

Frequently Asked Questions

Safety and Liability in the Human Ecology Classroom

Human ecology education requires students' active involvement in developing safe behaviours/skills in addition to knowledge that is applicable to their personal lives and success in learning, life, and work. As expectations for students include increasingly complex hands-on skill development, safety becomes even more of a priority.

Who is responsible for the safety of students in the human ecology classroom?

The safety of students is achieved through team effort involving all of those who set and administer school policies, design and maintain the learning environment, and plan and implement human ecology instruction.

What are the recommended guidelines for safety in the human ecology classroom?

The Middle and Senior Years Human Ecology Manitoba Curriculum Frameworks of Outcomes have detailed Safety in the Human Ecology Classroom Guidelines appendices (available on the department website at https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/teched/home_ec.html). The guidelines bring together information needed by principals, teachers, and support and maintenance staff to help them make sound decisions regarding safety. Each appendix supports planning and action by providing information on safety legislation and standards, safety hazards, and examples of procedures for eliminating or minimizing hazards.

What is negligence and liability, and who is responsible?

Principals and teachers must be aware of accident/injury liability and negligence statements found in *The Public Schools Act*, as well as in the Manitoba Education and Training *Administrative Handbook: School Administration—Negligence and Liability* (available on the department website at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/policy/admin/school_admin.pdf). In addition, school divisions may have their own liability and negligence policies.

Does the *Administrative Handbook* make reference to human ecology classrooms?

Below is an excerpt from Topic N1, "Negligence and Liability," of the *Administrative Handbook: School Administration* (September 2016), which makes reference to facilities and equipment related to Technology Education programming (e.g., human ecology, industrial arts, and technical-vocational education).

If students are to be placed in situations where the potential for injury exists, appropriate skills training and safety briefing must take place, and safety regulations conscientiously enforced. **In addition, school officials are legally obligated to see that any facilities and equipment used are in safe condition.** Particular caution should be exercised with regard to physical education equipment, playground equipment, vocational/industrial shops, etc. [emphasis added]

Are there safety-related specific learning outcomes (SLOs) within the Grades 5 to 12 human ecology framework of outcomes?

Yes. The specific learning outcomes related to safety are expressed explicitly in each grade and course, and safety is integrated throughout all courses and reinforced continually by the teacher in the classroom.

FAQs

Safety and Liability in the Human Ecology Classroom

What are the human ecology teacher's safety-related responsibilities?

Teachers have a professional responsibility to safeguard and educate those who have been placed under their supervision. Jointly with the principal, teachers are responsible for creating a safe instructional setting and integrating hazard identification, assessment of the risks, and control of the situation in all aspects of the facility. On a day-to-day basis, teachers must be aware of what is happening in their facilities, who is doing it, how various tasks are being performed, and under which conditions.

The teacher should ensure that every precaution against injury is taken and should recognize potentially dangerous surroundings in instructional areas, and perform regular inspection, maintenance, and/or replacement of equipment.

What are the support staff's safety-related responsibilities?

Support staff (e.g., educational or instructional assistants, student services) play a significant role in helping to create and maintain a safe and productive learning environment, especially in a human ecology classroom. Support staff and teachers are role models to their students and should demonstrate and model safe work procedures. Physical limitations or behavioural challenges may increase risk for potential accidents. Support staff are an integral component to a safe experience for the student(s) in their care, and they should be ready to contribute to all forms of safety in a human ecology classroom.

What are the human ecology educator requirements/qualifications?

A Bachelor of Education/Manitoba Teachers' Certificate is required. The University of Manitoba offers a B.Ed. with a teachable Major and Minor in Human Ecology.

Additional Recommendations:

Specialized studies from a first degree or additional post-secondary/professional development coursework from a(n) Health Promotion and Education, Family Health, Human Nutritional Sciences, Environmental Design, and/or Textiles/Clothing & Design program are recommended.

Current: Bachelor of Science in Human Nutritional Sciences (B.Sc.)
Bachelor of Health Studies (B.H.St.)
Bachelor of Environmental Design (B.Env.D.)

Former: Bachelor of Human Ecology/Bachelor of Home Economics (B.H.Ec.)
Bachelor of Human Ecology in Family Social Sciences (B.H.Ecol.—Family Social Sciences)

What are the human ecology teacher's safety training requirements?

Human ecology teachers are to review school safety and health policies and regulations within their school/division. Teachers may be required to have up-to-date training or certification in areas related to instruction, such as emergency first aid and CPR and/or safe food handling certification courses.

Where can I find more information about Grades 5 to 12 human ecology education?

Visit the *Human Ecology* website at https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/teched/home_ec.html for more information. Educators can access additional support material on Maple (Manitoba Professional Learning Environment) at <http://mapleforem.ca>.