

POLICY 11: Safety Program

POLICY OBJECTIVE:

The purpose of this policy is to affirm the Board's support of the continuous development, implementation, and oversight of a reasonably designed safety program that promotes safety-related behavior for all individuals associated with Rochester Public Utilities (RPU), and to reinforce the expectations of RPU's **Towards Zero** safety program.

POLICY STATEMENT:

One of RPU's core values is to **Protect Every Individual**. RPU is committed to the safety of its employees, customers, contractors, and the general public in all aspects of its operations, and safety is the primary consideration in performing all tasks. Ensuring safety at RPU is the responsibility of each RPU employee.

RPU's safety program is **Towards Zero**, reflecting the organization's expectation that safety is a core value, that serious incidents are preventable, and that continuous learning and improvement are required to reduce risk toward zero.

Safety at RPU is a shared responsibility. All employees are expected to perform their duties in compliance with applicable safety laws, regulations, policies, and procedures.

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE AND UTILITY SAFETY:

RPU will comply with all applicable Minnesota OSHA and Federal OSHA worker-safety requirements across municipal operations, including core standards for hazard communication, personal protective equipment, control of hazardous energy, confined space entry, fall protection, excavation and trench safety, and right-of-way work practices that protect workers and the public from roadway and traffic hazards.

For work involving utility infrastructure and high-consequence hazards, RPU will meet utility obligations.

The Electric Divisions will comply with OSHA 29 CFR 1910.269 and applicable construction standards for transmission and distribution work, including required qualification, training, and work practices.

The Water Division will comply with OSHA 29 CFR 1910 sections related to handling and exposure to chlorine gas and other hazardous chemicals, along with utility controls for confined spaces, hazardous energy, and respiratory protection when required, including additional duties when threshold quantities of high-hazard chemicals trigger specialized regulatory requirements.

SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS:

For consistent interpretation and governance oversight:

- **Utility-specific hazards:** hazards arising from utility operations and infrastructure that require specialized training, controls, and supervision.
- **Stop-work authority:** the right and expectation for any employee to stop or refuse work when an unsafe condition is reasonably believed to exist, without retaliation.

COMMITMENT TO SAFETY:

Through its management and employees, RPU will promote safety by:

- Communicating the expectation that all workers take personal responsibility for their own safety and the safety of their co-workers.
- Reinforcing **Towards Zero** expectations through leadership, communication, learning, and continuous improvement.
- Providing appropriate equipment and levels of education and training to enhance all workers' ability to perform their tasks in the safest possible manner.
- Setting, monitoring, and evaluating safety goals and objectives.
- Encouraging safe work behavior through awareness programs, safety teams, and other activities or education that promote safety.
- Establishing appropriate management policies that communicate and enforce safety, best practices, and procedures.
- Authorizing any employee, regardless of position, title, or grade, to stop or refuse work, without fear of retaliation, when the employee reasonably believes the work presents an unsafe condition.
- Maintaining and enforcing procedures that support stop-work authority, including prompt hazard evaluation, correction, and communication of resolution.

AUTHORITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY:

The Board delegates to the General Manager the authority and responsibility to implement and administer safety programs and policies consistent with this policy.

The Board's delegated authority to the General Manager extends to the development and implementation of management policies and procedures required to meet this stated objective.

The General Manager's delegated authority is limited only by law, City of Rochester Home Rule Charter provisions, City Policies, or other policies which the Board has adopted or may adopt in the future.

RPU shall maintain safety leadership capacity appropriate to the hazards, operational complexity, and applicable regulatory requirements of RPU operations. Safety leadership supporting RPU operations shall have clear accountability within the RPU organization under the authority of the General Manager, and shall have the authority to establish safety expectations, verify compliance, and require corrective actions.

BOARD OVERSIGHT:

The Board will provide oversight of RPU's safety performance and will receive at least quarterly reports from management regarding **Towards Zero** safety goals, performance metrics, incidents, and improvement initiatives, as appropriate.

At a minimum, reporting should address:

- Leading indicators (training completion, field observations, corrective action closure)
- Lagging indicators (recordable injuries, serious events, significant near-misses)
- Compliance assurance (audits, findings, enforcement actions if any), including status for regulated electric utility requirements under OSHA 29 CFR 1910.269 where applicable
- Safety program effectiveness and capacity (resources, coverage, and emerging risk areas)

If the Board determines, based on information presented to it, that safety goals are not being achieved or that RPU is not in compliance with applicable safety laws or regulatory requirements, the Board will require the General Manager to take corrective action consistent with applicable law and policy, may increase the level or frequency of safety reporting, and may take such additional actions as are within the Board's authority and discretion to ensure compliance and continuous improvement.

RELEVANT LEGAL AUTHORITY: Rochester City Charter Chapter XV, Minnesota Statute, Section 182.653, Subd. 8

ORIGINAL DATE OF POLICY: October 14, 1988

EFFECTIVE DATE OF POLICY: October 14, 1988

POLICY APPROVAL: October 27, 2026



Board President

10/27/2026

Date