

School Environmental Health and Safety Rule Project 2024 - 2025

What: Updates to K-12 School Environmental Health and Safety Standards

The Washington State Board of Health (Board) is working to develop new proposed standards for K–12 school environmental health and safety. The Board plans to develop and propose new language to the legislature by June 2025.

Why:

The current standards are over 50 years old, and the Legislature considers them outdated. Legislative restrictions delayed updating the standards, but now the Legislature has directed the Board to propose a new school environmental health and safety rule. As part of that process the Board is inviting all interested parties (parents, teachers, administrators, the general public) to provide comments and make recommendations.

History:

Chapter [246-366](#)^[1] of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) sets the current standards for K–12 school environmental health and safety for over one million students. In 2004, the Board initiated rulemaking to update this outdated rule and spent the next five years creating and adopting chapter [246-366A](#)^[2] WAC.

In the 2009–2011 biennium, the Legislature directed the Department of Health (Department) and the Board not to implement any new or amended rules related to these school facility standards due to concerns about cost. Every budget since 2010 has included the proviso. In response, the Board has continued to extend the effective date of Chapter 246-366A.

In 2016, Governor Inslee directed the Department to continue providing technical assistance and guidance for school districts to conduct voluntary [water quality tests](#)^[3]. The Legislature previously appropriated over 7.4 million dollars to the Department and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to support lead testing and remediation in schools.

During the 2024 legislative session, the Legislature included funds for the Board to review chapter 246-366 and 246-366A WACs and to propose updated environmental health and safety standards for K–12 schools in Washington state.

[1] <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=246-366&full=true&pdf=true>

[2] <https://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=246-366A&full=true&pdf=true>

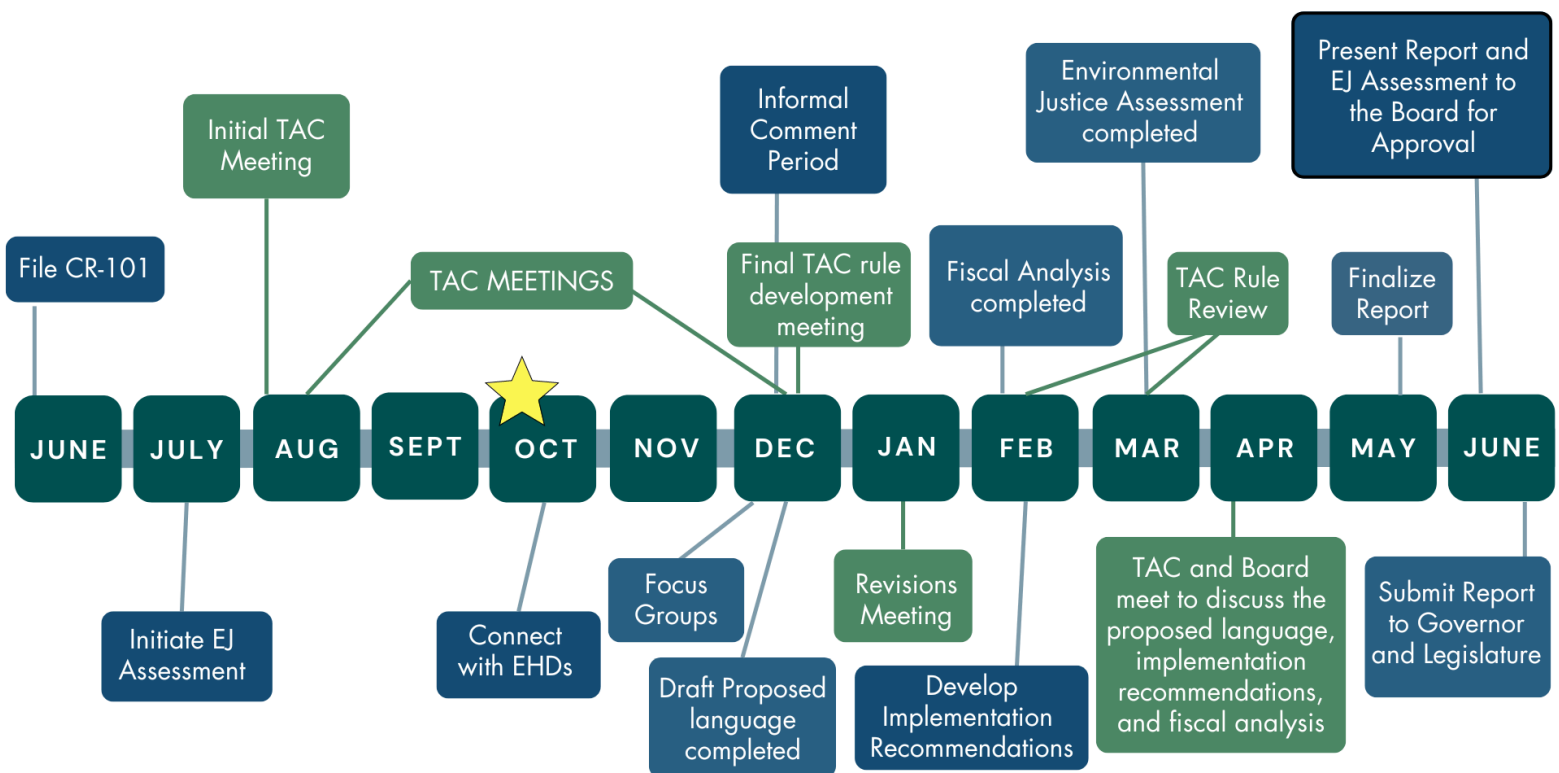
[3] https://governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/directive/dir_16-06.pdf

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The Legislature directed the Board to:

- Convene a technical advisory committee (TAC) consisting of various school associations, school districts, and OSPI to propose updated requirements.
- Collaborate with OSPI to develop a fiscal analysis.
- Assist the Department in completing an environmental justice assessment^[4] on any proposed rule.
- Work with the Department, OSPI, the TAC, and local health jurisdictions to provide a report to the Office of the Governor and appropriate committees of the Legislature by June 30, 2025.

Visual Timeline:



[4] <https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/health-equity/environmental-justice/assessments>