

Primary Source: Statute on Workplace Safety ^[1]

This statute set guidelines for what was considered "safe" in certain mentioned workplaces. This primary source illustrates changing standards in industry safety during the New Deal and era of economic recovery.

The Department of Labor is directed by statute to "conduct such research and carry out such studies as will contribute to the health, safety and general well-being of the working classes of the State." Upon these investigations and studies are to be based "rules and regulations governing work places and working conditions" (Chapter 312, Public Laws of 1931) which have the force of law.

That there is ample authority under the law to promulgate ^[2] such rules and require industry to observe them, is certain, but it is the opinion of the Commissioner of Labor that improvement of working conditions may best be secured by a campaign of education that will reach every employer and every employee. As the first step in this direction, Senator Capus M. Waynick, of Guilford county, who takes great interest in all matters relating to labor, was asked to sponsor a bill more clearly defining inspectional and other duties of the Commissioner of Labor and providing for posting in every place of employment in the State, a notice containing an abstract of the labor laws. This bill became law and will be found in Chapter 244, Public Laws of 1933.

With the labor laws posted "in a conspicuous place in every room where five or more persons are employed," as the law requires, the next step of the Department of Labor will be to make regular and systematic inspections, with these two ends in view:

First, to see if the labor laws and the Department's rules and regulations, made and published thereunder, are being violated.

Second, to determine what other rules and regulations should be adopted to further "contribute to the health, safety and general well-being of the working classes of the State."

The Department of Labor now has under way the drafting of "Rules Relating to Sanitation of Factories and Mercantile ^[3] Establishments in North Carolina." This code will not be completed until every proposed rule has been studied, both by industry and by labor, and tested out by the experts of the Department of Labor. It is the intention of the Commissioner of Labor to include in this code only those rules and regulations that time and experience have proved best and which meet the approval of a majority of the recognized leaders of labor and industry. Rules that have passed such a test can be enforced with a minimum of friction, because they will appeal to the conscience and good judgment of all parties concerned.

Approaching the problem from this angle, and by the methods outlined, it can be seen that the compilation of such a code can not be completed in a few weeks or months.

For the purpose of providing the necessary data and securing the proper back-ground of experience for the drafting of such a code and for the further purpose of interesting both employer and employee in improving working conditions, the Commissioner of Labor instituted on June 1, 1933, a system of grading industrial plants. It is hoped that this system will arouse no little interest and result in improving conditions everywhere.

In order that manufacturers may know the requirements of the Department of Labor, and the matters that are taken into consideration in grading, the Department's rules for the guidance of its inspectors are given below. The numbers refer to items on the Department's Form D. S. I.-15, "Report of Inspection," which the inspector is required to complete and leave with the manager or superintendent, as follows:

1. Laws properly posted _____
2. Compliance with posted laws I _____ II _____ III _____ IV _____ V _____
3. Provisions for drinking water _____
4. Cleanliness of floors (1) _____ Walls (2) _____ Windows (3) _____ Toilets (4) _____
5. General working conditions including lighting (1) _____ Heating (2) _____ Ventilation (3) _____ Air conditioning (4) _____ Safety (5) _____
6. First-aid training (1) _____ Safety education (2) _____
7. Cooperation of management (1) _____ Of employees (2) _____
8. Welfare activities _____
9. Compliance with previous recommendations (1) _____ Requirements (2) _____

The rules for the guidance of the Department's inspectors, which follow, are numbered to correspond with the numbered items above, and may be considered as tentative ^[4] rules for the regulation of manufacturing and other establishments. In more complete and detailed form they will form part of the industrial code above referred to.

Standards for grading industrial plants

1. The labor law shall be posted in every room where five or more people are employed. If the poster has been torn down in some manner that you feel is unavoidable the plant should not be penalized, provided application has been made to the Commissioner of Labor for a new poster.
2. All posted laws must be complied with. In the section dealing with the "First aid kit", if, for a good and sufficient reason, you find that the requirements have not been entirely met on your first inspection, the plant should not be penalized, provided immediate steps are taken to secure the necessary supplies.
3. The common drinking cup shall not be used. Fountains shall be provided at convenient places. Stress should be laid on the importance of using the angle jet fountain or other fountain so designed that the stream of water will not fall back on the point of discharge. The nozzle should be protected by a guard in order to prevent the mouth of the drinker from coming into contact with the nozzle.
4. If the local water supply is not pure, or if for any other reason it is impracticable to have fountains, a closed container (bottle recommended) should be used and individual drinking cups provided free of charge. Individual cups should be protected from dirt, supply should be adequate, and means of disposal of both the used cups and waste water should be provided. All drinking facilities should be kept clean and sanitary and in good repair.
5. (1) Floors should be scrubbed as often as necessary in order to keep them clean. No person shall expectorate ^[5] upon the walls, floor or stairs of any building. Cuspidors ^[6] shall be provided wherever necessary and shall be cleaned, for a plant in continuous operation, at least once a day. When wet processes are used, the floors shall be drained free from liquids, if possible.

(2) If walls are dirty they should be painted or whitewashed. This is not only important from the standpoint of sanitation, but it is also important from the standpoint of better lighting and of better production.

(3) Windows shall be kept clean. Dirty windows make a plant darker, thus lowering the quality of the product manufactured and also cause many avoidable accidents.

6. (1) In every manufacturing establishment proper lighting, either natural or artificial, shall be provided in all entrances, halls and stairs leading to work rooms; and in all places where persons have to work or pass in an emergency, and in all elevators. In all places where persons are working the lighting shall be such as will not cause strain on the vision or glare in the eyes of the workers.

(2) All manufacturing establishments shall keep all work-rooms, toilets and washrooms heated sufficiently for comfort and well-being of the employees. The minimum temperature should not be below 58° F.

(3) All workrooms and toilet rooms should be ventilated either by windows or a mechanical system of ventilation. If ventilation is secured by windows, means should be provided to prevent a draft directly on the persons working, in cold weather.

(4) Air conditioning is almost a necessity in some industries, while in others it is less essential. Attention should be paid, and credit given, to any means that is used to keep the air free from dust and dirt, thus making it more wholesome and comfortable for the employee. Sometimes this may be done by a ventilating system that washes and cleans the air; or by treating raw products in some way that will prevent the contamination of the air by dust and dirt. Greater stress should be placed on the matter of air conditioning in tobacco factories and similar industries where it is most essential.

(5) According to the report of the Industrial Commission there were 25,886 accidents in the state last year. Only 4,871, or less than 20%, were classified as working machine accidents, while the other 80% was from other causes. This seems to indicate that, on the whole, machines are reasonably well guarded. The major causes of accidents are, handling objects, use of hand tools, falls of persons and operation of vehicles. A great many of these accidents are due to the ignorance and carelessness of the workers and can only be overcome by the management educating the employees in safety methods and appliances and the strict enforcement of safety rules and regulations.

On your tour of inspection you should particularly look for objects lying around over which a person is liable to fall, holes in the floor that need patching, slippery floors caused by spilling oil or water and not cleaning it up, dark hallways and stairways, unguarded stairways, protruding nails or spikes, elevator shafts left open, the conditions under which heavy objects are handled and the movement of hand trucks and other moving objects. In machine shops and other places where there are flying objects you should observe if the operative, and particularly his eyes, are protected against flying particles.

It is important that you should observe safety appliances on machines and if you see a dangerous machine not properly guarded you should, by all means, call the attention of some one in authority to the danger and assist in working out a solution. However, you can make yourself very unpopular by insisting on the installation of certain safety devices that the management, from years of experience, has found to be impractical, although, theoretically, it may seem to be the ideal thing. Use common sense.

7. (1) In every establishment where the law makes it mandatory that a medical chest be provided, it shall be the duty of every employer to have at least one person in his employ who has been sufficiently trained or instructed so that he is competent to apply the simple treatments or remedies that are needed in "first-aid care". In large plants one such

person should be available for every major division of the establishment.

(2) Emphasis should be placed on the necessity of educating the personnel of a plant in the proper use of safety devices provided and to create in them a desire to eliminate accidents, thus protecting themselves and their fellow employees. Some of the methods of safety education that have been successfully used by many plants are, accident posters, lectures, motion pictures, employee safety committees, safety competition, etc. Any, or all, of these methods should be commended, encouraged and fostered. Due credit for these and any other programs that educate and encourage the employees in safety practices should be given.

8. (1) Cooperation of the management will largely determine the success of the work of an inspector. If the management is endeavoring to improve the general working conditions of their employees an inspector will be welcomed in the plant and his suggestions listened to, discussed, and acted upon if they are practical. Sometimes the management may conscientiously wish to make some major improvements but may not be able to do so for financial reasons. In such cases, they should be encouraged to work out their program over a period of time so that the cost can be distributed and will not work an undue hardship.

(2) Cooperation of the employees can be detected by the manner in which they keep the floors and walls of their workrooms and toilets, (provided the floors show evidence of being properly scrubbed and swept) and by their observance of safety rules and use of safety devices.

9. All welfare activities, such as a social service worker, musical organizations, baseball teams or other sports, gardening, the care of homes and yards, etc., are of immense value and much credit should be given a plant for fostering all such activities.
10. (1) Before making a recommendation you should be sure that it is both reasonable and practical, that the management is familiar with the necessity of it and that there is no misunderstanding. If, on your next visit, your recommendations have not been complied with this item will have to be checked as unsatisfactory.
- (2) **REQUIREMENT** are stronger than recommendations and should be most frequently used in the first three items. Sometimes other conditions such as exceedingly dirty walls or floors, unusually poor lighting or ventilation, etc., may be so unsatisfactory that you will require rather than recommend. If your requirements are not complied with on your next visit, you will not only check it as unsatisfactory, but will make a special report to the Commissioner so that he can take the matter up with the officials of the company.

Medical chest, or first-aid case, approved by North Carolina Department of Labor

(Extract from "Rules Relating to Sanitation of Factories and Mercantile Establishments.")

Rule 1.

- a. The contents of the first-aid case shall be as follows:

INSTRUMENTS

- 1 pair scissors
- [Thumb forceps](#)
- [Tourniquet](#) ^[7]
- [Graduated medicine glass](#)

DRUGS

- 2 oz. [aromatic spirits of ammonia](#).
- 2 oz. 4 per cent [boric acid](#).
- 2 oz. [Alcoholic iodine solution](#), half strength (for external use).
- 2 3-oz. collapsible tubes of [bicarbonate](#) ^[8] of soda mixed with vaseline (3 per cent for burns).
- 2 oz. castor oil (for eye injuries)

DRESSINGS

- 1 doz. assorted sizes sterile gauze bandages.
 - 1 spool [Z. O. Adhesive plaster](#), 1 inch by 5 yards.
 - 3-½ oz. packages of absorbent cotton.
 - 3-1 yard packages of sterile gauze.
 - Splints of assorted sizes for fractures.
 - Wooden applicators wound with cotton.
 - Wooden tongue depressors.
- b. All bottles or other containers containing drugs or other substances shall be clearly labeled and the specific purpose for which the contents are to be used shall be marked thereon.
- c. If the establishment occupies more than one floor, a stretcher shall be provided.

- d. In all establishments where work is carried on in more than one building, or on several floors, duplicate kits should be provided so as to avoid delay in attending to injuries.
- e. In every establishment where a first-aid kit is to be maintained, at least one person shall be instructed by a physician or trained nurse how to apply first aid to injured persons and shall have charge of the first-aid kit and its maintenance. Such kit shall be for first-aid use only.

User Tags:

[factories](#) ^[9]

[government](#) ^[10]

[history](#) ^[11]

[industry](#) ^[12]

[North Carolina](#) ^[13]

[North Carolina History](#) ^[14]

[Page](#) ^[15]

[reform](#) ^[16]

[Regulation](#) ^[17]

[Students](#) ^[18]

[Teachers](#) ^[19]

[Creative Commons BY-NC-SA](#) ^[20]

From:

[ANCHOR: A North Carolina History Online Resource](#) ^[21]

Copyright Date:

2009

Primary Sources:

[Rules and Regulations of the Department of Labor Relative to the Employment of Children under Sixteen Years of Age. Standards of the Department of Labor for Grading Industrial Plants. Effective June 1, 1933.](#) ^[22]

from DocSouth at UNC Chapel Hill

3 January 2018

Source URL: <https://ncpedia.org/anchor/primary-source-statute>

Links

[1] <https://ncpedia.org/anchor/primary-source-statute> [2] <https://ncpedia.org/glossary/promulgate> [3] <https://ncpedia.org/glossary/mercantile> [4] <https://ncpedia.org/glossary/tentative> [5] <https://ncpedia.org/glossary/expectorate> [6] <https://ncpedia.org/glossary/cuspidors> [7] <https://ncpedia.org/glossary/Tourniquet> [8] <https://ncpedia.org/glossary/bicarbonate> [9] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/factories> [10] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/government> [11] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/history> [12] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/industry> [13] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/north-carolina-5> [14] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/north-carolina-6> [15] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/page> [16] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/reform> [17] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/regulation> [18] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/students> [19] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/teachers> [20] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/creative-commons> [21] <https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/anchor-north> [22] <https://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/rules1933/rules1933.html>