

General information links for schools officers

Schools officers and all other operations officers perform a wide range of duties that require a knowledge and understanding of health and safety practices.

Applying the principals of health and safety in your daily work routines helps to prevent or minimise injuries and illness in your workplace. The Department of Education's (the department) [policies and procedures register](#) provides guidance on departmental expectations, roles and responsibilities with regards to health and safety in the workplace. The [Creating Healthier Workplaces website](#) also contains useful resources to assist you to undertake your role safely.

Operations officers make a significant contribution to the maintenance of school facilities. A key resource that operational officers will find very useful in the first instance is the '[Green folder](#)'. The link should be visited regularly, and at least annually, to access current information provided by the department to support the operational role. You can also access health and safety fact sheets, safety alerts and checklists from the [Creating Healthier Workplaces website](#).

[This link provides access to general information that will help school's officers.](#)

Confined spaces

Entering confined spaces (e.g. drains, rainwater tanks, lift wells, pontoons, silos) for maintenance, cleaning or inspection purposes requires specific knowledge and skills to complete tasks safely. Work permits are required to conduct activities in confined spaces and there are stringent legislative requirements that apply. As such, no school personnel should undertake confined spaces work. [Further information is available here.](#)

Community use of school facilities

[This link](#) accesses information that may be helpful to assist officers should you school hire school/campus facilities to community groups or organisations. Good practice would include a risk assessment that minimised the health and safety issues surrounding the activity to the lowest practicable level.

Design requirements for Education Queensland school facilities

[Can be found here.](#)

Emergency management and response

Effective planning and management of emergencies helps reduce potential loss of life and property damage. The [Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 \(Qld\)](#) requires that a comprehensive emergency plan is in place at the workplace. This plan must include specific emergency information and must be current. This regulation also requires regular testing of and training in the emergency procedures.

It is vital that schools officers are aware of/participate in the effective planning and management of emergencies that allow teaching and learning to be maintained or resumed as soon as possible after an incident. [Strategies to increase the level of disaster preparedness can be found here.](#)

Fire safety

The [Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990 \(Qld\)](#) and the [Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008 \(Qld\)](#) detail the main legislative fire safety provisions in Queensland. Departmental sites are required to comply with the legal requirements of these and other related statutes. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) have the power to undertake audits at commercial sites (including departmental facilities) to measure compliance with all fire legislation. As schools officers often act as a liaison and information source for fire safety, [access to this information is important.](#)



Invasive ants and facilities

Fire ants are a direct safety issue for schools. Fire ants are mainly found in South East Queensland but have been found elsewhere in the state. If you find fire ants at your school the principal should be notified and then arrangements should be made for Biosecurity Queensland (part of DPI) to treat the infestation. Under Queensland legislation, fire ants are a notifiable pest and suspected sightings must be reported to Biosecurity Queensland.

Electric ants have been found in the Cairns area. It is important that schools officers in the restricted area be aware of the obligations regarding the movement of high risk materials.

The *yellow crazy ant* is a class 1 declared species in Queensland. Schools are required by law to keep their land free of this pest.

[Further information about these pests can be found on the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries website including maps and declared restricted areas.](#)

Rural safety information

Many departmental workplaces are located outside of metropolitan areas and therefore have different working environments to smaller, inner-city campuses. [The following link accesses information about general rural responsibilities and agricultural hazards.](#)

School maintenance information

[Can be found on OnePortal here.](#)

School security

[The School Security Handbook](#) is a complete guide for security matters including key management, alarm system maintenance, access control, lighting and strategies for the protection of equipment. The School Security Handbook is available for download as either one whole document, or in separate parts.

Solar energy

General information on the solar and energy efficiency project for Queensland's state schools can be accessed [here](#). This page contains links to other information you might find helpful. A solar inverter maintenance checklist can be found [here](#).

Swimming pools

[School swimming pools – operation and management](#) identifies responsibilities and strategies regarding the maintenance and operation of state school swimming and hydrotherapy pools to support a safe and healthy pool environment and optimal service delivery.

Water management and conservation

[Can be found on OnePortal here.](#)

Other useful contacts

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland Infoline	1300 369 915
Electrical Safety Queensland Infoline	1300 650 662
Queensland Health Infoline – 24 hours a day, seven days a week	13 43 25 84 (13 Health)
Poisons Information	13 11 26

Other useful websites

- [Workplace Health and Safety Queensland](#) – the statutory body that enforces and provides advice on Queensland workplace health and safety legislation.
- [Queensland Health](#) – the Health Information Directory provides access to online health and well-being information. The resources on this site are constantly expanded and regularly reviewed.
- [DoE Library Services Databases](#) – web-based access to selected Australian and International databases and full-text information services. Resources include Australian Standards, journal articles, reports, statistical surveys and research findings.
- [Schools Officers Resources](#) – a link to the department’s OnePortal website for human resources, industrial awards and professional development information for schools officers.

Should you require further information regarding health and safety in your role, you should speak to your principal or workplace health and safety committee/officer in the first instance. The department also has [Regional Health and Safety Consultants](#) who will provide health and safety advice to your school. Current contact details can be found here.