

New York State School Safety Group 491 Safe Schools Agenda

Route to:

___ Superintendent
___ School Business Off.
___ Athletic Director
___ Supt. Bldgs/Grounds
___ Site Administrators
___ Transportation Dir.
___ Lunch Director
___ Classroom Teachers

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A monthly service provided to help you with your efforts to make your school safe for students, staff and the public

Pilot Program Reduces Costs of Health Benefits

The December issue of *American City & Council* reports on the results of a six month pilot program conducted in Garland Texas aimed at improving health and saving money on health care benefits. The program involved 30 employees who ended up losing nearly 800 pounds, improving other health problems, and saving the city nearly \$700 for each employee.

The overall objective of the project was to help employees establish healthier lifestyles. The city developed the project with the assistance of its health insurance company, its benefits consultant, and a local nurse-practitioner.

The participants first had physicals, and then met weekly at lunch to discuss eating habits, nutrition, exercise and preventive healthcare options without giving up their favorite foods. They learned strategies for eating, and they were encouraged to exercise and to drink 8 to 10 glasses of water each day.

After 4 months, participants had lowered their cholesterol levels an average of 20 points and their blood pressure readings an average of 10 points. By the end of the project, several participants had reduced or eliminated diabetes or hypertension medication. The participants reported less indigestion and higher self-confidence and energy levels.

The city reports that it is saving \$358 per employee per year in medical claims, \$168 in prescription claims and \$157 in absenteeism for a total of \$683. Based on the success of the pilot program, the city has already offered two additional classes for its employees. Looks like pretty solid evidence that a wellness program can be a “win-win” proposition!

Note: A majority of the members of the International Foundation of Employee Benefits Plans who were polled recently offer wellness plans as a way to stem costs.

How good is Your Computer Security?

The FBI reports that your chances of being a victim of some sort of computer security breach are nine out of ten. Its latest Computer Crime Survey of more than 2,000 public and private organizations also found that one-fifth of the respondents had been hit more than 20 times a year, and almost two-thirds had suffered financial loss as a result of the incursions.

The most frequently reported attacks were viruses (84%) and spyware (80%). One in five organizations reported they had experienced port scans and network or data sabotage.

One out of five reported they had experienced 20 or more attacks.

Viruses and worms cost the most, accounting for \$12 million of the \$32 million in losses.

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The attacks came from 36 different countries! The U.S. and China were the source of over half of the intrusion attempts.

Most of the respondents to the survey reported that they had installed new security updates and software following incidents. However, advanced security techniques such as biometrics and smart cards were used by only a few organizations.

Forty-four percent of the respondents reported intrusions from within their own organizations.

Computer technology is advancing at an ever growing rate. The potential political and financial costs of complacency about computer security are enormous. Strong internal controls and the help of qualified computer security specialists are in order.

Encourage Teenagers to Turn Down Rides with Teenage Drivers

They are more likely to be killed in car crashes than the drivers themselves, according to a recent analysis of 10 years of crash data conducted by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.

The study, conducted in Minnesota, revealed that young novice drivers accounted for slightly more than one third of all fatalities crashes in which they were involved. Nearly two thirds of those who were killed were riders or pedestrians.

Car crashes are the leading cause of death among teenagers

AAA advises that parents should be advised that they should not allow their teens to ride with other teen drivers. Further, teen drivers should not be allowed to transport other teens in the first year of driving. Parents can get help in enforcing these rules from the educational tools at AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety at <http://www.aaa.com/publicaffairs>.

The Safe Workplace Starts in the Job Interview...and Continues...

Make it a point to assess the safety consciousness of job applicants through your hiring process. An applicant's poor or ambivalent attitude about safety can ultimately lead to federal or state Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) fines, more frequent workers' compensation claims, higher insurance premiums, greater absenteeism, and property damage. Identify applicants who have a good attitude toward safety and have shown responsible behavior in the workplace.

Hiring: learn about their attitude toward safety by:

- Asking for copies of safety training certificates or documentation of completed safety courses – or in the case of teachers, copies of the curriculum for safety modules in teacher training courses.
- Checking driving records – if there are several recent driving violations, you can be pretty sure that this person does not have a good attitude toward personal safety or the safety of others.
- Administering a drug test.

Orientation:

- Be sure to provide required training on hazard communication, forklift safety, and other applicable subjects before the new employee is assigned to work.
- Workers are most susceptible to injury during their first month on the job. Provide basic safety training right away. Emphasize that you are serious about safety training, and that all unsafe conditions, accidents and “near misses” must be reported immediately. Assign a senior member of the staff to mentor each new hire.

Beware of Plug in Air Fresheners

We have a report from an insurance investigator who found that the cause of a fire which destroyed a house was a plug in air freshener. Apparently the plastic is thin and prone to over-heating. An experienced fire official confirms that plug in air fresheners have been a major source of fires for some time.