



Executive Summary

Updated Lewis County Risk & Safety Handbook (Effective March 17, 2026)

Overview

The Lewis County Risk & Safety Handbook has been fully updated to reflect current best practices, regulatory requirements, and emerging workplace hazards. This 85-page document serves as a comprehensive guide for promoting a safe, compliant, and risk-aware environment for all Lewis County employees, volunteers, elected officials, and contractors. The update aligns with Washington State Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and relevant Washington Administrative Code (WAC) standards, emphasizing proactive accident prevention, incident management, and employee well-being.

Purpose of the Update

The handbook aims to integrate safety into daily operations, reduce occupational injuries and illnesses, and minimize financial and operational risks to the County. Key drivers for this revision include:

- Incorporation of recent regulatory changes, such as enhanced protocols for heat-related illness prevention and wildfire smoke response.
- Expansion of training requirements and responsibilities to foster a culture of accountability.
- Streamlined procedures for claims administration, workers' compensation, and incident reporting to improve efficiency and compliance.

Key Highlights

- **Accident Prevention and Training:** Mandates general and position-specific safety training, hazard reporting, and disciplinary measures to achieve zero preventable incidents.
- **Specialized Programs:** Detailed policies on AED usage, personal protective equipment (PPE), bloodborne pathogens, lockout/tagout (LOTO), confined spaces, fall protection, and vehicle operations.

- **Risk Management and Response:** Strengthens incident investigation, loss prevention inspections, and emergency action plans, with clear roles for Risk Management, supervisors, and employees.
- **Environmental Hazards:** New or enhanced sections on chemical hazard communication, heat-related illnesses, and wildfire smoke, tailored to Lewis County's outdoor and variable climate work environments.
- **Workers' Compensation and Return-to-Work:** Clarifies benefits, filing processes, modified duty options, and timeframes to support employee recovery and retention.

The handbook applies countywide but allows elected officials to adapt sections as needed, ensuring flexibility while maintaining core standards.

Benefits of Adoption

Adopting this updated handbook will:

- Enhance employee safety and reduce liability exposure, potentially lowering insurance premiums and workers' compensation claims.
- Promote compliance with state and federal laws, avoiding penalties and fostering a positive work culture.
- Provide clear guidelines that empower departments to implement effective risk mitigation strategies, ultimately protecting public resources and improving operational resilience.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Lewis County Board of County Commissioners adopt the updated Risk & Safety Handbook effective March 17, 2026. This adoption will underscore the County's commitment to a safe workplace and should be accompanied by department-level training sessions and distribution to all relevant personnel. For implementation support, contact the Lewis County Risk Management Office.

Lewis County Risk & Safety Handbook Summary

This summary is based on the handbook's content; refer to the full document for detailed policies and appendices.

The "Lewis County Risk & Safety Handbook" (updated March 17, 2026) is a comprehensive 85-page document outlining policies, procedures, and responsibilities for maintaining a safe work environment, managing risks, and complying with state and federal regulations such as WISHA, OSHA, and WAC standards. It applies to Lewis County employees, volunteers, and contractors, with provisions for elected officials to adopt or modify sections. The handbook emphasizes accident prevention, incident reporting, and employee training, while assigning roles to Risk

Management, supervisors, and employees. Below is a structured summary of its 18 main sections, focusing on key objectives, responsibilities, and requirements.

Section 1: Accident Prevention Program (Pages 9-13)

Establishes a program to integrate safety into job tasks, aiming for zero occupational injuries. Covers scope, general safety rules (e.g., no horseplay, proper equipment use), orientation training, position-specific training, first aid supplies and training, emergency eyewash stations, action plans, hazard reporting, disciplinary policies, and maintenance. All employees must report hazards without fear of retaliation.

Section 2: Employee Safety Committee (Pages 14-15)

Requires a committee with elected and employer-selected members (employee-elected ≥ employer-selected) to meet monthly. Responsibilities include reviewing complaints, inspections, accidents, and the prevention program. Minutes must be documented and preserved.

Section 3: Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Policy (Pages 15-18)

Defines AED use for cardiac arrest, responsibilities for placement, inspections, training (integrated with first aid/CPR), and response plans. Provides limited civil immunity under RCW laws. Safety Officer oversees program; departments handle maintenance.

Section 4: Claims Administration (Pages 18-20)

Outlines handling of liability claims/lawsuits against the County. Defines terms like claims and lawsuits; assigns roles to Auditor, Risk Management, Prosecuting Attorney, and employees. Prohibits unauthorized settlements or admissions of liability.

Section 5: Loss Prevention and Risk Management Services (Pages 21-22)

Focuses on preventing losses through consultations, inspections, and hazard evaluations. Risk Management offers services like policy review and ergonomics. Inspections can occur without notice; employees report unresolved hazards via escalation to BOCC.

Section 6: Incident Reporting & Investigation (Pages 23-30)

Mandates reporting all incidents (accidents, near misses, safety/security concerns) immediately. Defines terms; details responsibilities, forms (e.g., Injury Report, Incident Report, WCRP Checklist), scene procedures, investigations, and post-incident drug/alcohol screening. Aims to prevent recurrences.

Section 7: Workers' Compensation (Pages 30-39)

Explains self-insured coverage for industrial injuries/occupational diseases. Covers eligibility, reporting (SIF-2 form), benefits (medical, travel, time-loss, vocational, disability), return-to-work processes (full/modified/no duty), timeframes (up to 9 months job hold), and second opinions. Non-disciplinary separations possible after extended absences.

Section 8: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (Pages 39-47)

Requires hazard assessments, provision of PPE at no cost (e.g., eye/face, foot, hand, head, hearing, respirators), standards (ANSI-compliant), and training. Voluntary PPE allowed if safe. Details types, responsibilities, and exemptions.

Section 9: Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan (Pages 47-52)

Applies to employees with exposure risk; defines terms like BBP and OPIM. Requires exposure determinations, control plans (universal precautions, PPE), post-exposure evaluations, Hepatitis B vaccinations, training, and confidential medical records.

Section 10: Vehicle Use Policy (Pages 52-58)

Governs County/personal vehicle use for business. Responsibilities include licensing, abstracts, defensive driving training, inspections, and reporting. Limits personal use; prohibits smoking, impairment. Details rentals, crash packets, and volunteer permissions.

Section 11: Utility Vehicle Safety (Pages 59-60)

Defines utility vehicles (e.g., ATVs, golf carts); requires authorization (age 18+, license, training). Outlines operational standards (speed ≤ 10 MPH, yield to pedestrians), responsibilities, and privately owned vehicle approvals.

Section 12: Powered Industrial Trucks (PIT) (Pages 61-62)

Covers forklifts, etc.; requires ANSI-compliant equipment, maintenance, inspections, training (initial/refresher every 3 years), and documentation. Exemptions for certain operations.

Section 13: Lock Out Tag Out (LOTO) Program (Pages 63-69)

Prevents unexpected energy release during maintenance. Defines terms; requires department SOPs, training (every 3 years), devices (locks/tags), sequences (shutdown, isolation, verification), group/shift procedures, contractor compliance, and device removal protocols.

Section 14: Chemical Hazard Communication (Pages 69-73)

Requires inventories, SDS binders, labeling, training, and plans for non-routine tasks/contractors. Aims to reduce exposures; annual reviews mandatory.

Section 15: Confined Spaces Program (Pages 73-74)

Defines confined/permit-required spaces; requires department programs with procedures, roles, training, and equipment. Risk Management assists.

Section 16: Fall Protection Program (Pages 75-76)

For falls ≥ 10 ft (or ≥ 4 ft in some cases); requires work plans, guardrails, training on hazards/systems. Retraining for changes/inadequacies.

Section 17: Heat-Related Illness (HRI) Prevention Program (Pages 76-81)

Addresses HRI from heat exposure; defines terms like acclimatization. Requires evaluations (Heat Stress Index), high-heat procedures (mandatory rests at $\geq 90^{\circ}\text{F}$), training, and symptom response chart.

Section 18: Wildfire Smoke Response Plan (Pages 81-85)

For outdoor work at AQI ≥ 69 ; defines terms like PM_{2.5}. Requires department plans, monitoring, notifications, respirators (N95 at ≥ 101 , mandatory at ≥ 351), health effects/symptoms, and annual training.

The handbook includes appendices/forms (e.g., reports, checklists) post-section 18. It promotes a safety culture through collaboration, emphasizing prevention over reaction. For full details, refer to the original document.