

The Adams Earn & Learn Program: Handling Issues and Concerns

Managing Potential Workplace Risks

Sometimes, situations will arise that fall into the category of workplace risks; these include environmental, travel and interpersonal hazards. To decrease vulnerability and reduce the possibility of an incident, interns need to take responsibility for learning about the work environment and becoming aware of potential risks. The five steps below are important to review and follow to be aware of risks and manage any that may arise during the Internship.

Five important steps to be aware of to manage potential risk:

- Be alert to your surroundings
- Identify potential risks
- Understand guidelines and expectations from the University and the employer
- Consider solutions to potential problems
- Inform your site supervisor and Earn & Learn Program (E&L) staff.

The section on environmental, travel and interpersonal hazards offers some basic guidelines appropriate for most situations involving those hazards, but these are not intended to be all-inclusive. It is important that students not ignore their instincts. If you suspect that something is unsafe or a potential problem, you should notify your on-site supervisor and your E&L staff immediately! Candidates should comply with all safety policies within the organization.

Handling Problems

Generally, when a problem comes up in your employment, your first recourse is to meet privately with your Supervisor to discuss the matter. This is a good “rule of thumb,” but remember that common sense and professionalism should prevail since problems can run the gamut from missed deadlines and work errors to harassment, sexual assault, illegal activities and environmental, health and personal hazards, and accidents. Additional comments on these types of hazards are provided below. How each is handled depends on the specific problem, but the following steps are important to use as a guide:

Steps to Follow to Handle Problems:

- Review company policies;
- Document all facts, including date, time, and persons involved (within reason, do not minimize your feelings);
- Report all concerns, including safety and personnel problems, to your supervisor and E&L staff within 24 hours; and
- If necessary, seek medical attention.

If the problem is one that candidate feels cannot be discussed with the supervisor, or directly involves the supervisor, candidates are encouraged to contact the E&L staff immediately.

Environmental, Travel and Interpersonal Hazards

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Environmental:

There are a number of hazards that are considered environmental hazards. They include, but are not limited to the following: physical, biological, chemical, and conditions that arise in emergency situations. The summaries below provide examples of each. If any such conditions arise, address your concern first with your Supervisor, if possible, or contact your career advisor immediately. Review company policies on what to do in the event of an incident.

Examples of “physical hazards” include:

- Working outdoors – extreme weather conditions, pollution, power lines, pipelines, gas leaks and
- Working indoors – machinery, unsuitable working conditions (for example, asbestos, insecure buildings with potential structural concerns, closed off or blocked fire escapes).

Examples of “biological hazards” include:

- Animals you work with
- Poisonous plants
- Infected birds or fish

Examples of “chemical hazards” include:

- Chemicals in a laboratory setting (protect your eyes, open sores, and avoid inhalation)
- Water supply
- Toner powders from printer or photocopiers (eye or lung irritation)

Emergency Situations:

- Understand the organization’s plan for potential terror, medical or other emergencies
- Inform your E&L staff if a threat is made to your organization or if you’re uncomfortable with a specific terror alert.

Travel:

As an E&L candidate you may be asked to travel while working for a company. Important issues to be aware of in connection with company travel are summarized below. Remember that this list is not inclusive. If you’re uncomfortable about any situation that arises in connection with company travel, notify your Supervisor or E&L staff immediately.

- Take caution if parking in garages or poorly lit parking areas
- Avoid walking to your car alone after dark
- When using your car or a vehicle provided for you for organization business, understand all policies dealing with:

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- Reimbursement of funds expended out of your pocket;
- Transporting clients
- Transporting sensitive or easily damaged materials
- Transporting potentially hazardous materials.

Interpersonal Hazards:

Interpersonal hazards or issues may be more difficult to identify (and possibly handle) than environmental or travel hazards, but are no less important. Your supervisor should be made aware immediately of any issues involving interpersonal hazards. If in doubt about how to handle a situation involving interpersonal matters, contact your career advisor immediately.

Harassment:

Harassment of candidates or other employees based upon age, gender, ethnicity, race or disability is illegal.

Immediately report any harassment to your Earn & Learn staff.

E&L will discuss the situation with you. When appropriate, the employer will be contacted to discuss the situation and seek a resolution.

Harassment of others by you as an employer in the workplace will result in your dismissal from the program and/or possible suspension from the College. Your behavior could also result in legal action.

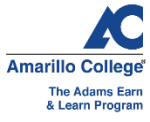
Please refer to the [Amarillo College policy on sexual harassment](#).

Sexual Assault:

To reduce the risk of becoming a victim of sexual assault:

- Refrain from a dating relationship with any member of the organization;
- Set limits; don't give mixed messages;
- Trust your "gut feeling" about situations to avoid;
- Be clear and responsible in your communication with others;
- If necessary, be forceful, firm and assertive in your communication with others;
- Be aware of nonverbal cues that can alert you to a potential problem;
- Don't lose control – alcohol and other drugs affect your judgment (and may be illegal) and
- Remove yourself from any situation at the first sign that you are feeling unsafe. Make noise to remove yourself from a possible sexual assault situation.

Networking. (n.d.). Retrieved October 01, 2020, from <https://blogs.shu.edu/internships/working-day-to-day/networking/>



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