

SCHOOL Safety Matters

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Monthly Safety Tips

Playground Safety

We ask that schools review playground and PE safety rules at least three times each year. The best time to do this is immediately following extended breaks. The most important time is when the school year begins, since it sets the tone and can prevent accidents before they happen. Establishing boundaries and expectations early allows students to fully enjoy these activities in a safe manner.

Safety Committees

Not only are safety committee meetings a legal requirement, but their work helps to keep students and staff safe and can be beneficial in helping a school run smoothly. This month, we focus on the committees themselves and provide some suggestions for helping them be as effective as possible. When our committees meet for the first time in September, it is an opportunity to set the tone for the year. The student and staff accident reports from the previous year should be reviewed in order to identify any potential trends or areas needing improvement. For more information on running an effective safety committee, see page two of this newsletter.

The beginning of every school year is a busy and exciting time for all school staff at each building. In the first issue of *School Safety Matters* for the 2013-2014 school year, we ask everyone to take a moment to think about safety. Standing on tables or chairs, improper lifting of boxes or furnishings, and stacking items in walkways, are a few of the unsafe practices that have led to preventable injuries in the past. To encourage a safe and successful school year, please remind everyone to take time to follow these simple techniques:

- Use a ladder (see below) or step stool instead of standing on chairs, tables, or counter tops
- Always bend at the knees, and not at the waist, when lifting to prevent back strain.
- Use hand trucks and carts whenever possible
- Avoid lifting overhead
- Use a partner to help move anything extra heavy
- Maintain clear pathways through the room to prevent trips and falls

Remember, a strong safety culture is the best way to prevent injuries and help ensure a successful school year!

Ladder Safety

Whether you are a maintenance worker changing a light 15 feet off the ground or a classroom teacher decorating a bulletin board for the new school year, proper ladder safety is crucial to reducing your risk of serious injury. Always use the following tips to protect yourself when using ladders:

- Use the right ladder for the task. It should be tall enough to reach the job easily.
- Never lean a stepladder against a wall to use as a straight ladder
- Never place a ladder on top of blocks, boxes, a table or anything else to gain height
- Inspect the ladder for missing bolts, screws, joints etc. before each use
- Make sure stepladders are fully open and the spreader is locked
- Set up extension ladders with a 4 to 1 ratio (for every 4 feet of working height, the bottom should be 1 foot from the wall)
- Face the ladder while climbing up and down and use both hands
- Never stand on the top of a step ladder or the top three rungs of an extension ladder



Most importantly, take your time and be careful!

Please call Risk Management at ext. 4560 if we can help you with any safety question or if you have any safety tips that should be forwarded to the rest of the District.

What Makes a Great Safety Committee?

Every employee in our District should be aware of their school or department safety committee and help to make it effective!

Safety Committees exist for several reasons. When done well, they:

- help create and maintain an enterprise safety culture
- help open and maintain communication between administration and all staff
- create a way to identify and bring forward suggestions to eliminate hazards
- fulfill the OSHA requirement of a local safety committee at each location

Quality safety committees and meetings:

- have a minimum of four representatives. If a larger school or a high school, the number must be higher
- meet the OSHA required 10 times per school year
- are represented by a broad spectrum of both certified and classified staff members and are typically led by a school administrator
- meet for 20 minutes but no more than 30 minutes
- discuss new and old business and use their time to discuss every student and staff accident that occurred during the previous month

OSHA requires that every work related accident be investigated and documented. Discussing them as well as potential ways to prevent similar accidents at the monthly safety committee meeting fulfills this requirement and documents it by way of the meeting minutes. It's a great idea to discuss student accidents in a similar way.

Effective safety committee meetings are a way to create a happy, safe, and healthy environment at your workplace.