



Healthy Schools

Serving Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma,
New Mexico, Texas and 66 Tribes

Welcome to the first edition of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6 Healthy Schools newsletter.

EPA is committed to protecting children where they live, learn, and play. Children are especially vulnerable to health risks from both the indoor and outdoor environments because their bodies are still developing. Our newsletter's goal is to provide information and resources to all the stakeholders working to help make schools and homes healthier places for children.

Whether you are an administrator, classroom teacher, school nurse, custodian or parent, we know you are working hard to make learning environments safer for students. EPA has environmental education resources and tools to help schools and parents make informed decisions on choosing cleaning products, improving indoor air quality, using integrated pest management, and preventing lead poisoning.

We hope you will find this newsletter useful and share it with others. Let's work together to stay safe and protect our families, our community, and our environment.

— Ken McQueen
Regional Administrator
EPA Region 6

Helping Kids Learn in a Pollution Free Environment

Region 6 Food Recovery Challenge Winners

EPA recognizes the exceptional accomplishments of businesses and organizations participating in our Food Recovery Challenge. Award winners apply innovative approaches and practical, cost-effective actions to prevent and reduce food waste. This year, two Narrative Awards went to Region 6's very own Wylie Independent School District in Texas!

Wylie ISD Birmingham Elementary was a national winner in the Source Reduction category. Read more at: <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/about-2019-food-recovery-challenge-national-award-winners#wyliebirm>.

Wylie ISD Harrison Intermediate School received an honorable mention in the Leadership category. Read more at: <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/about-2019-food-recovery-challenge-national-award-winners#wylieinter>

National Press release: <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-recognizes-food-recovery-challenge-award-winners>

To join Wylie ISD and others in the Food Recovery Challenge, go to: <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/food-recovery-challenge-frc#How>.

For more information, contact Stephen Sturdivant, EPA Region 6, at: sturdivant.stephen@epa.gov.



Region 6 Environmental Education Grants

Under the Environmental Education (EE) Grants Program, EPA supports environmental education projects that promote environmental awareness and stewardship and helps provide people with the skills to take responsible actions to protect the environment. Since 1992, EPA has distributed between \$2 and \$3.5 million in grant funding per year, supporting more than 3,700 grants. Some of the past grantees have: provided training to thousands of educators and students; initiated community-based resiliency projects; increased awareness about water, air and land pollutants;

introduced environmental stewardship to new farmers; and connected STEM to school environmental initiatives in the states and tribes of Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas and New Mexico.

For additional information and to sign up for notices, go to: <https://www.epa.gov/education/grants>. Contact Paula Flores-Gregg about Environmental Education grants at EPA Region 6 by email at: flores.paula@epa.gov.

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Learning Links



Whether students are in school buildings or learning remotely, parents and educators are always looking at useful links to help with virtual learning. This section of the newsletter will be devoted to interesting links for each issue. In this issue, the links will be EPA or available resources on the web. These resources can be found at <https://epa.gov/students> and <https://www.epa.gov/schools>.

In addition, included are several widely available websites which also might be of interest to schools

and school districts during these challenging times.

United States Geological Service: www.usgs.gov/science-support/osqi/yes/resources-teachers

NASA Kids Club: www.nasa.gov/kidsclub

National Gallery of Art: www.nga.gov/education/kids.html

Centers for Disease Control Healthy Schools: www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/bam/teachers.htm

Smithsonian: www.tweentribune.com; www.si.edu/kids

National Science Foundation: www.nsf.gov/news/classroom

National Archives: www.archives.gov/education

National Park Service: www.nps.gov/teachers/index.htm

Federal Aviation Administration: www.faa.gov/education/programs

Notes for Nurses



This section in each issue will give information on items of interest to school nurses. Selected topics will include asthma and asthma triggers, extreme heat events, ultraviolet light, Sunwise, Sun Safety, cleaning of schools, children's environmental health, indoor air quality, and outdoor air quality such as from idling school buses. In addition, other pertinent topics will be highlighted.

In this issue, a pertinent topic for school nurses also relates to proper cleaning and disinfecting of all areas of a school during a pandemic. EPA has a Coronavirus (COVID-19) website at <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus>. Within that website EPA is continuing to update our frequently asked questions as well as listing of disinfectants and other timely information of use to schools. Other useful links are:

<https://www.epa.gov/managing-pests-schools/bed-bug-guidance-school-nurses>

<https://www.epa.gov/iaq-schools/indoor-air-quality-tools-schools-action-kit>

Custodians Closet



This section in each issue will give information on items of interest to custodial and facilities personnel. Selected topics will include lead paint, indoor air quality and ventilation, mold and moisture control, PCBs in caulk and fluorescent light bulbs, pesticides and pest

management, radon, energy efficiency, cleaning of schools, and chemicals management in schools. Of immediate interest to all schools and school districts is proper cleaning and disinfection of all areas of a school during a pandemic.

Guidance for Cleaning and

Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes includes:

[Cleaning and Disinfecting Decision Tool \(PDF\)](#) (2 pp, 424 K, April 29, 2020)
More helpful links can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/schools>

June is Home Safety Month

A Healthy Home

This spring our homes became schools. With this in mind, June is Home Safety Month. Here are a few tips.

How do you clean up mold in your home? If you find mold, scrub surfaces with water and detergent, then keep the area dry by fixing leaks and running vents to the outside.

How do you know if you have radon in your home? Radon is a colorless and odorless radioactive gas.

Test your home for radon gas using a cheap and easy to use radon test kit purchased from your local hardware store.

How can you protect yourself and your family from carbon monoxide poisoning? Never idle your car or lawnmower in the garage, even if the garage door is open.

How can asthma risks be minimized? Dust surfaces with a damp cloth, and vacuum carpets and floors often.

How can you eliminate the risks to your family of second-hand smoke? Smoke outdoors or outside of the car if children or non-smokers are present.

Is indoor air pollution a concern in your home? Ventilate areas that have strong vapors or odors, and choose products with low vapors.

Is your water safe to drink? Do not flush prescriptions or dispose of hazardous items down the toilet or drain. Do not wash antifreeze or car oil into

storm drains.

Did you know that fluorescent light bulbs contain mercury? Wear latex gloves to clean up broken fluorescent light bulbs and mercury thermometers. Carefully pick up broken pieces with sticky tape and place them a bag or jar to dispose. Carefully read and follow instructions on product labels.

Here is a list of disinfectants for use against Covid-19: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

July is Sunwise and Extreme Heat Month

Overexposure to UV is harmful and can lead to cataracts and skin cancer, the most common cancer in the United States. The National Cancer Institute estimates that more than 100,350 new cases of melanoma, the most dangerous form of skin cancer, will occur in 2020. This is over 4,000 more estimated cases than in 2019.

Fortunately, it is easy to reduce your risks:

Seek shade when outside during mid-day hours when UV exposure is highest.

Wear clothing such as wide brimmed hats, long sleeved shirts, long pants, and sunglasses that protect your skin and eyes from UV rays.

Generously apply SPF 15+ sunscreen, and reapply often.

Be aware that reflective water, snow, and sand intensify UV exposure.

Avoid tanning beds and

minimizing sunbathing.

Check the UV Index.

Be sure to get the UV Index app on your smartphone, sign up for a daily UV Index forecast via email, or check the UV Index online at <https://www.epa.gov/sunsafety>.

Also National Environmental Education Foundation at: <https://www.neefusa.org/sunwise>

“Overexposure to Ultraviolet Light is harmful and can lead to cataracts and skin cancer.”

Future Newsletter Topics

Coming Soon:

School recycling and pollution prevention

Food waste and waste reduction in schools

Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools

Creating Healthy Schools

Schools Chemical Cleanout Campaign

Integrated Pest Management

Disposal of Paint and Toxics

Disposal of White Goods and E waste

Federal Green Challenge

Lead Based Paint and asbestos

Sustainable Materials Management



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Protecting human health and
the environment.



The EPA has many opportunities to increase the safety and sustainability of your school. Please contact us to schedule a live webinar on any of the subjects below:

Sustainable Management of Food: It's important now more than ever for all of us to not waste food. Learn how our food choices impact the environment and how we can reduce food waste and save money.
Stephen Sturdivant, Sturdivant.stephen@epa.gov, 214-665-6673

Recycling: Recycling, along with reduction and reuse, is a great way for your students to participate in your sustainability goals. By providing increased access to recycling receptacles and awareness of recycling best practices, you can reduce your waste and your carbon footprint.
Deanna Debose, debose.deanna@epa.gov, 214-665-6762

Safer Choice: Developed to give consumers an easy way to choose products with safer chemical ingredients, the Safer Choice label indicates that a chemical product has met the EPA's rigorous standards for safety, which means the products are better both for the environment and human health.
Whitney Lehrer, lehrer.whitney@epa.gov, 214-665-6553

Lead Based Paint: The Lead Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) Rule helps protect children from exposure to lead based paint dust caused by renovation and repairs conducted in a building built prior to 1978. Our lead-based paint program is here to help answer questions and to provide guidance on the regulation and removal.
Mikeal Adams, adams.mikeal@epa.gov, 214-665-6711

Integrated Pest Management: The Region 6 Contact for the Integrated Pest Management Program under Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) is Ken McPherson, mcperson.kenneth@epa.gov, 214-665-6754.

ODDS AND ENDS

Upcoming Newsletters

The Region 6 Healthy Schools Newsletter in September 2020 will highlight:

- Pollution Prevention Week, September 21-27;
- Children's Health Month and National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week in October; and,
- America Recycles Day on November 15.

Contacts

Disclaimer

Feedback

Other topics will include asthma awareness, schools chemical management for education, art, and science supplies in

addition to the quarterly columns on Notes for Nurses, Custodian's Closet, and Learning Links. Healthy Schools is published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 6 - South Central in Dallas, Texas. Region 6 includes the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas as well as 66 Tribes. For general information about Healthy Schools, to provide feedback on this newsletter, or to be added or removed from the distribution list, please contact Cathy Gilmore, Senior Environmental Employee (SEE) for Healthy Schools at Gilmore.cathy@epa.gov.

This page may provide links to non-EPA web sites that provide additional information about topics that may be of interest to schools and school districts. EPA cannot attest to the accuracy of information on any non-EPA page. Providing links to a non-EPA web site is not an endorsement of any non-government website, company or application; nor does EPA recommend membership in, donations to or commercial sales from non-government organizations. Also, be aware that the privacy protection provided on the [EPA.gov](https://www.epa.gov/privacy) domain (see [Privacy and Security Notice](#)) may not be available at the external link. We would love your feedback on this newsletter or suggestions for future topics. Please email EPA at Gilmore.cathy@epa.gov.