

Carry on with Better Lifting Practices

Summer is here again and classroom cleaning is on the agenda. Before assigning this work, a review of lifting methods should be accomplished. Improper lifting of heavy objects may seem like an obvious risk for back strain, but that's only part of the story. Repeated improper lifting and carrying without proper precautions can also lead to overexertion, the number one cause of non-fatal workplace injuries.

Before inflicting damage on your entire body by pretending to be made of Kryptonite, think about the lost mobility, wages and health that can result from a lifting injury.

Lifting Risks

Back strain, leading to chronic back pain, compressed disks, and nerve injuries.

Overexertion of heart and lung muscles.

Musculoskeletal damage through repeated improper lifting and carrying.

Tips for Prevention

Think before you lift. Estimate the weight of the object by titling it up slowly. If it's hard to move, it's too heavy to lift by yourself. Get someone to help, or use a lifting aid.

Keep the object you're lifting as close to your body as possible.

Don't twist your back as you lift. Instead, move your feet to turn.

Always lift with your legs, not your back. Your leg muscles are stronger than any other muscles in your body.

Push, rather than pull, a heavy load.

Get a handle on it—objects with handles are easier to lift and cause less back strain.

If you have to carry something any distance, balance your load, plan your route to avoid obstacles, keep a firm footing, and don't let your load obscure your vision.

Keep your back and abdominal muscles strong through regular exercise.

If lifting is a regular part of your job, spend a few minutes every day before work on warm-ups.

Watch your weight. Extra pounds cause extra strain on your back. 🚫

National Safety Council

Keep Summer Outdoor Cooking Safe

According to the National Fire Protection Association, gas and charcoal grills cause an average of 1,500 structure fires and 4,800 outdoor fires in or on home properties each year. With summer approaching, these numbers should be of concern to anyone that may want to use the grill.

To reduce these numbers and prevent injuries, keep these tips in mind:

General rules for barbecue grill safety include:

Remember that whether you have a gas or charcoal grill, you should never use it indoors.

When using barbecue grills on decks or patios, be sure to leave sufficient space from siding and eaves.

Always supervise a barbecue grill when in use.

Keep children and pets far away from grills.

Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and have the grill repaired by a professional.

Gas

Always check for gas leaks every time you reconnect the LP cylinder.

Do not use cylinder if dented, bulging, leaking or rusted.

Do not smoke or light a match while handling propane cylinders.

Do not leave a cylinder in your car.

Never use matches or lighters to check for leaks.

Do not attempt to repair the cylinder yourself.

Charcoal

Never attempt to restart a flame by adding more lighting fluid.

Use insulated, flame retardant mitts when cooking or handling any part of the grill.

Keep a spray bottle of water nearby to handle flare-ups.

Make sure charcoal ashes are cool before discarding. Water may be added to them, but beware of steam.☹

National Safety Council

SUMMER SUN

Everyone knows how painful a sunburn can be, but ultraviolet radiation that comes from the sun also can cause premature aging of the skin, wrinkles, cataracts and skin cancer. The amount of damage depends on the strength of the light, the length of exposure, and whether your skin is protected. Here are some tips to protect yourself from UV rays this summer.

Cover up. Wear tightly-woven clothing that blocks out light. Place your hand between a single layer of the clothing and a light source. If you can see your hand through the fabric, the garment does not offer enough protection.

Use sunscreen. A sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 blocks 93 percent of UV rays. You want to block both UVA and UVB rays to guard against skin cancer.

Wear a hat. A wide brimmed hat protects the neck, ears, eyes, forehead, nose and scalp.

Wear UV-absorbent sunglasses. Buy sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB radiation.

Limit exposure. UV rays are most intense between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. If you're unsure about the sun's intensity, take the shadow test: if your shadow is shorter than you, the sun's rays are at their strongest.☺

Claims Corner Article:

Law Against Discrimination

The Law Against Discrimination (LAD) recognizes a cause of action against a school district for student-on-student or sexual orientation harassment. This was just decided in a New Jersey Supreme Court case of LW vs. Toms River Regional School Board of Education. This cause of action is permitted if the school district fails to reasonably address that harassment. When assessing a school district's liability, the fact finders must determine whether the district, with actual or constructive knowledge of the maltreatment took actions reasonably calculated to end the harassment. A school district is shielded from liability, when their positive and remedial actions are reasonable in light of the totality of the circumstances.

It is a school district's duty to protect students from harm. A board of education must take reasonable measures to assure that the teachers and administration who stand as surrogate parents during the day are educating and protecting vulnerable children.

The LAD also protects students against harassment and discrimination based on other protected characteristics including race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, nationality and sex.

By statute, each school district must have a written policy in place dealing with student bullying and harassment. The school district must publicize the policy and provide training and education on their harassment policies to staff, students and parents.

The NJSBAIG through its Errors and Omission Policy may provide coverage for district negligent applications or failure to communicate its policy.

If you want to prevent these types of incidents then you must make sure your policy is communicated regularly and you respond immediately to any misconduct. You should consult with your solicitor relative to the type of training, how often it should be given and what to do when confronted with this type of behavior. If you have any questions on any of the above, please speak to your board attorney or contact Lou Giannetto, Mike Cox or Bill Miller at 609-386-6060 extension 3011, 3049 or 3095 respectively.☺

By Lou Giannetto
NJSBAIG Claim Manager

New School Laws Signed

On May 4, 2007, Acting Governor Richard Cody signed legislation making it a criminal offense for a school bus driver to leave a student on the bus at the end of their run. Under the law, the first offense will result in a six month suspension and a second offense will result in permanent revocation of their CDL.

Acting Governor Cody also signed a law to authorize fines for drivers who fail to obey a crossing guard's signal. The fines would be \$150 for the first offense and \$300 for subsequent offenses.

Laws should be discussed with your board solicitor prior to any changes in your districts policies. ☪

*By Tony Jones
NJSBAIG Senior Loss Control Representative*

Harassment and Bullying

Recently, a State Supreme Court decision determined that a school district had failed to provide a learning environment in which a student was free from harassment and awarded damages to the plaintiff. Even though the district had placed the student in an alternate school, the Court found the remedy to be unsatisfactory. The application of new standards, which are similar to the "hostile workplace" standard, to the classroom is now the law in New Jersey. Districts are required to adopt policy and conduct necessary training to prevent harassment and bullying. What are the requirements and how can districts comply?

New Jersey Statutes 18A:27-13 to 19 require all districts to adopt policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation or bullying of staff or students. Policy and training must be communicated to all staff, volunteers and students. The QSAC now contains a monitoring element on this issue.

NJSBAIG is concerned about this issue. The danger of a "hostile learning environment" or a "hostile workplace" due to bullying, harassment or intimidation has been clarified by the recent court decision.

Your district should:

Adopt appropriate policy. The NJSBAIG or a policy advisor firm such as Strauss-Esmay, Inc. can assist your district.

Arrange for all staff to receive training. One low cost provider (\$3 per person) is the Monmouth-Ocean Educational Services Commission's "OTIS" on-line course at www.moesc.org. This method does not require an in-service day or the use of substitutes.

Communicate the policy using age-appropriate material to all students. ☪

Don't Fool Around with Fireworks on the Fourth

Keep your Fourth of July celebrations safe for your whole family with the following tips:

Stay away from illegal explosives. Commonly known as M-80s, M-100s, Blockbusters or Quarterpounders.

Never attempt to make your own fireworks. Do not purchase kits advertised for making fireworks. Mixing and loading chemical powders is very dangerous and can kill or seriously injure you.

Never give fireworks to young children. Close adult supervision is mandatory.

Never take pets to public fireworks displays. The noise can severely hurt their ears.

Fireworks appropriate for home use are not appropriate when a large crowd is present. Leave your fireworks at home when going to a public display.

Never relight a "dud" firework. Wait 15 to 20 minutes and then soak it in a bucket of water.

Light only one firework at a time.🚫

Schools Insurance Authority