



# Employee Safety Manual

## Gearheart Communications

**A Guide to Safety Policies & Procedures  
to Support a Safety-Conscious Work Environment**

Provided by: QBE Farmers Union Insurance

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The materials presented herein are for general reference only. Federal, state or local laws, or individual circumstances may require the addition of policies, amendment of individual policies, and/or the entire Handbook to meet specific situations. These materials are intended to be used only as guides and should not be used, adopted, or modified without the advice of legal counsel. These materials are presented, therefore, with the understanding that the Company is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional service. If legal advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

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Gearheart Communications recognizes that our people drive the business. As the most critical resource, employees will be safeguarded through training, provision of appropriate work surroundings, and procedures that foster protection of health and safety. All work conducted by Gearheart Communications' employees will take into account the intent of this policy. No duty, no matter what its perceived result, will be deemed more important than employee health and safety. In this Safety Manual, any reference to Gearheart Communications shall include the following companies, CoalFields Telephone, Inter Mountain Cable, PDNS, Mikrotec, MTS, WPRG, WIFX, and WXMLR.

Gearheart Communications is firmly committed to the safety of our employees. We will do everything possible to prevent workplace accidents and we are committed to providing a safe working environment for all employees.

We value our employees not only as employees but also as human beings critical to the success of their family, the local community, and Gearheart Communications.

Employees are encouraged to report any unsafe work practices or safety hazards encountered on the job. All accidents/incidents (no matter how slight) are to be immediately reported to the supervisor on duty.

A key factor in implementing this policy will be the strict compliance to all applicable federal, state, local, and company policies and procedures. Failure to comply with these policies may result in disciplinary actions.

Respecting this, Gearheart Communications will make every reasonable effort to provide a safe and healthful workplace that is free from any recognized or known potential hazards. Additionally, Gearheart Communications subscribes to these principles:

1. All accidents are preventable through implementation of effective Safety and Health Control policies and programs.
2. Safety and Health controls are a major part of our work every day.
3. Accident prevention is good business. It minimizes human suffering, promotes better working conditions for everyone, holds Gearheart Communications in higher regard with customers, and increases productivity. This is why Gearheart Communications will comply with all safety and health regulations which apply to the course and scope of operations.
4. Management is responsible for providing the safest possible workplace for Employees. Consequently, management of Gearheart Communications is committed to allocating and providing all of the resources needed to promote and effectively implement this safety policy.
5. Employees are responsible for following safe work practices and company rules, and for preventing accidents and injuries. Management will establish lines of communication to solicit and receive comments, information, suggestions and assistance from employees where safety and health are concerned.
6. Management and supervisors of Gearheart Communications will set an exemplary example with good attitudes and strong commitment to safety and health in the workplace. Toward this end, Management must monitor company safety and health performance, working environment and conditions to ensure that program objectives are achieved.
7. Our safety program applies to all employees and persons affected or associated in any way by the scope of this business. Everyone's goal must be to constantly improve safety awareness and to prevent accidents and injuries.

Everyone at Gearheart Communications must be involved and committed to safety. This must be a team effort. Together, we can prevent accidents and injuries. Together, we can keep each other safe and healthy in the work that provides our livelihood.

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The primary responsibility of the employees of Gearheart Communications is to perform his or her duties in a safe manner in order to prevent injury to themselves and others.

As a condition of employment, employees **MUST** become familiar with, observe, and obey Gearheart Communications' rules and established policies for health, safety, and preventing injuries while at work. Additionally, employees **MUST** learn the approved safe practices and procedures that apply to their work.

Before beginning special work or new assignments, an employee should review applicable and appropriate safety rules.

If an employee has any questions about how a task should be done safely, he or she is under instruction **NOT** to begin the task until he or she discusses the situation with his or her supervisor. Together, they will determine the safe way to do the job.

If, after discussing a safety situation with his or her supervisor, an employee still has questions or concerns, he or she is required to contact the Safety Coordinator.

**NO EMPLOYEE IS EVER REQUIRED** to perform work that he or she believes is unsafe, or that he or she think is likely to cause injury or a health risk to themselves or others.

- 1. Conduct:** Horseplay, 'practical jokes,' etc., are forbidden. Employees are required to work in an injury-free manner displaying accepted levels of behavior. Conduct that places the employee or others at risk, or which threatens or intimidates others, is forbidden.
- 2. Drugs and Alcohol:** Use and/or possession of illegal drugs or alcohol on company property or on company time are forbidden. Reporting for work while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol is forbidden. **Refer to Policies 5.08 and 5.09 in the Employee Handbook for additional information concerning our policies.**
- 3. Housekeeping:** The following areas must remain clear of obstructions:
  - Aisles/exits
  - Fire extinguishers and emergency equipment
  - All electrical breakers, controls, and switches
  - Eye wash/safety showers

You are responsible to keep your work area clean and safe. Clean-up several times throughout the day, disposing of trash and waste in approved containers, wiping up any drips/spills immediately, and putting equipment and tools away as you are finished with them.

- 4. Injury Reporting:** All work-related injuries must be reported to your supervisor immediately. Failure to immediately report injuries can result in loss of Workers' Compensation benefits. After each medical appointment resulting from a work-related injury, you must contact your supervisor to discuss your progress. You must also give your supervisor any paperwork that you received at the appointment.

Gearheart Communications provides Transitional Return to Work (light duty) jobs when available for persons injured at work. Transitional work is meant to allow the injured employee to heal under a doctor's care while she/he remains productive. Employees are required to return to work immediately upon release when the company has light duty jobs available.

- 5. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Inspect PPE prior to each use. Do not use damaged PPE. You are required to maintain and keep PPE clean.
  - a) Safety Glasses – must be worn at all times in designated areas in the Outside Plant.
  - b) Hard Hats – must be worn at all times in designated areas.
  - c) Safety Vests are to be worn at all times while working in the Outside Plant

- 6. Equipment Operation:** You must specifically be trained and authorized by your supervisor to operate the following:

- Company vehicles,
- Forklifts,
- Power tools,
- Hoists

While working: do not wear loose clothing, long hair should be tied up and back, remove jewelry, and sleeves should either be rolled all the way up, or all the way down.

Never operate damaged or defective equipment. Turn the machine off and report it to your supervisor immediately.

Never tamper with, remove, or deactivate machine guards or controls designed to ensure safe operations.

## 7. Ladders:

- Inspect all ladders prior to each use;
- Ladders must be placed on secure footing;
- Only one person is allowed on a ladder at a time;
- Never stand on the top two steps of a stepladder;
- Always maintain 3-point contact when working on ladders;
- Never reach beyond arm length when working on a ladder; and
- Never use metal ladders when working on or around electrical equipment.

## 8. Hoists/Lifting Devices:

- a) Inspect all hoists and lifting devices (slings, hooks, etc.) prior to each use. Never use damaged equipment.
- b) Never walk under a load suspended from a hoist.
- c) Keep all personnel clear of the 'fall zone' of the hoist.
- d) Know the weight of material being lifted. Never overload a hoist.

## 9. Lockout/Tagout – prior to working on any machinery when guards are removed, every energy source (electrical, hydraulic, chemical, mechanical, etc.) must be deactivated, stored energy dissipated, and the control locked in the off (safe) position.

Never remove or tamper with a lockout performed by another employee or contractor. A lockout could consist of a lock applied to a control such as a switch, breaker, or valve. A tag containing words such as "DANGER - DO NOT OPERATE" may also be used for lockout. If you see the lock, the tag, or both applied to an energy control device it means, "Keep your hands off."

## 10. Hazard Communication:

- a) All chemical containers must be labeled to identify contents and hazards. Most labels use numbers to rank the hazard level in three important areas:
  - FIRE** (red background color) - will the material burn?
  - HEALTH** (blue background) - is the material dangerous to my body?
  - REACTIVITY** (yellow background) - is the material dangerously unstable?

After each hazard (Fire, Health, Reactivity), a number from 1-4 will be assigned. The number reflects the degree (or amount) of hazard:

- |             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| -0 Minimal  | -1 Slight  |
| -2 Moderate | -3 Serious |
| -4 Severe   |            |

- b) A Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) must be secured for all chemicals purchased or brought on site. You have a right to access MSDSs – ask your supervisor.
- c) Follow all label and MSDS instructions – including amount instructions

- d) Do not mix chemicals unless authorized to do so.
- e) Keep all chemicals in closed containers.
- f) Store all flammable liquids in safety cabinets or safety cans. Never use flammable chemicals around ignition sources such as smokers, pilot lights, or arcing/sparking electrical equipment.
- g) Wear required Personal Protective Equipment and minimize contact with the chemical.
- h) Do not eat, drink, or smoke while using chemicals. And always wash your hands after handling chemicals.

**11. Confined Space Entry** – Only trained and authorized employees are permitted to enter confined spaces. If you believe that your job requires confined space entry, contact your supervisor prior to undertaking the work. (Confined spaces are areas not meant for human occupancy, have limited means of entry/exit, and have electrical, chemical, thermal, atmosphere, or entrapment hazards).

## 12. Emergencies:

- a) In the event of any serious injury or fire, call 911. There is a designated lead person in each department. Follow their instructions. Send someone to the facility entrance to meet the Fire Department. If in doubt, call 911.
- b) Upon discovering a fire, alert others in immediate danger and initiate facility-wide fire alarm.
- c) When the evacuation signal is given, all employees should immediately turn off equipment, close doors, and evacuate to their designated evacuation areas. Attendance will be taken to account for all personnel. Stay together in the group until further instructions are received.
- d) Do not attempt to fight any fire which is uncontained, too hot, too smoky, or if you are too frightened.
- e) To use a fire extinguisher, remember PASS:
  - P = Pull (the safety pin)
  - A = Aim (at the base of the fire)
  - S = Squeeze (the lever)
  - S = Sweep (side to side)

If you use a fire extinguisher, remember:

- Stay low,
  - Keep yourself between the fire and an exit,
  - Do not turn your back on a fire, and
  - Immediately report the use to your supervisor.
- d) Do not touch blood or any other bodily fluid during or following an incident. If you are trained to administer first aid, gloves and other barriers are located with the first aid equipment. If you think that you have been exposed to bodily fluid, notify your supervisor immediately.

## 13. Company Vehicles and Driver Safety:

- a) Only employees authorized by Gearheart Communications are permitted to operate Gearheart Communications vehicles.
- b) No 'side trips' or personal use of company vehicles are permitted.
- c) Seat belts/shoulder harnesses must be worn whenever the vehicle is in motion.
- d) All local and state traffic regulations and signs must be followed.
- e) No unauthorized riders, hitchhikers, etc., are allowed.
- f) All moving violations resulting in points being assigned to your license must be reported to your supervisor.

g) Driving while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs is forbidden.

- Employees driving their personal vehicles on company business must follow steps 'c – g,' shown above.

**See Policy 5.20 in the Employee Handbook for the complete policy.**

#### **14. Electrical Safety:**

- a) Never operate or tamper with the electrical main switch or breakers. You are authorized only to operate switches/disconnects on/for individual machines.
- b) Report all electrical problems and suspected problems to your supervisor.
- c) All junction boxes, control boxes, connections, and other wiring must have covers securely installed to prevent accidental contact.
- d) Inspect all plugs, cords, and portable equipment prior to use.
- e) Report any damaged electrical equipment to your supervisor. Only authorized personnel are permitted to make repairs.
- f) Extension cords are to be used only for temporary applications. Never stretch cords across aisles or areas where others may trip over them. Do not attach extension cords to the building or run them under rugs/mats or through walls.
- g) Any personal electrical devices must be approved by Gearheart Communications prior to use.

#### **15. Lifting:**

- a) If you need help moving material, request assistance.
- b) When you lift, use your leg muscles by squatting close to the load, preserving the curve in your back, spreading your feet, and lifting with your legs, keeping the load close to your body.
- c) When you turn holding an object, move your feet, and do not twist.

**16. Staying Safe** - Report any unsafe conditions or situations to your supervisor. If you have suggestions on improving any aspect of safety in the facility, discuss it. If you are unsure of how to operate a piece of equipment or complete an assignment, **ask for help**. Asking for help when you are unsure reduces the chance of injury.

These rules are established to help you stay safe and injury free. Violation of the above rules, or conduct that does not meet minimum accepted work standards, will result in discipline, up to and including discharge.

When working at a customer location, employees are required to follow the above rules, as well as all customer rules and procedures, and work in a manner that reflects positively on the company. Before operating any equipment at a customer location, permission must first be secured from the customer contact.



**Angela Hall** is designated as Gearheart Communications Human Resource Manager. **David Heintzelman** is designated as the Safety Coordinator. The Human Resource Manager and the Safety Coordinator are responsible for implementation and compliance with the Safety and Health Policy of Gearheart Communications and is accountable for results as measured by criteria, such as incident rates.

Combined responsibilities include:

1. Resolve questions, approve and/or recommend necessary expenditures to correct unsafe conditions.
2. Make regular shop, warehouse, office and ground-job site tours, and safety inspections to determine if safe work practices are being observed; ensure that unsafe conditions do not exist.
3. Actively participate and follow the safety and health programs.
4. Plan, coordinate, perform, or delegate all safety training and testing given to supervisors and employees. Review results to be sure they are satisfactory. Maintain appropriate records of training and testing.
5. Review disciplinary actions with the employees.
6. Personally perform safety inspections, and review safety inspection reports and unsafe conditions reported by supervisors, employees, or others. Make or obtain corrections as required to maintain a safe workplace and ensure compliance.
7. Conduct regular safety meetings with employees to promote safety awareness and compliance with the Safety and Health Policies.
8. Ensure safety awareness among workers through regular meetings.
9. Ensure compliance with safe work practices and Coalfields Telephone Company's safety rules. Take appropriate disciplinary action to ensure compliance. This includes safe working procedures in the Outside Plant operations, the warehouse, yard, and office operations.
10. Investigate accidents and assist with completion of accident report forms when required.
11. Review reports of first aid incidents and reportable injuries to determine possible preventative actions. Take immediate corrective actions as required.
12. Ensure that specific programs (i.e. hazard communication, protection from bloodborne pathogens, hearing conservation, forklift safety/operator certification) are implemented and complied with consistently.

In order to promote better communication between employees and management, a Safety & Health Committee has been established for Coalfields Telephone Company's operations. Its primary function is to serve as a two-way channel of communication and to promote safety awareness throughout the workplace.

**ORGANIZATION:** The Safety & Health Committee will consist of:

- Human Resource Director
- Human Resource Manager
- Plant Superintendent
- Safety Coordinator
- Dispatch Supervisor
- Two Office Employees
- One Outside Plant Employee
- One MTS Security Employee

The Employee Safety & Health Committee will meet bi-monthly. The meeting will be chaired by the Safety Coordinator. Should a scheduled meeting have to be postponed, it will be held later in the month, on a date and time determined by the Safety Coordinator.

**FUNCTION:** The Safety & Health Committee has the following functions:

1. Conduct Safety/Housekeeping inspection(s) of one or more departments as part of each meeting.
2. Review and update safety rules and safe operating procedures.
3. Review accidents and "near miss" incidents reported since the last meeting, and suggest means for preventing future occurrences.
4. Convey, review, and comment on safety suggestions submitted by employees.
5. Plan and carry out various safety promotion activities (such as contests, award programs, etc.).
6. Promote safety awareness among all employees through safe attitudes and day-to-day interactions.
7. Review safety impacts of equipment/facility changes and multi-shift operations.

Take into account an employee's personal experience with safety when selecting Safety and Health Committee members. Someone from a specific work area with a history of accident or injury problems can bring valuable insights to the committee.

Volunteers or individuals who show they have an interest in safety are also good candidates. Likewise, individuals with a good safety record can bring their own experience to the group.

Rotate membership so that members exposed to Safety & Health Committee issues are "circulated" back into the workforce and others are brought in.

Occasionally, specialists or consultants may be added to the committee to address a specific situation or problem. Also, ad hoc subcommittees may be used to analyze and formulate recommendations on a particular problem.

The Safety & Health Committee should also be involved with developing SAFETY INCENTIVE PROGRAMS and in recognizing individual employees who have contributed to safety efforts and positive results.

Written documentation of Safety & Health Committee meetings should be maintained. A log or written minutes should be taken at each meeting. Meetings should follow a standard agenda.

1. Employees of Gearheart Communications are required to follow all client safety and security procedures during client visits.
2. If your client host does not advise you regarding safety hazards consider the following:
  - Emergency exit location(s);
  - Keep your eye on the path you are walking and avoid any tripping/slipping hazards. When on stairs maintain three point contact (hand on rail and feet on stairs);
  - When visiting manufacturing or construction sites, eye protection, hearing protection, and hard hats are frequently required. Ideally, this equipment will be in the possession of the Gearheart Communications' employee and not provided by the client.

If you will be touring a factory or construction site, dress appropriately. Wear shoes that support your feet and are slip resistant. Avoid clothing that is either constrictive or too loose; loose clothing could get caught in machinery or other equipment.

1. Any work-related injury or suspected injury must be reported immediately to your supervisor and to Human Resources. An Accident Report form must be completed by the injured employee and their supervisor. Failure to promptly report an injury may result in disciplinary action.
2. After each practitioner appointment, the employee must report to his/her supervisor and Human Resources to review his/her progress.
3. When available, Gearheart Communications provides light duty work for employees recovering from injury. Employees are required to return to light duty work immediately upon release.
4. An accident investigation will be conducted to determine the root cause of the accident. The injured employee will be asked to participate in the investigation.
5. Employees are urged to report hazardous conditions and "near miss" incidents to their supervisors before injuries result.

**See policies 4.05 and 5.06 in the Employee Handbook for complete policies.**

**GENERAL EMERGENCY GUIDELINES:**

- Stay calm and think through your actions
- Know the emergency numbers:
  - Fire/Police/Ambulance 911
  - Internal Emergency Number (Safety Coordinator 479-6510)
  - Human Resources \_479-6355\_\_
  -
- Know where the stairwell exits are located
- In the event of any emergency, do not take elevators, use the stairs
- Do not hesitate to call/alert others if you believe that an emergency is occurring — you will not “get in trouble.”
- Know where emergency equipment is located: (Posted on Safety Bulletin Boards)

**FIRE:****1. EVACUATION**

- Employees will be notified of a fire alarm either by the fire alarm system or by a paged announcement.
- Upon becoming aware of a fire alarm, employees should immediately evacuate the building using the closest stairs. Do not delay evacuation to get personal belongings or to wait for co-workers. Also, all doors should be closed as the last person passes through. (Note: never use elevators during fire alarm situations and never go back into the building).
- Supervisors should be the last persons to leave the area. Check in conference rooms, lavatories, and offices to be sure that all personnel have evacuated.
- Any employee having a mobility, visual, hearing, or other condition, which may hinder them from becoming aware of an emergency or evacuating, should request special assistance through Human Resources.
- Upon exiting the building, personnel should report to designated meeting area for a headcount. Department personnel should gather and be accounted for by Supervisor/Lead Person.
- If any employee is missing, an immediate report should be made to Human Resources Manager/Safety Coordinator who will in turn report to the first available fire department officer.
- Employees should stay together in a group so that periodic updates on the situation can be issued.
- The order to re-occupy the building will be issued by the Human Resources/Safety Coordinator.
- In the event of inclement weather, Human Resources Manager will make arrangements for all personnel to move to shelter.

**2. EMPLOYEE DISCOVERING A FIRE:**

- Alert other persons in the immediate hazard area.
- Activate a fire alarm or call CTC Supervisor/Lead (479-6226) to page an emergency announcement.
- If you have been trained, you can decide to use a fire extinguisher following these instructions:
  - P=Pull the safety pin
  - A=Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire
  - S=Squeeze the operating lever
  - S=Sweep side to side covering the base of the fire

*\*When using a fire extinguisher always stay between the fire and an exit; stay low and back away when the fire is extinguished.*

*\*Never feel that using a fire extinguisher is required. If the fire is too hot, too smoky or you are frightened, evacuate.*

- Have someone notify Human Resources where the emergency is located. He/she will relay this information to the fire department.

**3. MEDICAL EMERGENCY:** (chest pains, loss of consciousness, fall from a height, etc.)

- Upon discovering a medical emergency, call 911.
- Contact your supervisor and they will contact HR.
- Stay with the person involved being careful not to come in contact with any bodily fluids, unless properly trained and equipped.
- Send two persons (greeters) to the building entrance, to await the Emergency Unit. (One person should call and hold an elevator car if needed. Often two Emergency units will arrive, so the second greeter should wait at the entrance to receive the second unit while the first greeter escorts the Emergency personnel to the scene).
- Employees in the immediate vicinity of the emergency, but not directly involved, should leave the area.
- Human Resources will make any necessary notifications to family members of the person suffering the medical emergency.

**4. SEVERE WEATHER:**

- The Dispatch Supervisor will monitor a weather alert radio/Weather Station. If a severe weather report is issued, she/he will immediately page the following announcement: (This announcement will be repeated three times).
- Employees will shut down office equipment and will be instructed where to go for safety.
- The Dispatch Supervisor will take the weather radio with her/him. When the severe weather warning is cancelled, she/he will send runners to advise that it is safe to return to office areas. A general announcement will also be made.

**Quick Guide**

**Do not attempt to drive through water that has crossed a roadway. The following are important points to remember when driving in flood conditions:**


Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most passenger cars causing loss of control and possible stalling.

1. A foot of water will float many vehicles
2. Two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles including sport utility vehicles (SUV's) and pick-ups.
3. Do not attempt to drive through a flooded road. The depth of water is not always obvious. The road bed may be washed out under the water, and you could be stranded or trapped.
4. Do not drive around a barricade. Barricades are there for your protection. Turn around and go the other way.
5. Do not try to take short cuts. They may be blocked. Stick to designated evacuation routes.
6. Be especially cautious driving at night when it is harder to recognize flood dangers.

**In case of a tornado the following steps are recommended by FEMA:**

Lie flat in a nearby ditch or depression and cover your head with your hands. Be aware of the potential for flooding.

Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location.



Never try to outrun a tornado in urban or congested areas in a car or truck. Instead, leave the vehicle immediately for safe shelter.

Watch out for flying debris. Flying debris from tornadoes causes most fatalities and injuries.

#### **5. WORKPLACE VIOLENCE:**

- Any employee who feels that she/he has been threatened should immediately report their concern to their manager and to Human Resources.
- If any person is observed exhibiting threatening behavior or making threatening statements, the person discovering the situation should warn others in the area and immediately notify Human Resources and stay away from the person exhibiting threatening behavior.
- Depending upon the level of concern, the (911) should be called immediately.
- Never attempt to confront any person exhibiting threatening behavior.

\*If you have reason to believe that events in your personal life could result in acts of violence occurring at work, you are urged to confidentially discuss the issue with Human Resources so that a prevention plan can be developed.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT:**   Betsy Layne \_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE:**   478-5555 \_\_\_\_\_

**FIRE DEPARTMENT:**   Maytown \_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE:**   285-9543 \_\_\_\_\_

**FIRE DEPARTMENT:**   Wheelwright \_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE:**   452-4202 \_\_\_\_\_

**FIRE DEPARTMENT:**   Cow Creek \_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE:**   874-9500 \_\_\_\_\_

**FIRE DEPARTMENT:**   Middle Creek \_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE:**   886-9097 \_\_\_\_\_

**POLICE DEPARTMENT:**   Floyd County Sheriff \_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE:**   886-6171 \_\_\_\_\_

**EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (AMBULANCE):**   Trans Star \_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE:**   886-6664 \_\_\_\_\_

**HOSPITAL:**   Pikeville Medical Center \_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE:**   218-3500 \_\_\_\_\_

**HOSPITAL:**   Highlands Regional \_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE:**   886-8511 \_\_\_\_\_



1. Smoking is not allowed in any interior area of the building or company vehicles. Smoking is only allowed in designated exterior smoking areas.
2. No candles or open flames are allowed within the facilities.
3. Only space heaters provided by the company are approved for use within the facility. Employees using space heaters are responsible to turn the heater off when leaving their desk for extended periods of time (lunch, end of the workday, etc.).

**The space heater must be plugged directly into an outlet.** Do not use a light-duty extension cord or a multi outlet strip/surge protector; it can start a fire with a high-wattage appliance. The unit must be grounded with a three-pronged plug.

**Keep the space heater accessible – do not store anything within three feet of the unit. The leading cause of space heater fires was combustibles too close to the heater.**

4. No flammable chemicals are allowed inside the building at any time. If you feel that there is a work-related need to use a flammable chemical, contact Human Resources for guidance.
5. Electrical safety:
  - With the exception of independently fused multi-tap cords for computers, extension cords are not allowed.
  - Keep electric cords out of areas where they will be damaged by stepping on/kicking them.
  - Turn electrical appliances off with the switch, not by pulling out the plug.
  - Turn all appliances off before leaving for the day.
  - Radios/tape/CD players and PDAs are the only personal electrical devices allowed to be used in offices/cubes. These devices must be in good repair. Gearheart Communications reserves the right to instruct you to remove personal electrical devices at any time.
  - Never run cords under rugs or other floor coverings.
  - Any electrical problems should be reported immediately to Safety Coordinator.
6. The following areas must remain clear and unobstructed at all times:
  - Exit doors,
  - Aisles,
  - Electrical panels, and
  - Fire extinguishers.

It is our goal to prevent work-related injuries from happening. We are always concerned when one of our employees is injured or ill due to a work-related condition. We believe that such absences cost both Gearheart Communications and its employees. We want our injured employees to get the best possible medical treatment immediately to assure the earliest possible recovery and return to work.

Gearheart Communications has a workers' compensation program available for employees who have suffered work-related injuries. The program's administrator will determine, based upon their guidelines, whether you are eligible for wage loss or medical expenses under that program.

Gearheart Communications wants to provide meaningful work activity for all employees who become unable to perform all, or portions, of their regular work assignment. Thus, we have implemented a Return to Work program, which includes transitional or light duty work if available.

### **Employee Procedures**

- All work-related injuries or near-misses should always be reported immediately to your supervisor no later than the end of the shift on which the injury occurs.
- If a **post-accident drug screen** is not performed the **same day** as the injury, the employee shall be tested on the following day.
- You must complete and sign an Accident Report.
- When medical treatment is sought, the injured employee must advise their supervisor that they are seeking treatment and obtain a Return to Work Evaluation form. Gearheart Communications will not accept a general note stating that you are only to be off of work.
- Under this program, temporary light duty work may be available while you are temporarily unable to work in your regular job capacity.
- If you are unable to return to your regular job, but are capable of performing transitional duty, you must return to transitional duty if the company has such duties. Failure to do so will result in your not being eligible for full disability benefits under the workers' compensation program, and may result in disqualification for certain employee benefits and, in some cases, be a basis for termination.
- Employees who are unable to work and whose absences Gearheart Communications approves must keep us informed upon every follow-up. Failure to do so will result in a reduction in benefits available and discipline, up to and including termination from employment.


If you are unable to return to your regular job or transitional duty, your absence must be approved under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) program. For this purpose, you need to complete all Family Medical Leave Request form and submit it to the Human Resources Department within 15 days upon receipt of the document. You must have your practitioner complete a **Physician's Transitional Duty Recommendations Record**.

- Employees who are not eligible for leave under FMLA must return to light duty if available or regular work if at all possible. If you are unable to return to any available work, your job position may be filled.
- Employees must provide a Return to Work form indicating they are capable of returning to full duty. Permanent restrictions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and relate to the performance of essential job functions. No permanent light duty positions will be created.
- Cooperate with our third-party administrator and provide accurate and complete information as soon as possible so that you receive all benefits to which you are entitled. If you have problems or concerns, please contact your Human Resources Department.

1. All Gearheart Communications' employees have a right to know what chemicals they work with, what the hazards are, and how to handle them safely.
2. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are documents provided by the supplier of a chemical. MSDS detail the chemical contents, associated hazards, and general safe handling guidelines. At Gearheart Communications, the MSDS collection is located at HR. Employees are free to utilize the MSDS as needed.
3. General rules for handling chemicals in an office environment are:
  - Read all label warnings and instructions.
  - When changing toner cartridges, consult with an experienced employee if you are unsure how to proceed.
  - Follow instructions for quantity. More is not better.
  - Minimize contact with chemicals. Use double layer cloths or gloves to protect your skin and keep your face clear of the area to reduce inhalation.
  - Always wash your hands after handling chemicals.
  - If a chemical enters your eye(s) immediately hold open the injured eye(s) and rinse it/them with clean, cool water for 15 minutes. Then be sure to report the injury immediately.
  - Any questions or concerns regarding chemicals should be reported to Human Resources.

## **Hazards Associated with Batteries**

1. **Hydrogen Gas**
  - Gas is a by-product of the battery charging process.
  - It is lighter than air
  - Flammable in nature
  - Hydrogen gas has no taste. You can smell the acid in batteries if they heat up
2. **Acid Hazards**
  - Corrosive material
  - Burns to skin
  - Burns to eyes
  - Never open the battery caps with your face directly over the battery
3. **Electrical Hazard**
  - Some battery systems are capable of discharging at extremely high current. Accidental shorting of terminals or cables can result in sever electrical Arcing, causing burn and electric shock to nearby personnel.
4. **Electrical Safety Precautions**
  - Never touch both terminals with your bare hands at the same time !
  - Remove rings, watches and dangling jewelry when working with or near batteries. The metal in the jewelry can cause shock or burn if they contact the battery terminals.
  - Never lay tools or metal objects on top of batteries
  - Ensure charger is turned off before connecting or disconnecting a battery to prevent Arcing.
5. **Fire and Explosion Precautions**
  - Do not smoke in battery charging areas.
  - Never over charge batteries! This can cause the battery to give off gas that may explode.
  - Prevent open flames, sparks or electric arcs in battery charging areas.

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- Keep tools and other metallic objects away from uncovered batteries
  - Neutralize static buildup just before working on battery by contacting nearest grounded surface.
  - Ensure battery area ventilation is operating prior to working on batteries.

#### **6. Handling Battery Acid**

- Use extreme caution when handling acid keep an acid neutralizing solution such as baking soda ready available
- Always wear proper eye and face protection.
- Use non-metallic containers to handle liquid
- If the acid is splashed into an eye , immediately force the eye open and flood it with clean, cool water for at least 15 minutes. Get prompt medical attention.
- If acid is taken internally, drink large quantities of water or milk. Do not induce vomiting. Call a physician immediately
- Neutralize any acid that spills on a vehicle or in the work area. After neutralizing, rinse contaminated area clean with water.

**Office Safety:**

1. Never leave file drawers open, or open multiple file drawers at once.
2. Do not stack heavy or bulky objects on top of cabinets.
3. Do not store frequently used objects above shoulder height or below knee height.
4. Never reach into office machines without turning them off and unplugging them if possible.
5. Keep your work area free of trip hazards such as storage in walkways, cords across aisles, and damaged floor coverings.
6. Inspect step stools/ladders before use. Be sure to keep a stationary object in front of you when using a step stool to provide stability.
7. Never use defective or broken equipment. Report these problems to your supervisor.

**Security:**

1. Always be aware of your surroundings. Keep your head up and hands out of your pockets while walking to and from your car.
2. Immediately report any suspicious activity or persons to HR. And immediately report any theft to HR.
3. When parking, remove all valuables from sight and lock car doors.
4. **Be sure doors close behind you, especially in the rear entrance.**
5. Keep all valuables (money, purse, jewelry, etc.) out of sight when at your desk. Do not bring large sums of money or other valuables into the building.
6. Secure laptop computers, PDAs, and other small electronic devices before leaving your workspace for extended periods of time (lunch, meetings, etc.).
7. If you are working alone and are in the office before or after regular business hours, on weekends, or holidays, observe these additional guidelines:
  - **Be sure doors close and lock after you.**
  - Turn on lights as you move through the building.
  - Always be aware of the closest telephone (do not hesitate to call 911 if you feel threatened).
  - Be sure that someone at home knows that you are at work and is expecting you to check in by a specified time.
  - As you leave the office, be sure to turn off all equipment, lights, etc., after use.
8. Weapons, including firearms, knives with blades longer than two inches, bow/arrow, pepper spray (mace, tear gas), and clubs, are not allowed on Gearheart Communications' property.

**Ergonomics:****Office Ergonomics**

If you sit behind a desk for hours at a time, you're not doomed to a career of neck and back pain or sore wrists and fingers. Proper office ergonomics — including correct chair height, adequate equipment spacing and good desk posture — can help you and your joints stay comfortable at work.

**Chair:** Choose a chair that supports your spinal curves. Adjust the height of your chair so that your feet rest flat on the floor or on a footrest and your thighs are parallel to the floor. Adjust armrests so your arms gently rest on them with your shoulders relaxed.

**Key objects:** Keep key objects — such as your telephone, stapler or printed materials — close to your body to minimize reaching. Stand up to reach anything that can't be comfortably reached while sitting.

**Keyboard and mouse:** Place your mouse within easy reach and on the same surface as your keyboard. While typing or using your mouse, keep your wrists straight, your upper arms close to your body, and your hands at or slightly below the level of your elbows. Use keyboard shortcuts to reduce extended mouse use. If possible, adjust the sensitivity of the mouse so you can use a light touch to operate it. Alternate the hand you use to operate the mouse by moving the mouse to the other side of your keyboard.

**Telephone:** If you frequently talk on the phone and type or write at the same time, place your phone on speaker or use a headset rather than cradling the phone between your head and neck.

**Footrest:** If your chair is too high for you to rest your feet flat on the floor — or the height of your desk requires you to raise the height of your chair — use a footrest. If a footrest is not available, try using a small stool or a stack of sturdy books instead.

**Desk:** Under the desk, make sure there's clearance for your knees, thighs and feet. If the desk is too low and can't be adjusted, place sturdy boards or blocks under the desk legs. If the desk is too high and can't be adjusted, raise your chair. Use a footrest to support your feet as needed. If your desk has a hard edge, pad the edge or use a wrist rest. Don't store items under your desk.

**Monitor:** Place the monitor directly in front of you, about an arm's length away. The top of the screen should be at or slightly below eye level. The monitor should be directly behind your keyboard.

References: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/office-ergonomics/art-20046169>

## 5.24 SEXUAL AND OTHER FORMS OF HARASSMENT

It is the policy of Gearheart Communications to strive to maintain a working environment for its employees that is free from sexual harassment by supervisors, coworkers, or third parties. The Company will not tolerate any act of sexual harassment by any person in violation of this policy.

- A. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests or sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
  - 1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment;
  - 2. Submission to or rejection of any such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions; or
  - 3. Such conduct has the result of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating or offensive working environment.
  
- B. Examples of specific conduct that would violate this policy include, but are not limited to, the following activities on company premises or during work hours.
  - 1. Visual displays of sexually suggestive or sexually explicit materials, such as posters, postcards, catalogs, drawings, cartoons, magazines, or photographs, viewing or reading such materials or downloading or bringing such materials into the workplace.
  - 2. Sexually suggestive or explicit comments, jokes, epithets, name calling, etc.
  - 3. Sexually suggestive or explicit gestures.
  - 4. Sending or receiving sexually suggestive or sexually explicit e-mail.
  - 5. Logging onto, viewing, or downloading sexually suggestive or sexually explicit material from the Internet.
  - 6. Viewing or showing sexually suggestive or sexually explicit films or videotapes.
  - 7. Touching any co-worker or other person in a sexually suggestive or sexually explicit manner.
  - 8. Any act of "hazing" that involves the removal of any item of clothing from a co-worker that involves actual or threatened physical contact of any sort, or that involves any sexually suggestive or sexually explicit element.

Please note that men as well as women can be victims of sexual harassment, and that sexual harassment may involve persons of the same sex. In addition, conversations or activities that are purely voluntary and consensual may make third persons feel uncomfortable, and thus, may be a violation of this policy.

Harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristic is also strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment is verbal or physical conduct that defames, shows hostility or dislike toward an individual because of his/her race, color religion, national origin, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law, and that:

1. Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.
2. Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance.
3. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to: epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; degrading jokes and display or circulation in the workplace of written or graphic material that degrades or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group (including through e-mail).

It is the responsibility of every supervisor employed by Gearheart Communications to ensure that this anti-harassment policy is enforced strictly. Every supervisor is responsible for ensuring that each employee under his or her supervision is aware of this policy. It is the further responsibility of all supervisors to ensure that any work sections under his or her responsibility are free from sexual conduct that causes, or reasonably can be considered to cause, an intimidating or offensive working environment. In addition, supervisors are required to comply with all reporting requirements in this policy, including the obligation to promptly report to senior management any complaints made under this policy or any possible violation of the policy.

It is the responsibility of all employees to conduct themselves in ways that ensure that others are able to work in an atmosphere free from sexual harassment.

It is the responsibility of all employees to comply with this policy in all respects and at all times.

It is the further responsibility of all employees, including in particular all supervisors, to bring to Gearheart Communications' attention any evidence of sexual harassment, and to promptly report any act or event that is believed to be a violation of this policy (or that may be a violation of this policy) so that the matter can be investigated as soon as practicable and appropriate action taken. Further, all employees are required to cooperate fully, honestly, completely, and truthfully in any such investigation.

If you believe that you or any other employee has been subjected to sexual harassment in the workplace in violation of this policy, we ask that you immediately report your concerns to Human Resources or to John Schmoldt at 606-478-9401 ext 6242. Incidents of sexual harassment should never be ignored nor should they be considered a joke or an accident since experience shows that the conduct will usually continue or increase if it's ignored. When a complaint of harassment is brought to our attention, it will be promptly investigated.

No employee shall be subject to any form of reprisal or retaliation for having made a good faith complaint under this policy.

Any employee who is determined to have violated this policy by engaging in or condoning harassment of a fellow employee will be subject to immediate discipline up to and including termination of employment.



Any work-related accident resulting in serious injury or the death of an employee presents significant emotional challenges for management. Following are some guidelines, which may reduce the effects on fellow employees and minimize the impact from regulators, such as OSHA.

1. Be prepared to talk to local police officials, district attorney investigators, coroners, and OSHA compliance officers. Be aware that police and district attorneys can conduct criminal investigations. Be truthful but do not speculate or offer unsolicited opinions, information, or theories. Also be prepared for contacts from local news media. Consult with legal advisors if in doubt. (Operate under the assumption that OSHA will investigate. Take steps to be sure that your entire facility is as prepared as possible).
2. Fatalities and incidents resulting in three or more employees receiving inpatient hospitalization must be reported within 8 hours to the closest OSHA area office. If after hours, the incident can be reported to OSHA at: 1-800-321-6742.
3. Have a representative of your company contact the employee's next of kin to inform her/him of the circumstances. If possible, this contact should be made in person. Offer to provide transportation and/or other support. (For example, providing a Gearheart Communications' representative at the hospital will convey the company's concern).
4. Get all witnesses names. If some witnesses are not employees, be sure to get full addresses and phone numbers.
5. Render safe any hazards created by the accident scene. (i.e. material that may fall, leaking chemicals, etc.). Rope off or otherwise isolate the accident scene early on to prevent it from becoming a "tourist attraction."
6. Conduct an initial investigation. If equipment and/or duties directly involved in the accident are duplicated elsewhere in the company, take immediate steps to assure that there will be no re-occurrence of the accident.
7. Take pictures to document the scene. Note anything that may help you identify specific equipment involved such as serial numbers, license plate numbers, etc.
8. Follow Gearheart Communications procedure for bloodborne pathogens in cleaning any bodily fluid spills.
9. Consider meeting with employees in small groups to discuss, in general terms:
  - a) The serious accident that occurred.
  - b) That all the necessary steps were taken to care for the person involved.
  - c) That an accident investigation is being performed.
  - d) That all employees will be kept informed.
  - e) The availability of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) (if applicable).
  - f) Provide encouragement and request that employees work safely.
10. Request your supervisors be alert for employees who may not be paying full attention to their jobs and thereby jeopardizing their own safety. During these discussions, do not discuss fault, discipline, opinions, etc.
11. If your company has a physician on contract, have him/her follow the case.

1. Blood and other bodily fluids can carry pathogens, which are capable of causing diseases in others. This includes HIV, which leads to AIDS and hepatitis.
2. Because we cannot tell by looking at a person if they are infected with a pathogenic disease, we must take precautions following an illness or injury when bodily fluids are released.
3. In the event of a person losing bodily fluids, stay away from the area and warn others to also do so. You can still stay close to the ill/injured person to support him/her, just be sure to stay out of contact any bodily fluids.
4. In the event that you find spilled bodily fluids, a syringe, or other medically contaminated materials, do not attempt clean up by yourself. Call Human Resources immediately for instructions.

## **5.20 AUTOMOBILE USAGE**

It is Gearheart Communications' policy to provide the use of company owned vehicles to our employees, who are 21 years of age or older, when use of a vehicle is required for the performance of business functions and/or contributions to the efficient operation of the Company. Vehicles are provided for business purposes only and are not to be used for personal use except as authorized by designated by Senior Management. Use of personal vehicles for business purposes is to be limited to employees only in cases outlined by this policy.

### **Safety**

Each employee is responsible for operating the assigned vehicle safely and courteously. Employees are to drive defensively, compensate for road and weather hazards and take into account traffic conditions.

Only employees of the company are allowed as passengers in company vehicles. Exceptions to this rule require pre-approval from management.

Each vehicle is to have a first aid kit and fire extinguisher.

### **Vehicle Maintenance & Appearance**

Each employee is responsible for ensuring the assigned vehicle is properly maintained and regularly serviced per the vehicle's maintenance schedule. Vehicle maintenance logs will be maintained by the department's Dispatcher with a copy to be kept in the vehicle. Inform the Dispatcher wherever maintenance is performed and provide them documentation of the service provided.

Each employee is responsible for ensuring the assigned vehicle is kept clean on the outside as well as on the inside.

The vehicles must have the Company logo displayed on each door panel. The only other decals allowed on the vehicle are advertisements for other divisions within our company. Strictly prohibited are personal decals, stickers, license plates, flags, etc., anywhere on the vehicle. Only pre-approved decals and license plates are permitted. Check with your supervisor if you have a question about this.

Each vehicle must have a vehicle number displayed along with a phone number for the public to use to report any actions they witness and wish to report. If any of the company sponsored decals require replacement it is the employee's responsibility to report the matter to your supervisor.

Company vehicles are prohibited from having any type of tinting on the windows. If tinting exists it is the supervisor's responsibility to see that it is removed from the vehicle.

Each employee assigned a vehicle shall receive a company credit card for the sole purpose of purchase of gasoline and car maintenance items.

Employees shall have assigned vehicles serviced at service centers authorized by the Company. We encourage employees to find a service center in the area they work where we can routinely take the vehicle for servicing.

### **Vehicle Registration & Insurance Documentation**

The insurance identification card and vehicle registration must be kept in the assigned vehicle at all times.

## **Accidents, Arrest & Fines**

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In the event of an accident, immediately contact the local police department, exchange identity and insurance information with drivers involved in the accident and obtain a copy of the police report.

The employee should contact their immediate supervisor immediately and provide a written report concerning the accident to their supervisor and Human Resources department within 48 hours.

## **Reporting**

A Vehicle Mileage and Expense Summary Report for each company vehicle is to be produced monthly by the employee assigned to that vehicle. Reports shall be provided to their supervisor by the third working day of the month.

The employee's Supervisor shall maintain all reports and all maintenance logs for each vehicle in their department.

## **Personal Vehicle Use for Business Purposes:**

Personal vehicles for company business are to be used only where and when other means of transportation is not available or unsuitable.

If an employee is assigned a task that requires use of a vehicle and no company vehicle is available or suitable:

- A. Approvals must be obtained from the employee's supervisor for use of a personal vehicle or rental vehicle in advance;
- B. The employee must have proof of liability insurance in an amount not less than the minimum required by the state of residence; and
- C. Employees shall keep expenses and mileage to a minimum. Mileage reimbursement is made on the basis of actual mileage traveled on company business at the authorized rate per mile.

## **Responsibilities**

Employees are responsible for maintaining a safe driving record and abiding by the rules of this policy. It is also the employee's responsibility to make themselves available after hours as set forth in the On-Call Policy of the department. Violations of this policy will cause for termination of use of company vehicle and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination from the Company.

Gearheart Communications is firmly committed to your safety. We will do everything possible to prevent workplace accidents and are committed to providing a safe working environment for you and all employees.

We value you not only as an employee but also as a human being critical to the success of your family, the local community, and Gearheart Communications.

You are encouraged to report any unsafe work practices or safety hazards encountered on the job. All accidents/incidents (no matter how slight) are to be immediately reported to the supervisor on duty.

A key factor in implementing this policy will be the strict compliance to all applicable federal, state, local, and Coalfields Telephone Company policies and procedures. Failure to comply with these policies may result in disciplinary actions.

Respecting this, Gearheart Communications will make every reasonable effort to provide a safe and healthful workplace that is free from any recognized or known potential hazards. Additionally, Gearheart Communications subscribes to these principles:

1. All accidents are preventable through implementation of effective Safety and Health Control policies and programs.
2. Safety and Health controls are a major part of our work every day.
3. Accident prevention is good business. It minimizes human suffering, promotes better working conditions for everyone, holds Gearheart Communications in higher regard with customers, and increases productivity. This is why Gearheart Communications will comply with all safety and health regulations which apply to the course and scope of operations.
4. Management is responsible for providing the safest possible workplace for Employees. Consequently, management of Gearheart Communications is committed to allocating and providing all of the resources needed to promote and effectively implement this safety policy.
5. Employees are responsible for following safe work practices, company rules, and for preventing accidents and injuries. Management will establish lines of communication to solicit and receive comments, information, suggestions, and assistance from employees where safety and health are concerned.
6. Management and supervisors of Gearheart Communications will set an exemplary example with good attitudes and strong commitment to safety and health in the workplace. Toward this end, management must monitor the company's safety and health performance, working environment, and conditions to ensure that program objectives are achieved.
7. Our safety program applies to all employees and persons affected or associated in any way by the scope of this business. Everyone's goal must be to constantly improve safety awareness and to prevent accidents and injuries.

Everyone at Gearheart Communications must be involved and committed to safety. This must be a team effort. Together, we can prevent accidents and injuries and keep each other safe and healthy in the work that provides our livelihood.

By signing this document, I confirm the receipt of Gearheart Communications employee safety handbook. I have read and understood all policies, programs, and actions as described, and agree to comply with these set policies.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date