



SELF-STUDY GUIDE: SAFETY MATTERS

InReach has a commitment to providing a healthy and safe workplace environment to all of our employees, as well as to promoting safety in the home and community for the people we support. By completing this training, staff will receive information on general safety procedures, community awareness and taking a proactive approach to both you and your customer's personal and physical safety.

Unit I: Prevention of Injuries

1. **Musculoskeletal disorders** (MSD's) affect the muscles, tendons and nerves. Work-related MSD's are one of the leading causes of lost workday injury and illness, including those of the neck, upper extremities and lower back. Lifting, bending, reaching, pushing, pulling, and repetitive movements increase a worker's risk of injury.

The spine provides the basic form of movement and support for the human body. It is constantly used and may suffer cumulative injuries caused by repetitive lifting of heavy objects. The most important aspect of preventing shoulder, neck and back injuries is using proper lifting techniques:

- ✓ Make sure feet are stable , and close to the person being lifted
- ✓ Face the person being lifted, slightly bend the knees and squat in preparation to lift.
- ✓ Hold in the abdominals and keep the back straight.
- ✓ Point feet toward the person being lifted. If possible, place one foot in between the person's feet and one foot to the outside for optimal stability.
- ✓ Do not let your back do the heavy work – use your legs.
- ✓ Consider using a back support belt.

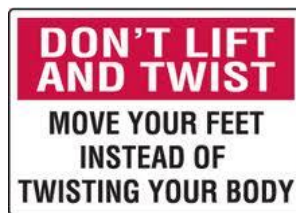


Never lift more than you can comfortably handle.

It is important to observe the following principles of body mechanics:

a. Lifting:

1. Tell the person what you are going to do.
2. Make sure there is plenty of room for good footing, and the path is cleared for the carry.
3. Stand so you will not have to twist as you lift.
4. Your back should be kept as straight as possible.
5. Lift by straightening your legs in a steady upward thrust and, at the same time, move your back to a vertical position.
6. The weight of the person should be kept close to your body and over your feet.
7. **If the weight of the person is more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of your body weight, you should get somebody to help you.**



b. Carrying:

1. Tell the person what you are going to do.
2. Carry the person as close to you as possible.
3. Keep your back straight, not arched.
4. Do not twist. Change direction by taking small steps and turning the whole body at once.

c. Lowering:

1. Tell the person what you are going to do.
2. Spread your legs to hip width and lower the person between your feet.
3. Hold the back straight and steady, even when you lean forward.
4. Lower in a slow and even manner while bending your legs.
5. Do not twist your body. To turn, move your feet.



Although many people who use a wheelchair have tremendous arm strength and coordination and require no assistance transferring in and out of their chair by themselves, others do need help.

General guidelines when transferring a person from a wheelchair:

- a. Make sure the chair is locked when removing or seating the person.
- b. When removing or seating the person, make sure you put the foot pedals up or swing them out of the way.
- c. Pull the wheelchair backwards up steps or curbs.



Transferring a person from wheelchair to chair or toilet:

- a. Tell the individual what you are going to do.
- b. If able, the individual should push up on armrest in order for you to remove their clothing.
- c. The individual will need to slide to the edge of the wheelchair with flat feet, if able.
- d. Support the person's knees between your legs.
- e. With the individual's help, move to a standing position while keeping your knees bent.
- f. Turn and lower to chair or toilet by bending your knees.
- g. The individual should hold you at the waist or shoulders for support if necessary.

When moving a person, always breathe deeply and keep your shoulders relaxed. Let your *legs* do the lifting.

Assisting person from lying to sitting position:

- a. Tell person what you are going to do.
- b. If able, have them slide to the edge of the bed and roll on their side.
- c. Reaching over their knees and under the shoulders, assist him or her to a sitting position.



Assisting person from sitting to standing position:

- a. Tell person what you are going to do.
- b. Have person slide to edge of wheelchair with feet flat, if able.
- c. Support their knees between your legs.
- d. Put your arms under the person's arms and have the person push up.
- e. Bend at your knees and hips.
- f. Support the person with your knees.
- g. Have the individual hold you at the shoulders if necessary.

Assisting person up and down the stairs:

- a. Support the person with one hand and keep the other hand on the railing.
- b. Stand on two steps for balance.

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2. **Ergonomics** means improving the fit between your body and the ability to perform an activity. It allows you to make any task less taxing on your body.

- a. **Posture:**

Good posture is required to make sure the neck and spine do not carry more weight than necessary. Sustained awkward postures may put unnecessary strain on the back and neck, which may lead to pain or injury.



Chairs are one of the most important pieces of office equipment.
Features of a well – designed chair includes:

- Back rest is easily adjustable to height and angle
- Back rest provides lumbar support
- Height of chair is adjustable
- Adjustable or removable armrests
- Five star castor base for stability

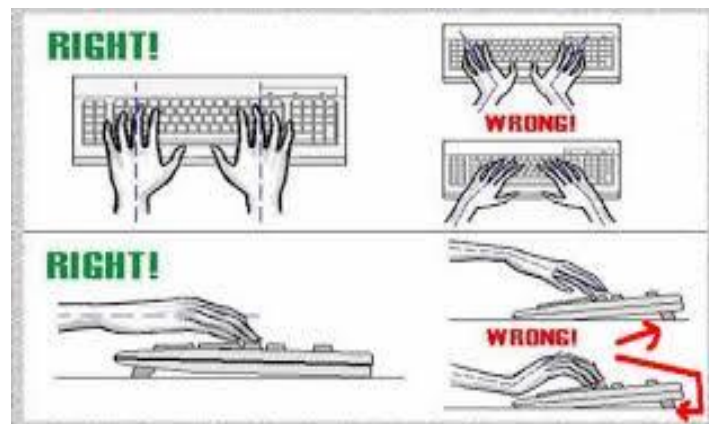


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The computer monitor should always be positioned directly in front of you with the monitor just below eye level to accommodate normal head position and line of sight.



The keyboard should allow the forearm/wrist to rest when you are not keying. It should lie flat or negatively inclined (tilted slightly away from you). The mouse should be positioned at the same level as the keyboard and within easy reach. Palm rests are designed to raise the palms and keep the wrist in a neutral position.



b. Environment:

Lighting –

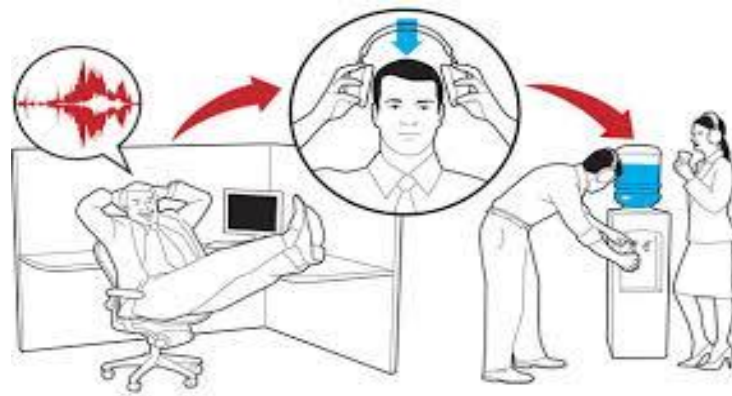
Good lighting in the workplace enables staff to see clearly and perform their work safely, without straining their eyes.

Glare is caused by light shining directly onto your computer screen by windows or interior lights. To reduce the glare caused by window light, position your monitor so that your line of sight is parallel to the window. You may also cover the window partially or fully. If interior lighting is causing the glare, lights may be shaded or redirected to reduce glare.

Noise –

Office noise is generally an annoyance that is distracting and/or interferes with concentration. The following options may address “annoyance” noise:

- Rearrange the office layout so noise generating activities or equipment are separated from quiet tasks
- Select equipment with low noise output
- Noise barriers can help contain noise, such as room dividers
- Lower the volume setting on telephones
- Consider co-workers when using radios/playing music at work stations
- Be considerate with speaking volume



Basic Work Safety Tips:

- Moving in a controlled fashion decreases the chance of accidents, so please walk... don't run!
- Keep your work area clean. Open drawers, scattered papers, litter, boxes and other debris increase the chances of slips, trips and falls.
- Don't touch or use any equipment that you have not been trained or given permission to use.
- Be familiar with the hazards of even common cleaning products that contain chemicals. Used improperly, some can be very dangerous.
- Smoke in designated smoking areas only, and always thoroughly extinguish tobacco products when finished.
- Be aware of flammable materials that can catch on fire, such as oil, gasoline, paint thinner, etc.
- **Always report work related injuries or accidents immediately!!!** (*see Incident/Accident Reporting*)

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3. **Workplace Violence** is a broad term that includes any act where a person is abused, threatened, intimidated or assaulted at his or her job by an individual or individuals inside or outside of the organization.

a. Types of Workplace Violence:

Threatening Behavior

- Shaking fists
- Damaging or destroying property
- Throwing objects
- Stalking
- Pranks
- Anger-related incidents

Verbal or Written Threats

- Expressing an intent to inflict physical harm
- Threatening a person's position, job, promotion or property

Harassment

- Discriminatory behavior that demeans, embarrasses, humiliates, annoys, alarms or verbally abuses and that is known to be, or would be expected to be, unwelcome

Sexual Harassment

- Words or actions that cross another person's sexual boundaries

Verbal Abuse

- Swearing, rumors, insults and condescending language

Physical Assault

- Hitting, shoving, pushing, punching, kicking, attempted murder



b. Preventing Workplace Violence:

Assess Your Work Environment

Thoroughly examine all areas of your workplace, including parking lots, hallways, entryways, reception areas, work areas, offices, etc. Is the lighting adequate? Are there convenient escape routes? Would there be easy access to a phone if an emergency did occur?

Pay Attention to Warning Signs

Many people who become violent communicate their intentions in advance. Threats from customers, current or former co-workers, or others should be reported immediately. (*see Incident/Accident Reporting*)



Promote Respect

The best way to prevent violence in the workplace is to foster a daily attitude of respect and consideration throughout the organization. We must all make an effort to be courteous and show appreciation to our co-workers and customers. Our agency as a whole should not accept intolerance of differences and language that is derogatory, insensitive or cruel in nature.

If You See or Hear an Incident of Workplace Violence:

- ✓ **Ensure your safety and the safety of others**
- ✓ **Call 911 if needed**
- ✓ **Report the incident immediately**
- ✓ **Document what happened – facts, locations, people involved, etc.**
- ✓ **Adhere to confidentiality policies and agency procedures at all times**

Unit II: Safety in the Home

People are often not aware of the numerous potential dangers that may exist in their homes. We all need to prepare for unplanned events that could occur, and preventing hazards is especially important for people who have physical disabilities and mobility needs.

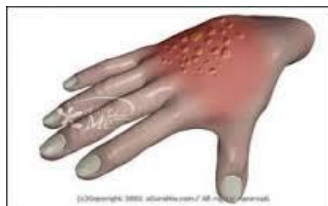


a. Safety on Stairways and Ramps:

- ✓ Make sure stairway handrails are properly installed. They should be able to support 250 pounds, and should be screwed into studs or blocking not sheetrock.
- ✓ The staircase should have good lighting, with no glares or shadows.
- ✓ Stairways should be kept clear of clutter, such as extra objects, ice, snow and leaves. There should be no cracks, loose bricks or stones on outside steps.
- ✓ Ramps should have handrails and be free of objects. The ramp surface should be non-slip ; a nonskid deck paint or adhesive strips will often do the trick.
- ✓ Do not place throw rugs at the bottom of staircases as they may cause people to trip and fall. Any throw rugs should have skid-resistant backing.

b. Hot Water Tank Settings:

It is recommended for safety to have the hot water heater set no higher than **120 to 125 degrees**. A setting higher than this can cause severe burns in both children and adults.



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c. Safety in the Kitchen:

- ✓ Have nonskid floor surfaces.
- ✓ Place a kitchen-grade fire extinguisher where it is easy to reach.
- ✓ Make sure there are no curtains, dish towels, potholders or flammable utensils located close to the burners because they may be a fire hazard.
- ✓ Choose ovens with knobs or push-button controls on the front. This prevents having to reach across burners.
- ✓ A mirror installed over the oven would allow people to watch food as it cooks.
- ✓ People with limited upper-limb strength might prefer ceramic cook tops or flat surface burners so they can simply slide pots and pans. Pan holders can keep pots in place while stirring.
- ✓ People with visual impairments may prefer smaller work spaces with all appliances close by.
- ✓ Add rolling storage carts if you lose storage space due to accessibility needs.
- ✓ Lapboards may make food preparation easier for people who use wheelchairs.
- ✓ Make sure there is good lighting in food preparation areas, especially where food is sliced, cut, chopped and cooked to prevent injury.



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d. Safety in the Bedroom:

- ✓ Lamps or light switches located close to each bed will allow people getting up at night to see where they are going.
- ✓ Place a telephone close to the bed so if an emergency occurs, the person is able to reach the phone without getting up.
- ✓ *Never smoke in bed.*
- ✓ *Never go to sleep with a heating pad turned on.*
- ✓ Use electric blankets according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- ✓ Consider bedrails for a person who is at risk for falling out of bed.



e. Safety in the Bathroom:

- ✓ Toilet flush extensions and toilet paper clamps are helpful for people who have upper-limb loss.
- ✓ Sensor or lever-type faucets are ideal for people who have trouble grasping with their hands.
- ✓ Install a nightlight to prevent walking through a dark area.
- ✓ *Always unplug small appliances, such as hairdryers, curling irons, electric razors, etc, when not in use.* Even an appliance that is not turned on can cause lethal shock if it falls into water while plugged in.

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People with limited mobility or balance may find it difficult to transfer in and out of the tub. To help, it is useful to install:

- Grab bars
- Transfer seats
- Nonslip tub mats
- Bench that extends outside of the bathtub
- Swivel-style shower seat
- Roll-in shower

Medications that are not clearly or accurately labeled can be easily mixed up which can be dangerous.

- Be sure that all containers are clearly marked with the contents, instructions, expiration date, and name of patient if applicable.
- Dispose of outdated medicines properly

*** Note: Staff must follow all InReach policies and procedures for Medication Administration as reviewed by the R.N. in training.**

In homes with children, always store medicines out of their reach to prevent poisonings.



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f. Safety in the Living Room/Great Room:

- ✓ Purchase rugs and runners with slip-resistant backing.
- ✓ Relocate space heaters away from passageways and flammable materials such as curtains, rugs, furniture, etc. *Never place items on top of a heater.*
- ✓ Have the chimney checked and cleaned on a routine basis by a professional. A clogged chimney can result in poisonous fumes and smoke coming back into the house. Burning wood can cause a build-up of creosote, which may ignite and result in a serious fire.
- ✓ Shadowed or dark areas can be tripping hazards, so make sure traffic areas are well lit.
- ✓ Reduce hazardous traffic areas by rearranging furniture to open up walkways, and remove clutter.
- ✓ Cords stretched across walkways are dangerous. Arrange furniture so cords are close to the outlets.
- ✓ Furniture resting on electrical cords can damage them, creating fire and shock hazards. Electric cords running underneath carpeting may cause a fire.
- ✓ *Always replace frayed or cracked cords.*



g. Fire Safety:

1. Fire Extinguishers:

- Every home should have a UL approved 5-pound fire extinguisher
- It should carry an ABC rating
- The best place for one is mounted on the wall in the kitchen, but not placed directly next to the stove

2. Smoke Detectors:

- Every home should have a smoke detector on each level and placed inside of each bedroom
- They should be tested on a monthly basis
- Hard-wired smoke detectors should have a battery back-up
- Batteries should be replaced twice a year at the same time (such as spring and fall)



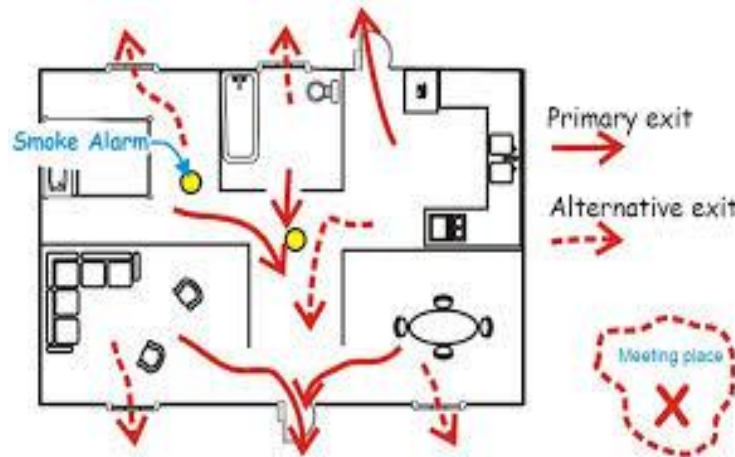
3. Carbon Monoxide Detectors:

- If your home has natural gas, a fireplace or uses a kerosene heater, you should use a carbon monoxide detector
- If you live in an apartment complex, town home or condo with a "shared roof line", you should have one
- They should be tested on a monthly basis, and batteries should be changed twice a year



4. Evacuation Plans:

- Evacuation plans must be posted in all InReach Group Homes and AFL Homes
- Fire Drills must be performed according to the evacuation plan (typically on a monthly or quarterly basis)
- InReach residents must understand evacuation procedures and know where to meet once exiting the home



- It is recommended to have a rope ladder in second-story bedrooms

Unit III: Safety in the Community

Everybody needs to know how to stay safe and secure when exploring the world we live in. There are some general guidelines that may reduce one's risk of becoming a victim of a crime.

1. When Out and About:

- ✓ Let somebody know when you're leaving and when you expect to return
- ✓ If possible, go with a friend
- ✓ Stay on well-lit, well-traveled streets; avoid shortcuts through wooded areas, parking lots, vacant lots and alleyways
- ✓ Consider carrying a whistle or personal alarm device
- ✓ Stay alert and tuned in to your surroundings
- ✓ Know the area you will be going to, and avoid places or situations that will put you at risk

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a. Elevators:

- When waiting for an elevator, leave the lobby or hallway if someone makes you feel uncomfortable
- Check the elevator's mirror for safety before entering
- Position yourself between the control panel and the door when in an elevator so you may make a quick exit if you feel uneasy



b. ATM Machines:

- Be aware of suspicious people near the entrance
- Use well-lit, well-populated machines
- Avoid ATM's that have unlocked doors or are directly on the street
- Use mirrors positioned at the ATM to see behind you for safety
- Block a bystanders view when doing your transaction
- Always put your money, card and receipt away before exiting the ATM, and make sure the door closes behind you

c. Public Transportation:

- Sit near the front of the bus whenever possible
- Have your money or pass available
- Be aware of your wallet/purse to avoid a pickpocket
- Stay awake and aware, and always exit with the crowd



d. Purse/Wallet Safety:

- Be aware of your surroundings and carry your pocketbook clasp toward you, tucked in the bend of your elbow like a football.
- Do not place your purse on the back of chair when dining out; the only place for your purse is in your lap. The back of a chair is an easy target for a thief.
- Never carry a wallet in a back pocket; use a front pocket or an inside coat pocket.
- Be aware of your purse or wallet in crowded situations. Also, arguments and commotions are designed to distract people while a purse or pocket is being picked.
- Minimize the amount of money, credit cards and valuables you carry by taking only what is necessary for that day.

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e. Driving Safety:

- Plan your route before you leave; displaying a map will send the message that you're unfamiliar with the area
- Keep valuables secured in the trunk, not in the open where they can be seen
- Keep windows rolled up (except small opening for ventilation) and doors locked at all times when driving
- Only park in well-lit areas, and look around before exiting car
- Have your car keys out and ready before you get back to your car
- Upon approaching your parked car, look to make sure no one is hiding in or around the vehicle, especially the back seat



2. Using Technology Safely:

- Never give financial or personal ID information (including social security number, credit card, or bank information) to a person you haven't met face-to-face before
- Ignore any request to send money, especially overseas or by wire transfer, even if the person claims to be in an emergency. Wiring money is like sending cash and it is almost impossible to reverse the transaction or trace the money.
- Be wary of communications that ask you to act immediately, offer something that sounds too good to be true or asks for personal information.

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- Use extra caution when accessing your account from a public or shared computer. Disable the auto sign-in feature to your account and clear all saved passwords
- Limit the amount of personal information you share online. Thieves use social media to steal your identity if you let them. Lock down your privacy settings, use nicknames instead of your legal name, don't put the year of your birth date, etc.
- Avoid posting that you're on vacation. When you announce to the world, "I'm not home", local thieves may be plotting to rob you. *Post your vacation pictures after you return.*



In Social Media or Online Dating Sites, Be Cautious of Anyone Who:

- Asks you for money
- Claims to be from the U.S. but is currently living or working overseas
- Makes a lot of spelling or grammatical errors
- Asks for your address so they can send you gifts
- Pressures you for personal or financial information
- Vanishes from the site and then reappears under a different name

They may be a scammer.

Unit IV: Reporting Injuries and Accidents

Incident/Accident Reporting:

Incident Reports are used to communicate information to other people and to document significant events within individual records as required by agency and state standards. The information obtained from incident reports is helpful when creating Person-Centered Plans, developing support strategies and making team decisions. Therefore, it is very important that the content of the incident report is:

- ✓ Clearly written
- ✓ Factual and descriptive
- ✓ Without opinions or judgement; neutral language
- ✓ Completed properly

ANY EVENT THAT OCCURS THAT IS OUTSIDE OF THE NORM REQUIRES AN INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REPORT. Staff should document any unusual, out-of-the-ordinary events that occur when providing support to a customer. Examples include but are not limited to the following:

- Injury to individual or caused to others
- Aggressive behavior directed others
- Self-injurious behavior
- Medication error
- Endangering or threatening others
- Property destruction
- Serious disruptive situation while in the community
- Illegal or unusual problematic behavior
- Being victimized by another
- Any incident involving the police, fire department, ambulance, etc.
- Any time an individual is involved in an auto accident while receiving services
- Any time an intervention has occurred *that is not in accordance* with an approved behavioral treatment plan
- Allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation
- Serious illness and/or hospitalization
- Imminent death or death

IF YOU ARE NOT SURE ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT TO COMPLETE AN INCIDENT REPORT, WRITE ONE!!!



InReach Incident/Accident Report Timeframe:

- Incident Reports must be completed and delivered or faxed to the office within 24 hours of the incident
AND
- A verbal report (phone call) must be made to the staff person's supervisor with 24 hours of the incident
AND
- A progress note for the Incident Report must contain:
 - The description of the event
 - The actions taken by the staff on behalf of the customer
 - The customer's condition following the event

*Fax the progress note with the Incident Report to your supervisor

**Incident Reports are subject to review by the InReach Human Rights Committee and/or the Quality Assurance Committee



InReach Protocol for Auto Accidents:

Please understand that if injury is serious and needs immediate help, 911 is the number to call but if the accident does not require 911 follow the procedure below:

- Medcor is the agency that is on-call 24 hrs a day seven days a week @ **1-800-775-5866**
- They will file the **'First Report of Injury'** that is required by North Carolina
- Even if **no injury** is noted when the accident happens it is **better to call the accident in case something comes up later**
- Medcor has trained nurses on the call 24/7
- As soon as possible the supervisor and employee (if possible) should call the number **1-800-775-5866** together
- If the supervisor is unavailable the employee should call the number
- Ideally the call will be placed by both and the nurse will talk with the supervisor first and then the employee
- The nurse will advise if any treatment is necessary and if the employee can return to work or what if any medical treatment is needed
- Info you will need when you call:
 - Company name – InReach
 - Employee – name, department, supervisor and work phone #
 - Employees home phone #
 - Employee social security number and date of birth
 - Time & date if accident
 - Accident location
 - Description of how the injury occurred
- Medcor will follow up with the employee and give the caller a confirmation number



If you have any questions regarding policies and procedures, please contact Janice Chandler, Human Resources Manager, at (704) 536-6661 ext. 415.

*Remember Incident Reports don't replace the **"First Report of Injury"** that goes to North Carolina OSHA. The First Report of Injury is required within 24 hours.