county law. However, the HCPSS has established additional standards that must be maintained during a construction project. In order to be awarded the bid, a contractor must ensure the company will comply with all of the standards and guidelines outlined in the bid specification. Failure to do so may result in termination.
- An important component of the bid specification is the maintenance of Indoor Air Quality throughout the project. HCPSS requires all contractors to ensure the use of materials and processes that comply with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) Air Quality regulations.



## **During Construction**

### **Communication**

- Every project is assigned an HCPSS Project Manager who stays in constant contact with the school principal throughout the project. On larger projects, a Construction Manager and/or a Site Superintendent may also assist. Any concerns or issues raised by the school principal are immediately addressed.
- There is a zero tolerance policy for construction workers. Any inappropriate behavior reported is immediately investigated and the worker is dismissed if it is determined that an infraction has occurred.
- Aspects of the project which require the use of excessively loud machinery are scheduled during hours when school is not in session. If any construction noise is interfering with instruction, the principal alerts the project manager or site superintendent and the work is stopped until it can be completed without interfering with instruction.
- Any reports or concerns related to student safety or comfort are documented in the construction daily reports, including information about how the concern was addressed.

### **Monitoring Safety**

- All construction workers wear identification.
- Regularly scheduled inspections are conducted by a licensed industrial hygienist to monitor the Indoor Air Quality during major construction or renovation projects.

## **Monitoring Safety**, *continued*

- Members of the Office of School Facilities do unannounced observations of every construction project to ensure that all appropriate safety measures and standards are being met.
- The Executive Director of School Facilities maintains contact with the school principal throughout the project in order to track any issues which arise, and to ensure that the issues have been addressed appropriately.
- Inspections by county and state officials are scheduled as needed throughout the project to ensure compliance with all regulations.

## **After Construction**

- Following the move-in, the Office of School Construction works closely with the school administration and maintenance personnel to correct any problems that arise during the warranty period.
- On any major project that affects the Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems, a third party commissioning agent ensures that all HVAC equipment is functioning properly and as designed.
- For any new school or major modernization project, a walk-through evaluation occurs one year after the completion of the project.
- All documentation pertaining to the project is retained in accordance with state regulations. Contact the Office of Public Information to review these documents; a Freedom of Information Act request may be required in order to obtain archived documents.

