

January's Safety & Staff Meeting Minutes
January 29, 2026 – 2:30 PM – BCRSD Conference Room

SAFETY IS A PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

MEMBERS PRESENT: Drew Perkins, Jesse Stephens, Jason Horton, Jason Wolf, Angela Gonzalez, Spencer Nichols, Daniel Cunningham, Kenneth Eskew, Roy Freeman, Robbie Hill, Caleb Rittenour, Rodney Spires, John Fraiser

MEMBERS ABSENT: Seth Cozean, Kevin Sublett

Videos :: Wastewater Epidemiology & Waterborne Pathogens

The safety discussion focused on wastewater epidemiology and waterborne pathogens, emphasizing how modern testing methods allow wastewater systems to serve as an early indicator of public health trends. It was explained that wastewater epidemiology involves analyzing wastewater for trace levels of viruses, pharmaceuticals, and other substances to identify emerging community health issues before they are reflected in clinical data. Advances in detection technology now allow for analysis at extremely small concentrations, enabling earlier awareness and more proactive public health responses.

The discussion clarified that while viral fragments—such as COVID-19 RNA—may be detected in wastewater, these are not live viruses and do not pose an infection risk through the sewer system itself. Instead, the data provides valuable insight into infection trends within specific service areas, often several days before cases peak in healthcare settings. Additional monitoring of pharmaceuticals, opioids, and other substances was discussed as a way to better understand community behaviors, reduce environmental impacts, and support education efforts related to proper disposal practices.

Attention was also given to waterborne pathogens commonly associated with wastewater exposure, including bacteria, viruses, and parasites that primarily cause gastrointestinal illness. Emphasis was placed on prevention through proper hygiene, handwashing, use of gloves, boots, eye protection, and avoiding contact with the face while working in wastewater environments. Employees were reminded that even treated wastewater and sludge can contain harmful organisms and should always be handled with appropriate protective measures.

The discussion reinforced the importance of promptly cleaning up after exposure, changing contaminated clothing, and using eyewash or shower facilities when necessary. Vaccination considerations, including tetanus boosters and other recommended immunizations for wastewater workers, were also reviewed. Overall, the safety topic highlighted that awareness, personal protective equipment, and consistent hygiene practices are the most effective safeguards against illness and injury when working around wastewater systems.

Supporting Documentations :: Protecting Workers Handling Human Waste & Biological Hazards in Sewage and Wastewater Treatment Plants

The supporting materials reviewed reinforced the biological risks associated with working in sewage and wastewater environments and the importance of consistent protective practices. The documents outlined common biological hazards, including bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites that may be present in untreated or partially treated wastewater and sludge. These organisms can cause gastrointestinal, respiratory, and other infections if proper precautions are not followed.

The materials emphasized that engineering controls and safe work practices are the primary means of protection, supported by appropriate personal protective equipment when exposure risks are present. Key preventive measures highlighted included thorough handwashing, avoiding contact with the face, wearing gloves and waterproof footwear, and changing out of contaminated clothing promptly. Additional guidance stressed the importance of eye protection, proper handling of equipment, and immediate reporting of any illness or injury believed to be work-related.

The documents also addressed post-exposure response and long-term health considerations, including the use of eyewash and shower facilities, laundering contaminated clothing separately, and maintaining up-to-date vaccinations such as tetanus. Employees were encouraged to communicate with healthcare providers about their occupational exposure to wastewater so that symptoms can be properly evaluated. Overall, the supporting materials reinforced that awareness, hygiene, and adherence to established safety procedures are critical to protecting worker health.

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Accidents or Near Misses: The group discussed recent near-miss situations and emphasized the importance of recognizing conditions that could lead to injury even when no accident occurs. One near miss involved a plastic access lid that was not fully secured, creating a slip and fall hazard. The discussion reinforced the need to ensure lids and covers are properly fastened with adequate hardware to prevent shifting or unexpected movement.

Additional discussion focused on situational awareness when working near roadways and active traffic. A near miss was described where a passing vehicle created concern for worker safety while equipment and vehicles were positioned near the roadway. Staff were reminded to use appropriate warning measures, maintain visibility, and remain alert to changing conditions in work zones. The overall message emphasized that reporting and discussing near misses helps identify hazards early and prevent future incidents.

Cyber-Security Training from Ninjio Dojo – S11|E1 – “A.I. Accomplice”

The Ninjio Dojo training episode “A.I. Accomplice” focused on emerging cyber threats involving artificial intelligence, specifically invisible prompt injection attacks. The training explained how malicious instructions can be hidden within emails, documents, or web content in ways that are not visible to human users but can be interpreted by AI tools. These hidden prompts can cause AI assistants to generate misleading guidance or prompt users to take unsafe actions such as clicking links, resetting passwords, or entering credentials.

The training emphasized that these attacks often rely on urgency and familiarity to increase the likelihood of success. Employees were reminded to treat any unexpected or unusual instructions generated by AI tools as suspicious and to verify requests through a separate, trusted channel. Guidance also stressed limiting AI systems’ ability to take autonomous actions without organizational approval. The overall takeaway reinforced that awareness, verification, and cautious use of AI-assisted tools are essential to protecting systems and data from evolving cyber threats.

Status of Safety Works-in-Progress & Annual Items: Nothing to Discuss

Other Business: Nothing to Discuss

Equipment Safety: Nothing to Discuss

Old Business: Nothing to Discuss

New Business: Nothing to Discuss

Meeting Adjourned at 3:30 pm.