



Student Handbook

Our Mission

People's Inclusive Welding intends to curate a safe and supportive environment for underserved and underrepresented communities to participate in, and successfully complete, a welding training program as well as worker's rights education so that they may enter into a high paying career within the blue collar industry. We aim to reshape New England's current demographic of the blue collar industry by guiding well trained and highly informed individuals into positions of employment where they can succeed both as an employee and as a healthy and happy human being.

[\(website link\)](#)

LEGAL DISCLAIMER: This handbook is designed to give general information to orient students about People's Inclusive Welding. The info in the handbook is subject to change, and is not a legally binding document. Students will be required to read, review, and sign safety agreements and liability waivers in order to be permitted to participate in any courses or classes.

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Section I |Introduction

How to use this Handbook

Welcome to People’s Inclusive Welding (PIW). This handbook is a resource for students to use in order to answer common questions raised about the school, programs, student body, expectations of the student body, onsite health and safety, grounds for discussion and excusal, and more. This manual is not a reference book for technical aspects of welding instruction or certification. The staff, board, and educators at People’s Inclusive Welding believe in providing a safe, transparent and equitable learning environment for all of our students and people who pass through our doors, as such all students will receive a current copy of the handbook upon enrollment. The Student Handbook is intended to adapt with the programs and curriculum, so confirm with your instructor that you have a current (2021) edition. We highly recommend that the manual be read in its entirety, but it is not mandatory. However all students must read and review *The Safety Agreement in Section II* and sign a corresponding agreement in order to participate. Enjoy!

Section II| Health and Safety

2A|Safety Agreement

Any individual attending a welding course with People’s Inclusive Welding is required to wear proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at all times and to adhere to all safety instructions. Each individual attending a PIW class will be required to review and sign the “Safety Agreement” before they may be allowed to participate. Individuals who choose not to comply with these safety requirements will be asked to excuse themselves from class. All individuals will be given thorough safety instructions before use of any tool or equipment. Individuals will be provided MOST (* next to an item indicates that individuals must bring their own) proper PPE in compliance with ANSI Z49.1.

Below is a list of the Required Shop PPE to be worn at all times:

- Safety Glasses

- Hearing Protection
- Steel or Composite Toed Boots*
- Pants*: non-synthetic, cotton or wool (ex: denim, carhartts)

*-not provided by PIW

When Welding individuals must wear the Required Shop PPE as well as:

- Long Sleeves* OR
- a Welding Jacket
- Gloves
- Welding hood or correct shade goggles/face shield
- OPTIONAL: Respirator* OR
- dust mask

When cutting or grinding individuals must wear the Required Shop PPE as well as:

- Gloves
- Welding hood with clear/cutting lense OR face shield

****Individuals are required to review and sign a separate “Grinder Safety Contract” before operating any grinder.****

There will be a safety tailgate each morning after first break in which the instructor will facilitate a safety discussion. Various hazards related to welding as well as actual job site dangers will be examined.

PIW recognizes that some individuals may need adjustment to their PPE and/or Safety equipment. Any individual needing specific requirements should inform the instructor who will arrange for custom alterations to be made so that each individual is comfortable as well as in compliance with ANSI Z49.1.

[Link to safety agreement](#)

[Grinder Safety Contract](#)

2B | Emergency Plan

The emergency plan will be covered on the first day of class. Students will be informed as to the location of every fire extinguisher, fire alarm, exit and

muster site so that each student will be prepared in the event of a fire or evacuation. If for any reason the shop should need to be “Locked Down”, each student will be made aware of how to lock each door. Individuals may be designated to lock a specific door based on their booth location.

2C|Liability Waiver

All students must read and sign the Liability Waiver before they may be allowed to participate. Follow link to read or print the [Liability Waiver](#).

Want a physical copy?

1. Print a copy from the link above. Or;
2. Request a copy via email: piwsopo@piwsopo.org. Or;
3. Call (207) 370 2070. Or;
4. Drop by the South Portland Shop and ask an instructor for a physical copy.

2D|Sick and Weather Policy

Peoples Inclusive Welding asks students to please inform their instructor if they will be out of class. PIW cares about the health and wellness of every individual. If a student must miss a class for any reason, there will be up to three make-up sessions the week following the last scheduled day of class.

PIW asks that any student feeling ill or under the weather please take the day off to rest and get well. Under no circumstances should an individual attend class if they are sick or showing symptoms of being sick.

Due to the pandemic we ask all students to consider becoming vaccinated, and regardless of vaccination status, in order to maintain a safe and inclusive work shop we ask everyone to stay home if they have any of the potential Covid-19 symptoms and we have the right to ask you to go home if you present with any of the following;

- Loud or persistent cough
- Audible congestion/ frequent blowing of the nose
- Fever
- Loss of smell or taste

You may return once you have tested negative of covid-19. For a full list of symptoms, or ways to get tested please refer to the Maine CDC website. If you are unable to find a free test, you may ask your instructor to assist you in scheduling an appointment, or inquire about PIW covering the cost, or providing a refund.

PIW will refer to the University of Southern Maine (USM) as a guide for whether or not to cancel class due to inclement weather. If USM is cancelled, PIW will close for the day. In the event of closure due to inclement weather, the instructor will send a confirmation message. If an individual does not feel that their commute would be safe then they may choose to miss class, no questions asked.

Section III| What to Expect from PIW

First things first, the **ABC's** of welding are **ALWAYS BE COMFORTABLE**. People's Inclusive Welding will provide whatever they can to make sure each individual attending classes can learn and practice welding in an environment that is safe both physically and mentally. We want each individual to have an equitable chance at receiving every ounce of education that they desire within their chosen course. Don't forget, you're a welder now, and welders can fix anything. So if you require special safety gear, we'll get it. Booth alterations? We'll make them. Schedule conflicts? We'll work with you. We strive to make sure that any individual who wishes to become a certified welder is able to.

PIW is always seeking to build relationships with employers who practice racial sensitivity training, provide good benefits and ensure fair wages. With the high demand for welders, we believe we are in a good position to insist employers abide by these expectations. Of course students can look for employment anywhere they would like, but we aim to create a network of vetted employers that marginalized groups can work for comfortably and confidently.

During the 320 hour Welding 101 course, safety and workers rights will be a constant theme. PIW will help individuals to understand exactly what their rights are. We will also provide realistic information about the blue collar world and what to expect. A major aspect of knowing your rights as a worker is

knowing when to say “NO” to an unsafe assignment. PIW’s aim is to arm each individual with enough knowledge to confidently begin a safe career within the blue collar world.

When interviewing for a position, going into a weld test cold can be quite daunting. After completing a course with PIW, all students will have an open invitation to return to the shop to practice, take or retake any test. Simply schedule a time with the instructor with details about which test you will be taking. We will follow AWS guidelines if individuals are looking for a certification. If an individual needs to prepare for an upcoming interview we will run the test until they feel confident!

An individual who attends the 320 hour Welding 101 course should expect to leave the completed course with:

- The skills to troubleshoot and operate a variety of welding machines
- Basic knowledge of STAW, GTAW and various applications of GMAW as well as ability to perform each process
- Knowledge and ability to operate common hand tools
- A primary understanding of industry safety
- Knowledge of your rights as a blue collar worker
- Support in finding a well suited welding position
- An AWS Certification of their choosing (*OPTIONAL, many employers do not require these certs and have their own tests specific to their codes.)
- Having successfully practiced an upcoming weld test (*OPTIONAL, job specific for each individual.)
- An open door invitation to practice, take or retake any weld test

Section IV | What PIW Expects from You

It’s in the name, People’s Inclusive Welding is an inclusive program with individuals attending class from many different walks of life. PIW welcomes any individual with a desire to learn this new skill; this will include people living with disabilities, people who speak very little english, people who are transitioning and many, many more life experiences. PIW asks that each individual who attends class remembers that each person there shares a common interest and that is to learn how to weld.

We ask that any individual who attends class to prioritize two things: Kindness and patience. "School" can be a triggering and anxiety inducing space for many people. We ask that any individual who attends PIW realizes this, and practices kindness and patience with all of their peers, as well as with themselves. If you find yourself feeling frustrated, anxious or any other of those emotions that begin to raise your blood pressure, you are invited to take a break. When your heart rate is elevated your hands tend to shake, and shaky hands are a welder's adversary. Welding is a skill that takes years to master, so give yourself permission to learn at your own pace.

People's Inclusive Welding has a zero tolerance policy for any form of discrimination, harassment or violence as outlined under Maine Law, which includes but is not limited to acts of;

- Racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, islamophobia, fatphobia, anti-semitism or any other form of discrimination.
- Verbal threats, harassment, sexually explicit or inappropriate or otherwise non consensual language.
- Sexual or physical harassment, sexual or physical assault, stalking or any other form of physical violence.

PIW is a learning environment in which physical and verbal harm are unacceptable. PIW is committed to anti-racism, and will maintain a safe learning environment. Both over-expressions and microaggressions will be taken seriously. Under no circumstances will the police be called or be allowed into the shop space.

In order to successfully complete a welding training at PIW, each individual must:

- **Remember the common goal:** Everyone is here to learn a new skill.
- **Practice kindness and patience with your peers and yourself.**
- **It's not a race!** Give yourself permission to learn at your own pace.
- **We encourage personal and collective growth,** and as such ask that students not act, use language or otherwise behave in a manner that is; physically threatening, non-consensual, harmful, or discriminatory.
- **Give space & make space!** It's a functioning weld shop, there are sparks flying, sharp objects and hazardous scenarios, in addition to the

pandemic, therefore we ask all students to practice consent before entering one another's booths, or make physical contact or touch.

- **If you are unsafe follow these steps; remove yourself or the hazard, inform those around you, and ask for help.** In the event that you are presented with an extreme or hazardous situation prioritize your personal and/ or collective safety. When possible, immediately inform the instructor, staff, fellow students and anyone else present about the situation. If the situation is interpersonal remove yourself from the situation and go to an instructor or onsite staff to discuss your options including; peer mediators and instructor interventions. We ask each of you to make a collective commitment to not call the police, by pursuing all possible alternatives including fire, or emergency services, but each of you retains the right to do so as a last resort option.

People's Inclusive Welding does not give loans, it gives sponsorships. Many students at PIW may be here on financial aid, and that is a deliberate design of the program, and everyone is equal once accepted.

The number of booths available in the shop dictates the number of students who can participate therefore the student body is small and each student on site represents many others who were not able to participate. There is no expectation that this money will be paid back, but we ask that all students regardless of payment have the intention to take full advantage of the course offerings, maximize time in the shop, and complete the program. Participation is a privilege and we expect that since you received an opportunity that you will make the very best of it.

Section V | Grounds For Discussion

People's Inclusive Welding strives to maintain a safe and welcoming environment for every individual who enters the door. We require that every student conducts themselves with empathy. It's a fact of life that tensions can form, and fights happen. We won't meddle with interpersonal relationships, but we will intervene if conflict occurs between students, or students and instructors while in the shop or during shop hours. Any form of harmful or discriminatory behavior and/or language is not permitted. As such, PIW reserves the right to ask any individual who violates this expectation to

leave. If an altercation between individuals arises, all who actively participate will be excused for the day. This is with the intention of letting everyone cool down before returning to discuss the incident.

PIW defines “covert” as: hidden or disguised, “covert behavior” may be likened to “implicit bias” in which the individual displaying such behavior may not be aware of the harm they are causing. This does not mean harm was not done, just that harm was not intended.

PIW defines “overt” as: done or shown plainly, “overt behavior” shows intent to cause harm.

PIW classifies discriminatory behavior into two categories: covert and overt. Regardless of the category of the action both covert and overt expressions will be taken seriously and may have consequences, and any decision made in response will be made with the consideration of all parties involved. The instructor and staff reserve the right to decide on the course of action for individuals who have caused harm.

Potential outcomes may include;

- Require the individual who displayed such behavior to assess why it was discriminatory.
- Completion of a mediated conversation and/or reconciliation process between the person who caused it and the person who experienced the harm.
- An ask to write a formal letter including how the behavior was harmful, who it harmed and what they will do in order to avoid causing any further harm. This letter may be presented in a group meeting to all individuals who may have been harmed as well as the class instructor and/or a relevant mediator.
- A personal apology.

If the individual who causes harm successfully completes the course of action as determined by the instructor, they may consider rejoining the course, or shop. This participation is not guaranteed, and is determined by the instructor and feedback and safety of the individual who experienced harm. The person who caused harm will not be invited back to class until the individual who experienced harm give’s explicit consent. A recurring incident will be grounds for permanent excusal.

In order to give individuals who have been harmed options to remain within their comfort level, they choose how and when they participate in this process. Each incident will be treated with flexibility pertaining to the wishes of the individual who was harmed. If an incident occurs in which a person is being harmed without the instructor's knowledge, covert behaviour, we ask that the harmed individual initiate a conversation with the instructor. The instructor will never doubt an individuals' account, and an investigation and intervention will begin with the harmed individual's consent. If a harmed individual wishes to remain anonymous, PIW will resolve the situation separately and discretely. Please be reminded that even if an individual wishes to remain anonymous, they must still give consent before the offending individual will be invited back to class.

Section VI | Grounds for Excusal

As a private institution PIW reserves the right to excuse, refuse services or entry to an individual on the grounds of;

- Threats to the health and safety of self, to other students or faculty.
Or;
- Substantial action, words or general behavior that is discriminatory to a group in general or specific individual.

Depending on the severity or overt nature of the situation this may constitute cause for permanent excusal from the program. An individual who displays such behavior will be barred from class until the instructor/mediator has spoken with the individual who was harmed. The decision to proceed with permanent excusal, or whether the situation could proceed with a mediation and/or reconciliation process will be made with the consideration of all parties. In the instance that the individual who was harmed does not feel comfortable and/or safe to be in the same space as the offender and/or undergo a reconciliation process, the offender will be excused for the remainder of the course. If the harmed individual chooses to pursue a Reconciliation Process, the offending individual may rejoin class under probationary terms once the process is completed. These terms dictate that any further instance of discriminatory behavior, whether overt or covert, will be grounds to be permanently barred from any and all classes at PIW.

In the spirit of education and growth, PIW may allow some offending individuals who have been previously barred from classes or programs to return to use the shop and/or take future classes. This is conditional on;

- The nature/ terms of their initial dismissal.
- Whether or not they successfully completed a mediation or reconciliation process.
- The harmed individual's safety and successful completion of course work or status in the student body.

Once a process has been successfully completed, the offending individual may re-apply under probationary terms contingent on the Instructor and Board's unanimous approval.

Section VII | Payment/Refund Policy

Once an individual has received an acceptance letter they must submit a deposit in order to hold their spot. The deposit amount will vary based on the amount the individual is paying. Full tuition payment amounts are required two weeks (14 days) before the start of the course. If an individual makes a deposit but decides they cannot attend the course for any reason, they must request a deposit refund two weeks before the start of the course at the very latest. The deposit will be held if it's requested later than the two weeks. If an individual begins the course but decides it does not meet their needs, they may receive a partial refund. A deposit will never be refunded after the course has begun. If an individual drops out of class after one week they may receive a full refund excluding their deposit. If an individual drops out after two weeks they may receive a half refund (again, excluding the deposit). After two weeks no refunds will be issued.

If a student is barred from class for any reason they will not receive a refund. If they choose to re-apply and are accepted, they must pay full tuition for whichever course they are enrolled into.

If a student must suddenly withdraw or miss class due to extenuating circumstances, we will discuss together how to proceed. In most cases, PIW prefers that the student resolve their circumstances and retake the course when they are able to.

Section IX | What Happens After?

Congratulations! You have completed a PIW welding course and are well on your way to becoming a badass welder. During the last couple weeks of class, PIW will begin to help you decide which welding career would be best suited for you (there are a lot!). We will do our very best to link you to an employer who shares similar ideas to PIW. We will support you until you've found a position that works for you, whether that means coming to the shop to practice for an interview test, or giving you tips on companies who are hiring. We want anyone who takes a course through PIW to break into the blue collar world with confidence and skill, and we also want you to be mentally and physically well. We appreciate check-ins as to what you are up to and how you are doing! Always send cool photos and tell us of your accomplishments. Who knows, maybe one day you can come back and teach a workshop on your new and exciting specialty. PIW wants you to always remember to prioritize your safety and wellness, and don't forget, you're a welder now, **you can fix anything!**



