

Employee News



Anchorage School District

Please refer to the “**ASD Allergy Handbook**” for the district’s policies and procedures for responding to and accommodating allergies in ASD facilities:

www.ask12.org/forms/uploads/ASD_Allergy_Handbook.pdf

The **U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration** recommends the following documents for information on latex allergies and prevention:

“**Latex Allergy, A Prevention Guide**”
- Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Publication No. 98-113:
www.cdc.gov/niosh/98-113.html

“**Potential for Sensitization and Possible Allergic Reaction to Natural Rubber Latex Gloves and other Natural Rubber Products**” – OSHA Safety and Health Information Bulletin, Jan. 28, 2008:
www.osha.gov/dts/shib/shib012808.html

“**Preventing Allergic Reactions to Natural Rubber Latex in the Workplace**” - DHHS, NIOSH Publication No. 97-135. Contains recommendations to help minimize latex allergy reactions and exposures:
www.cdc.gov/niosh/latexalt.html

All ASD facilities to become latex-reduced worksites

All Anchorage School District facilities will become latex-reduced work environments this year. Signs are being distributed to the facilities advising individuals that products such as latex balloons will no longer be allowed on the grounds.

According to Valerie Woods of the ASD Equal Employment Opportunity Office, 77 percent of the district’s schools are currently latex-reduced facilities.

“Due to the increased number of allergy cases we have seen at the schools, it makes sense to reduce latex at all our facilities,” Woods said. “Because some of our buildings were not latex-reduced environments, some of our employees who suffer from latex allergies could not attend trainings or meetings held at those worksites.”

ASD employees are encouraged to replace latex gloves with vinyl ones and to evaluate their work areas to insure as many latex products as possible are removed. Frequent cleaning, vacuuming of upholstery and dusting, can reduce the amount of latex particles in the air.

Natural rubber latex is used in many products such as carpeting, upholstery, adhesive tape and bandages, pacifiers and diapers. The protein in rubber can cause allergic reactions in some people. The thin stretchy latex rubber in products like gloves and balloons causes more allergic reactions than hard-rubber products like automobile tires.

Allergic symptoms range from mild to severe respiratory problems. Research has shown that the more exposure a person has, the more likely he or she will become latex-sensitized, according to the National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety. The institute states that about 6 percent of the general public and about 12 percent of health-care workers are allergic to latex.