



## **Consultation Report**

**for**

**City of Stamford Public Schools  
888 Washington Boulevard  
Stamford, CT 06901**

**Site visited**

**Toquam Magnet School  
123 Ridgewood Ave  
Stamford, CT 06907**

**Submitted by:**

**Mark Trotochaud, CSP  
Health Consultant**

**State of Connecticut, Department of Labor  
Division of Occupational Safety and Health  
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## **1. Executive Summary**

### Purpose

A health consultation visit was made in response to a request from Dr. Tamu Lucero, Superintendent for the City of Stamford Public Schools. When referring to this report, please reference visit number 290418.

This visit was made to Toquam Magnet School on October 7, 2021. Mark Trotochaud held an opening conference with Ms. Olympia Della Flora, Associate Superintendent, Ms. Sibyl Brooks, Principal, Mr. Kevin McCarthy, Director of Facilities, Ms. Cindy Grafstein, Mayor's Representative, Ms. Dianne Phanos, Teachers Union President, Ms. Elizabeth Merturi, Teachers Union Representative, and Mr. Matt Stuhlman, Risk Management.

Following the opening conference, your Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) concerns were reviewed.

Toquam Magnet School was constructed in 1967. The school is built into a hillside and has two levels below grade. The school had the roof replaced in 2019 and is in the process of updating the aging HVAC system. The design phase of the HVAC upgrade is 80% complete. The school has a history of water intrusion and an inefficient heating and cooling system. A majority of the classrooms are utilizing portable dehumidifiers.

Mold, temperature, and humidity concerns have been brought up over the years which has led to the creation of the "Mold Task Force" in 2018. During the opening conference health concerns and working conditions were discussed by Ms. Phanos and Ms. Merturi. There is a history of respiratory issues with some employees along with working conditions in classrooms that have excessive temperature and humidity levels.

A walk-through was conducted to identify safety and health hazards in the workplace along with recommended actions. There were no hazards found during the consultation.

It is recommended that water intrusion prevention efforts continue along with the redesign of the HVAC system as part of the "Fresh Air Project" which was started in February of 2020. Any wet or mold affected areas should be brought to the attention of Facilities for repair or remediation.

A closing conference was conducted on October 7, 2021 and Dr. Lucero was informed that a written report would be sent.

## **2. Employer's Obligations and Rights**

In order to use our services, employers must agree to abide by certain obligations. Employee participation is required on all on-site visits involving hazard identification. Requirements vary depending on whether or not the site has a recognized employee representative. Consultants do not issue citations or propose penalties. The employer must correct imminent danger situations immediately or remove employees from the danger area. Failure to remove employees from an imminent danger area will result in immediate referral to enforcement. The employer must correct all serious hazards in accordance with mutually agreed upon correction due dates and provide to CONN-OSHA documentation of the action taken to eliminate or control the hazards. Failure to do so will result in referral to enforcement. Employers should correct other-than-serious hazards in a timely manner but need not send verification of correction except for those employers wishing to participate in an exemption program like SHARP or Pre-SHARP.

The employer must agree to post the List of Hazards, as it was received from the Consultation Project, for a minimum of three working days, and it can only be removed once all hazards identified on the list are corrected. Agreed-upon modifications or extensions of correction due dates must also be posted. Posting must be in a prominent place where it is readily observable by all employees. While in most instances this will entail posting a hard copy of the List of Hazards, posting by electronic means is acceptable in cases where electronic transmission is the employer's normal means of providing notices to employees and each employee is equipped with an electronic communication device. Failure to post the List of Hazards will result in the termination of the Consultation "visit in progress" status.

### 3. Interim Protection for Employees

**Where a serious hazard(s) is identified and is not immediately corrected in the presence of the consultant, the employer must provide interim protections for affected employees at the worksite while the identified hazard(s) are being corrected. Interim protections include but are not limited to the following:**

**Engineering Controls:** Engineering controls consist of, but not limited to, substitution, isolation, ventilation and equipment modification.

**Administrative Controls:** Any procedure that significantly limits daily exposure by control or manipulation of the work schedule or manner in which work is performed is considered a means of administrative control. The use of personal protective equipment is not considered a means of administrative control.

**Work Practice Controls:** Work practice controls are one type of administrative control in which the employer modifies the manner in which the employee performs assigned work. Such modification may result in a reduction of exposure through such methods as changing work procedures, improving sanitation and hygiene practices, or making other changes in the way the employee performs the job.

**Personal Protective Equipment and/or Clothing:** Providing the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) to all affected employees and training affected employees in the proper selection, use and maintenance of the PPE.

The recommended abatement action and interim protection recommendations in this report are intended as advisory in nature, informational in content, and are intended to assist employers in identifying potential engineering controls, administrative controls, work practice controls and personnel protective equipment to reduce employee exposure to the hazard. It is the employer's responsibility to evaluate the workplace and the controls necessary for their particular operation in order to reduce employee exposure.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act requires employers to comply with hazard-specific safety and health standards. In addition, employers must provide their employees with a workplace free from recognized hazards likely to cause death or serious physical harm under Section 5(a)(1), the General Duty Clause of the Act. Employers can be cited for violating the General Duty Clause if there is a recognized hazard and they do not take steps to prevent or abate the hazard.

In the event of an OSHA inspection, it is important to remember that the Compliance Officer is not legally bound by the consultant's advice or by the consultant's failure to point out a specific hazard. You may, but are not required to, furnish a copy of this report to the Compliance Officer, who may use it to determine your good faith efforts toward safety and health and reduce any proposed penalties. You are, however, required to furnish any employee exposure data from this report as required by 29 CFR 1910.1020.

#### **4. Safety and Health Management System**

A safe and healthful workplace depends on an effective management system to ensure that hazards are identified and corrected; and that effective physical and administrative protections are established and maintained.

Safety and Health Management Systems (SHMS) are universal interventions that can substantially reduce the number and severity of workplace injuries and alleviate the associated financial burdens on U.S. workplaces. Most successful programs are based on a common set of key elements. These include: hazard anticipation and detection, hazard prevention and control, planning and evaluation, administration and supervision, safety and health training, management leadership, and employee participation. Because of the importance of these programs, OSHA requires consultation projects to assess some SHMS elements during general industry consultation visits. A complete program assessment can also be requested when an employer desires. OSHA encourages all employers to work toward implementing an effective SHMS to protect their workers and recognizes employers who do so through SHARP.

## 5. Appendices

### Appendix A – Questionnaire *Questionnaire*

The mission of the Connecticut Division of Occupational Safety & Health (CONN-OSHA) Consultative Services is to provide timely, courteous and professional consultative services to Connecticut employers and their employees so they may recognize and control workplace hazards and prevent occupational injuries, illnesses and fatalities. In a continuing effort to improve our services, we ask that you complete the following questionnaire. Your responses will tell us if the program is working and how we can improve. Your opinion is important to us.

PLEASE CIRCLE THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE:

1. Did you receive a prompt response to your request for assistance? YES NO
2. Was the consultant friendly, courteous and knowledgeable about the machinery and/or processes associated with your business? YES NO

Please explain:

3. Would you recommend our services to other businesses? YES NO

4. List any suggestions you feel would improve our program and services:

5. Please rate the overall effectiveness of this consultation in solving your safety and health problems. Rate us from 1 to 10 where 1 is “Not effective at all” and 10 is “Very effective”.

Rating: \_\_\_\_\_

Firm name: City of Stamford Public Schools

Consultation date: October 7, 2021

Contact person: Dr. Tamu Lucero

Consultant: Mark Trotochaud

Please FAX OR EMAIL the completed questionnaire to the attention of John Rosa at (860) 263-6940 or [john.rosa@ct.gov](mailto:john.rosa@ct.gov). If you have any questions, call him directly at (860) 263-6925.