

Health & Safety *focus*

ADDRESSING THE HEALTH AND SAFETY
NEEDS OF OUR 56 SUBSCRIBING NASSAU
COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Indoor Air Quality & COVID-19

Many recommendations have emerged recently related to ways of assuring acceptable indoor air quality in consideration of COVID-19. Much of the terminology being used is confusing and misunderstood such as MERV, HEPA filtration, and CADR. Let's take a look at these terms.

MERV stands for Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value. Numbers typically range from 1 to 20 with the higher number providing greater filtration. HVAC systems are designed to handle specific MERV filters. Installing a MERV 13 filter in a system designed for a MERV 8 can adversely affect the overall system operation. A MERV 13 filter can provide up to 50% filtration for particles down to .3 microns while a MERV 16 filter can reach up to 95% (this would be about the same filtration ability of an N95 face mask).

HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) filtration is commonly available in vacuum cleaners and stand alone air purifiers. HEPA filters can capture over 99% of particles down to .3 microns. So even a filter as high as a MERV 16 would not have the filtering

ability of a HEPA filter. This is why HEPA filtration is often considered the gold standard.

Another terminology seen recently is called CADR (Clean Air Delivery Rate). This is a non-industrial standard often used for evaluating residential air purifiers. It is a voluntary rating system developed by the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers (AHAM). The system rates the ability of a unit to filter dust, smoke and pollen. Depending on the particle, ratings range up to 450 with higher numbers indicating greater filtration. CADR is computed by dividing the room size by 1.55. So a typical 400 square foot room would have a CADR of approximately 260. Conversely, if you are told that the CADR of a unit is 400 you would know that the room size for that unit should be approximately 620 square feet (400 x 1.55). Use this as a guide for evaluating this type of system.

Understanding these systems will help you make better decisions when evaluating current guidance. Your designated BOCES In-District Health & Safety Specialist is available to help.



CDC Update for Vaccinated People

On April 27, CDC updated guidance for fully vaccinated individuals. Some of the new considerations include fully vaccinated individuals no longer needing to wear masks outdoors except in certain crowded settings and venues. They can also visit with other fully vaccinated people indoors without wearing a mask or physical distancing. In addition, they may visit with unvaccinated people (including children) from a single household who are at low risk for severe COVID-19 disease indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing. Fully vaccinated individuals may also refrain from quarantine following a known exposure if asymptomatic and resume domestic travel and refrain from testing before or after travel or self-quarantine after travel. For the full text please go to:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>.



Compliance Issues

Answers to recent compliance questions arising in school districts.

Q. If a child arrives at school with a bed bug on his/her person or belongings can I exclude the child from school?

This reason alone is not adequate to exclude a child from school.

Q. If I find a bed bug in a classroom should I have all students in the classroom examined?

No. You may choose to notify all parents of those children and provide informational materials. Sample letters and information can be obtained from the Nassau BOCES Health & Safety Service.

Q. If I designate the school district facilities director as the Chemical Hygiene Officer for the school district are there any concerns?

The Chemical Hygiene Officer is responsible for overseeing chemical use, storage, and safe practices in the science laboratories only. It would be inappropriate for the facilities director to assume this responsibility for an area not under his/her direct control. This would create liability for the facilities director and the school district. The district should assign a science supervisor, chairperson or may choose to develop a chemical hygiene committee.

Q. Recently, NY SED has returned school safety plans to school districts citing various issues that need to be addressed. What are some of the issues typically cited as safety plan deficiencies?

Some of the deficiencies cited include the following:

- * No public health, medical annex.
 - * No public hearing or 30 day comment period.
 - * No Board approval by 9/1.
 - * No Filing by 10/1.
 - * Names not listed for safety team members only titles.
 - * No Reunification Plan.
 - * Lack of Incident Command structure.
 - * No training by 9/15.
 - * No campus maps.
 - * Codes used instead of plain language.
 - * "To be determined" is not an acceptable response.
 - * No safety meeting agendas.
 - * No debriefing after drills.
- Please consider the items listed above when updating your safety plans.

Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Technology

Health & Safety Training and Information Service

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The Nassau BOCES *Health & Safety Focus* is a review of health and safety issues for subscribing school districts. Questions and comments on this document are welcome. Please contact the Health & Safety Training and Information Service staff at:

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