

Date: Late Summer 2021

To: Safe Schools Manual Recipients

From: Dr. Derek Shendell and Dr. Koshy Koshy (NJ Safe Schools Program (NJ SS) at the Rutgers School of Public Health, for the NJ Department of Education and Interagency Alliance partners)

Re: NJ SS Manual Update #43-1 for Calendar Year 2021/Fall 2021 Reopening (2021-22 School year)

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Enclosed below you will find information for the 2021 update of the **Safe Schools: A Health and Safety Check Manual** (“Manual”). This is the 43<sup>rd</sup> update on the now mobile-friendly online Manual.

**Note: We no longer print paper copies of the Manual. Now, annual updates are released online through the NJ SS website.** Please go to our website and click on the link for the Manual to download relevant Checklists, Appendix sections, etc. as PDF files and print, if desired, at: <https://www.njsafeschools.org>. Or, please go directly to NJSS Manual home webpage: <https://sph.rutgers.edu/training/nj-safe-schools/manual.html>.

To support NJ school districts and schools re-opening local and county campuses, classrooms, gyms, laboratories and shops in August-September 2021 for in-person learning (general education, work-based learning, extracurricular activities, etc.), NJ SS wanted to remind our colleagues in administration and designated persons roles (facilities, operations and maintenance, Right to Know, etc.) of resources available online for free to assist walk-through assessments. You do not need to turn in the data to these checklist/survey questions. The NJ SS Manual checklists have always been meant to guide with planning during periodic assessments. We think these checklists, by category noted, are most pertinent.

***For quick reference:***

*For each classroom, lab, multi-purpose room including the cafeteria and the gymnasium, and shop:*

Checklist #5 (general conditions), Checklist #7 (fire and electrical codes), and Checklist #6 (indoor air)

*For each lab, shop and storage area:*

Checklist #62 (accident prevention signs and tags), Checklist #25 (toxic and hazardous exposures).

*In addition, given separate requirements of NJ Department of Environmental Protection or of NJ Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health Program (NJ Departments of Health and of Labor), which are carried out by your designated person—members of NJ Association of Designated Persons (like Dr. Shendell for NJ SS), we also recommend referring to the following checklists for these different topics:*

1. For air and environmental quality indoors due to chemicals present like pesticides approved for use, beyond ventilation (natural and/or mechanical with particle filtration): Checklists #24 and #81;
2. Hazard Communication Standard requirements, Right to Know about chemicals: Checklists #14, #80;
3. Hazardous Waste (including even e-waste) and Regulated Medical Waste: Checklist #41; and,
4. Medical Waste, and Blood borne pathogens: Checklist #79 and Checklists #77-78, respectively.

In addition, remember the science-based guidance/recommendations in our v.13 n.15-16 June-July 2021 e-news:

“...The NJ Safe Schools Program reminds NJ schools of the critical importance of adequate enhanced ventilation and filtration in our public, charter and private schools serving students and adult workers in K-12. Overall, in general, based on our field research experiences--documented in peer-reviewed journals--conducted in NJ as well as in other U.S. states and nations (Dr. Shendell), we provide the following opinion/guidance.

Without details/context of an individual school and its buildings/facilities, we recommend you do not buy expensive air cleaning equipment and UV light add-on devices to unit ventilators/mechanical HVAC systems (heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems).

Instead, with available resources, please focus your resources on the maintenance of existing mechanical HVAC; on the use of the most efficient HVAC filter (highest MERV rating possible), ideally MERV 13 or higher and/or HEPA filtration units if no HVAC; and, replace the filters per manufacturer recommendations (i.e., certain number of times per year). Finally, bring in outdoor air, not just recirculate indoor air; the HVAC system should have adjustable settings.

For more information, please go to: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/list-carb-certified-air-cleaning-devices> [California Air Resources Board guidance and recommendations]... and to [https://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/documents/ceohs%20content/NJDOH\\_Guidance\\_Air\\_Cleaning\\_Devices\\_NJ\\_Schools.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/documents/ceohs%20content/NJDOH_Guidance_Air_Cleaning_Devices_NJ_Schools.pdf) [NJ Department of Health, “Guidance on Air Cleaning Devices for NJ Schools (and about ozone).”

If you have any questions, please contact New Jersey Safe Schools Program at 732-235-4988 or -9095.

*Finally, please do remember the following from recent years/Manual updates #41-42 (2019-2020):*

The 2019 Manual update incorporated changes from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) codes released through winter-spring 2019 by NFPA. Due in part to the ongoing situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic due to infection with the SARS-CoV-2 virus, NJ SS determined there were no substantive updates pertinent to the Manual, by NFPA or federal agencies, during fall 2019-spring 2021.

For the 2020 Manual update, given COVID-19, in addition to a webpage modern matrix redesign—for use on PC, laptop or mobile devices--NJ SS added Appendix G (content below), available only online.

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Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes [Update #42, 2020-1]

(Website is:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>

and downloadable PDF version as of 5/18/2020 is:

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/Reopening\\_America\\_Guidance.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/Reopening_America_Guidance.pdf))

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