

Safety Awareness

Safety awareness means being able to recognize unsafe practices and conditions. It requires following safety procedures. It means getting to know all you can about the conditions that promote safety, including emergency response procedures (fire alarm, bomb threat, etc.). Safety awareness signifies your willingness to take time to prevent accidents.

Most of all, safety awareness means having the right attitude about safety, both your own and your co-worker's safety. Safety awareness can help prevent injury, illness and accidental damage to school district property.

Safety awareness begins with an attitude and commitment to safety by everyone in the organization. The school board and administration is not solely responsible for safety. All staff personnel, both teaching and support, must follow safety rules and procedures as well as proactively support the safety effort. It is each person's responsibility to act each and every time a hazardous act or condition is observed. Regardless of the situation, there is always an appropriate way to handle it so that safety is considered with the priority it deserves.

Your willingness to take the time to help prevent accidents is a direct measure of your safety awareness and attitude. The responsibility to act must be shared by each member of the school district organization in order to make your work places as safe as possible.

With everyone pitching in, the burden of identifying and remediating unsafe acts and conditions is reduced to a manageable level.

Although formal safety inspections should be performed at least quarterly, each person should be responsible for eyeballing their own work area weekly. These informal inspections will help spot and eliminate hazards before they have a chance to cause problems.

Remember, safety awareness requires foresight and sound judgment. It should be considered in all decision-making processes. Employees who are safety conscious are alert and practice good safety habits. Safety awareness is one way you can control your own safety on the job. •

What safety awareness means:

Looking out for unsafe conditions in your work area.

Looking out for unsafe acts.

Learning how to work safely.

Observing the motto, "Safety First".

Working safely every day and in every phase of your work.

Knowing how to handle emergencies quickly and effectively.

Workers' Compensation Accidents

7/1/2006—12/31/2006

Personnel	Frequency % of Claims		Cause	Frequency % of Claims
Educator	31.7		Fall Same Level	18.9
Custodian	20.9		Special Education Acting Out	16.2
Educator Aide	18.9		Overexertion	15.8
Office Worker	5.4		Struck By	14.8
Cafeteria	4.4		Struck Against	8.9
Trades	3.8		Fall Different Level	8.4
Educator Athletic	3.1		Student Altercation	3.8
Administrator	2.7		Internal/Sudden	2.7
Bus Driver	2.3		Caught Between	2.2
Other	6.8		Other	8.3

As usual the teachers led the way in accident frequency. (31.7) The custodians were second (20.9), but they only account for approximately 7% of the work hours. Therefore, the custodial rate of accident frequency is higher. Both teachers and custodians should be included in your safety program. •

By Marty Kalbach
NJSBAIG Loss Control Manager

WeTip Success Continues

The WeTip program continues to be successful. During the month there were reports of drugs on campus, vandalism and weapons in New Jersey schools. The information provided by these tips is crucial to solving this criminal activity.

Introducing, implementing, educating and reminding your school community about this free program has reduced criminal activity significantly in schools across the nation. The deterrent effect can be dramatic. In one case, the WeTip reports of criminal activity were almost negligent. However, the number of criminal acts was reduced dramatically. The

only explanation was that criminals were reluctant to act out because they feared being reported.

Information concerning WeTip is available from Marty Kalbach at 609-386-6060 extension 3024. All members of the NJSBAIG are eligible for free membership in this program. •

*By Marty Kalbach
NJSBAIG Loss Control Manager*

Claim Corner Article:

Safety During Winter Months

The cold days are here and with this comes snow and ice. During these few months of winter it is important to stress safety, particularly for those who traverse the sidewalks and parking lots. The best way to prevent accidents is to make sure the walkways and parking areas are clear of snow and ice. To prevent an employee from slipping and falling outside or inside is to maintain and clean these areas before the staff arrives or leaves school.

Another important factor is to make the staff aware of the slippery conditions and the dangers of snow and ice. Remember when an employee falls because of poor or no maintenance, the school loses out. Please stress to your employees to be cautious when there is inclement weather. Emphasizing safety should lead to less accidents and healthier employees.

We, at the Group, know a lot about slip and falls. Many of the accidents we investigate are avoidable, but it starts with you. Be cautious during bad weather and be safe. If there are any questions relating to the workers' compensation law, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you and have a safe winter.

*By Lou Giannetto
NJSBAIG Claim Manager*

Winter Storm Safety

When a winter storm strikes or extra-cold weather lingers for long periods, certain items and information are indispensable in an emergency or even under normal circumstances. A home energy emergency kit should include:

Phone numbers you can dial for help—your neighbors, the police, fire department, and other community service organizations. Check your local telephone directory for these emergency numbers and write them down.

Emergency food and water supply. Store some food that does not require refrigeration or cooking. An ample supply of drinking water should be kept on hand.

Battery-powered radio and extra batteries. This will enable you to hear weather forecasts, emergency information and advice broadcast by local authorities, even if you are without electricity.

Flashlight and extra batteries, or candles and matches.

Extra medicine as may be required by family members.

First aid supplies and first aid manual.

Extra blankets or sleeping bags.•

Playground Compliance Alert

The Playground Safety Subcode for New Jersey (N.J.A.C. 5:29-11) requires the replacement or improvement as necessary for compliance with the subcode before **October 18, 2007.**

<http://www.state.nj.us/dca/dcr/rec/regu/recplaygroundsafety.pdf>

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission *Handbook for Public Playground Safety (HPPS)*. Pub No. 325 has been adopted by reference as the New Jersey Playground Safety Subcode. The HPPS guidelines govern design, installation, inspection, and maintenance requirements for playgrounds.
<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/325.pdf>.

All construction or alteration to playgrounds, equipment, or surfacing shall comply with the provisions of the Barrier Free Subcode (N.J.A.C. 5:23-7). That is, a pathway and entry point shall be provided to the play area that is wheelchair accessible. Pre-existing playgrounds (April 2000) that comply with the Playground Safety Subcode are excluded unless renovations occur to the surfacing or equipment. The fall surfacing compliance deadline was October 2004.

http://www.nj.gov/dca/codes/code_assist_internet/barrier_free/pdf/barrier_free_6_1_2006.pdf Pages 15, 16, and 23

Some requirements of the HPPS:

A routine maintenance schedule must be established for the equipment and the general area. This maintenance would include tightening and inspecting hardware, removing debris and leveling the use zone surfaces, etc. Equipment manufacturer's guidelines should be followed and the use factor of the play area taken into consideration.

Daily inspections must be performed by the custodial/maintenance staff or a playground aide. The inspector should be given a brief tutorial on what to examine, how to document the inspection, and the process for reporting deficiencies. For example, checks would include looking for foreign objects on the fall surface and identifying any obviously broken equipment. Checklists work well as an inspection point reminder and documentation tool.

An annual audit of the playground is recommended. This is an inspection for compliance with the HPPS conducted by a certified inspector or a knowledgeable person.

The guidelines are technical and govern equipment, use zones, hardware, fall surfacing, and hazards particular to playgrounds.

Please contact Steve Williams, of the NJSBAIG Loss Control Department to discuss your questions or to schedule an inspection/audit at 609-386-6060 extension 3045. •

*By Steve Williams
NJSBAIG Senior Loss Control Representative*