SUPPORT SERVICES

Bleacher Safety Program

Indoor and Outdoor Bleachers

I. Purpose

The purpose of this regulation is to establish the procedures for planning, installation, modification, inspection, maintenance, and safety of indoor and outdoor bleachers for Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS).

II. Scope

Whether bleachers are inside a gymnasium or outside on school grounds, they are subject to wear, weathering, corrosion, abuse, and metal fatigue. Therefore, all bleachers should be inspected on a routine basis, records should be retained on maintenance performed, and bleachers should be monitored during use to prevent abuse and to maintain the structural integrity of the bleachers.

For purposes of this regulation, the term “bleachers” refers to any indoor or outdoor, tiered or stepped seating facility, whether temporary or permanent, used in PWCS for accommodation of the seating of occupants.

III. Planning, Installation, and Modifications

A. Requirements

1. Pre-approval of site location shall be obtained through the Office of Facilities Services and the Office of Risk Management and Security Services prior to ordering new bleachers.

2. Pre-approval of any modifications or alterations of existing bleachers shall be approved by the Office of Facilities Services and the Office of Risk Management and Security Services. Modifications and alterations include, but are not limited to, painting bleachers, adding seats to existing bleachers, attaching signage to bleachers, and/or altering bleacher egress. All new and existing bleachers are subject to this regulation.
3. Any bleacher modification recommendation made by the manufacturer for safety reasons shall be made by the Office of Facilities Services and the Office of Risk Management and Security Services.

4. All bleachers shall be constructed according to the manufacturer’s plans and specifications.

5. All bleacher purchasers, installers, inspectors, and any employee performing repairs shall assure compliance with, and adherence to, the standards set forth within the guidelines of the following publications:

IV. Inspections

A. Responsibilities

The Office of Risk Management and Security Services shall administer indoor and outdoor bleacher inspections.

B. Inspections (Annual)

1. The annual inspection concentrates on preventive maintenance and structural integrity.
2. Annual inspections shall be conducted by staff from the Office of Facilities Services and the Office of Risk Management and Security Services.

3. The Office of Facilities Services and the Office of Risk Management and Security Services shall request support from an outside structural engineering consultant to assist with inspections when deemed necessary.

4. Upon completion of the annual inspections, a report shall be supplied to school principals and the Office of Facilities Services for abatement of any violations.

5. The Office of Risk Management and Security Services shall retain the annual inspection reports.

C. Inspections (Routine)

1. Routine visual inspections focus on the removal of debris from surfaces, underneath bleachers, and walkways. Work orders shall be submitted for remedial maintenance (e.g., loose or missing bolts, loose handrails, improper functioning of bleachers, etc.).

2. Specified school staff (e.g., custodial or physical education department) shall visually inspect bleachers before and after each use. The specified school staff shall reference the “Inspection Checklist” as a guide to visually inspect bleachers. (See Attachment I)

3. Work orders for bleacher repairs shall be made to the Office of Facilities Services immediately after observing a defect or safety hazard.

4. School staff shall immediately cordon off any area of the bleachers that requires repair with signage, caution tape, or fencing. The signs and/or fencing shall be removed by the Office of Facilities Services once the repair or hazard has been abated.

V. Maintenance

A. Responsibilities

1. All repairs for bleachers shall be referred to the Office of Facilities Services via work order.
2. Any structural concerns including broken, cracked, or loose bleacher seat(s) or walking board should be reported immediately to the Office of Facilities Services.

VI. Safety

A. The priority of the School Division is to provide a safe environment for students, staff, and spectators who use our bleachers. The School Division shall adhere to the recommendations set forth by the CPSC.

1. The CPSC has issued the following guidelines as recommendations—they are not intended as a CPSC standard or mandatory requirement. The CPSC believes that, if implemented, the safety features that are recommended in these guidelines shall aid in safer bleachers.

   a. Guardrails should be present on the backs and portions of the open ends of bleachers where the footboard, seatboard, or aisle is 30 inches or more above the floor or ground below. Bleachers with the top row nominally 30 inches above the ground may be exempt from this recommendation.

   b. The top surface of the guardrail should be at least 42 inches above the leading edge of the footboard, seatboard, or aisle, whichever is adjacent.

   c. When bleachers are used adjacent to a wall that is at least as high as the recommended guardrail height, the guardrail is not necessary if a four-inch diameter sphere fails to pass between the bleachers and the wall.

   d. Any opening between components of the guardrail or under the guardrail should prevent passage of a four-inch sphere.

   e. To discourage climbing on guardrails, guardrails should be designed in one of the following methods:

      (1) Use only vertical members as in-fill between the top and bottom rails.

      (2) If there are openings in the in-fill that could provide a foothold for climbing, the widest measurement of the
opening where the foot could rest should be limited to a maximum of 1.75 inches.

(3) Opening patterns that provide a ladder effect should be avoided.

(4) Where visibility would not be significantly impaired, use solid members.

f. All bolts on bleachers shall be examined closely during inspections.

g. Welded and bolted parts shall be inspected closely. Fractured welds indicate an uneven distribution of forces and could be a potential cause of local or total collapse.

h. All debris shall be removed from underneath indoor bleachers daily. The presence of dust and debris could impede wheel traction and obstruct proper functioning of the row locks or other mechanisms.

i. The “Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code” states that spaces underneath grandstands and bleacher seats shall be kept free from combustible and flammable materials.

B. At no time shall students be allowed to climb or sit upon closed bleachers.

VII. PWCS shall adhere to all requirements and standards set forth under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

A. Accessible Stadiums

The ADA requires new stadiums be accessible to people with disabilities so they, their families, and friends can enjoy equal access to entertainment, recreation, and leisure.

This standard highlights key accessibility requirements of the ADA that applies to new stadiums. Other accessibility requirements, such as those for parking lots, entrances, and rest rooms also apply and are consistent with the requirements for other buildings. Compliance with all the accessibility requirements is essential to provide a basic level of access for people with disabilities.
1. Key Features of Accessible Stadiums Seating

   a. Wheelchair accessible seating is required. At least one percent of the seating must be wheelchair seating locations. A wheelchair seating location is an open and level space that accommodates one person using a wheelchair which has a smooth, stable, and slip-resistant surface.

   b. Accessible seating must be an integral part of the seating plan so that people using wheelchairs are not isolated from other spectators, their friends, or family.

   c. A companion seat must be provided next to each wheelchair seating location. The companion seat is a conventional seat that accommodates a friend or companion.

   d. Removable or folding seats can be provided in wheelchair seating locations for use by persons who do not use wheelchairs so the facility does not lose revenue when not all wheelchair seating locations are ticketed to person(s) who use wheelchairs.

   e. Whenever more than 300 seats are provided, wheelchair seating locations must be provided in more than one location.

   f. Wheelchair seating locations must provide lines of sight comparable to those provided to other spectators. In stadiums where spectators can be expected to stand during the show or event (e.g., football, baseball, basketball games, or rock concerts) all or substantially all of the wheelchair seating locations must provide a line of sight over standing spectators.

   g. Wheelchair seating locations must have an accessible route that provides access from parking and transportation areas and that connects to all public areas, including concessions, rest rooms, public telephones, and exits.

The Associate Superintendent for Finance and Risk Management (or designee) is responsible for implementing and monitoring this regulation.

This regulation and related policy shall be reviewed at least every five years and revised as needed.

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
INSPECTION CHECKLIST

Visual inspections and the operation of bleachers shall be conducted by authorized school staff only. Under no circumstances shall students be permitted to inspect or operate bleachers.

PRIOR TO USE CHECKLIST

1. Check under bleachers for debris or obstructions prior to operating the bleachers.
2. Extend bleachers out to full extension.
3. Assure that row locks underneath the bleachers are engaged.
4. Assure that seats and footboards are even and secure.
5. Assure that all rows of bleachers are straight and level.
6. Install and adjust handrails on the sides and aisles of the bleachers.
7. Prior to closing the bleachers, make certain all students are at least 25 feet from the bleachers.
8. Check for debris on the bleachers prior to closing.
9. If loud noises are heard, or bleachers do not open or close smoothly, cease operation and call the Office of Facilities Services immediately for repair.

IF ANY OF THE ABOVE CONDITIONS ARE NOT MET, BLEACHERS ARE NOT TO BE USED. CONTACT THE OFFICE OF FACILITIES SERVICES IMMEDIATELY FOR ASSISTANCE.