



New York State School Safety Group 491

Safe Schools Agenda

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Route to:
__ Superintendent
__ School Business Off.
__ Athletic Director
__ Supt. Bldgs/Grounds
__ Site Administrators
__ Transportation Dir.
__ Lunch Director
__ Classroom Teachers
__ _____

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

Have You Posted OSHA Form 300A?

Beginning February 1, employers have been required to post a summary of the total number of job-related injuries and illnesses that occurred last year. Summary Form 300A must be posted until April 30, 2005.

The form must be displayed in a common area wherever notices to employees are usually posted, and a copy of the summary must be made available to employees who move from worksite to worksite.

Copies of the OSHA Forms are available on the OSHA Recordkeeping Web page.

Watch Those Red Light Runners

A recent news report on red light running reminded me that a school bus driver in my local school district was involved in an accident at a four way intersection because he ran the red light. Running red lights is the leading cause of crashes in urban areas, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS). Red light running crashes cause nearly 1,000 deaths and more than 200,000 injuries each year.

A survey conducted by the Farmers Insurance Group showed that more than 36% of motorists admitted to running a red light in the past year. The survey found that men are slightly more likely to run a red light than women, and nearly half of the individuals in the 18-34 age group had gone through a red light in the past year.

So, don't speed up to get through that changing red light, and watch out for the dummies that do.

Fraud of the Eyes

A man who claimed he had been blinded in the right eye in four different accidents recently pleaded guilty in New York to attempted insurance fraud. Legally blind in his right eye, he collected on claims in 1985, 1992 and 1997, but was prosecuted for the fourth claim in 2002.

Eye Safety Check

About 1,000 real eye injuries happen in workplaces every day. Most eye injuries occur because the employee is either wearing the wrong eye protection or no eye protection at all. Take these steps to reduce the chance of eye injury:

1. Conduct a workplace assessment. Review all work areas to identify operations and areas that have potential eye hazards (chemicals, flying or falling particles, etc.)
2. Select the appropriate eyewear. There are many different kinds of goggles. Make sure they meet exposure standards of OSHA regulations, and that employees are comfortable with the choice.
3. Train all new employees on the need for personal protective equipment and provide regular refresher training. Explain how you will enforce the requirement.
4. Provide anti-fog wipes and cleaning materials. Have employees clean their eyewear before working and during breaks.
5. Demonstrate your commitment to eye safety by wearing eye protection in all required locations at all times.

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Things You Should Know About Harassment in the Workplace

Is sexual harassment the only form of unlawful harassment? No, workplace harassment may be based on any of the protections of federal and state law, including gender, race, religion, ethnicity, age, disability, marital status or sexual orientation.

Sexual harassment is not confined to females. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1998 that men are protected from harassing behavior. Men have brought charges of sexual harassment in increasing numbers, accounting for more than 13% of all cases filed.

Any unwelcome conduct – verbal, physical, or visual – that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment is harassment - even if the sexual harassment occurs when a power holder does not threaten job consequences for refusing a sexual advance.

Persistent, pervasive behavior is usually required before a work environment becomes legally hostile, but a single severe physical act, threatening behavior or use of extremely offensive words may meet the criteria.

A claim for hostile environment sexual harassment does not require proof of intent to harass. It is not what the perpetrator perceives, but what the victim's reasonable perception is of what is offensive, intimidating or abusive that counts. This standard applies to racial, religious, ethnic, age and disability-based harassment, too.

A harassed employee is not required to discuss his/her discomfort with the perpetrator.

The employer must provide multiple avenues for internal complaints but none can require that the complaint be made to, handled at any stage by, or controlled by the accused harasser. On the other hand, an effective, accessible complaint system, coupled with immediate and appropriate corrective action, can support a successful defense of claims of supervisory harassment if the employee did not use the internal complaint process.

A manager or supervisor who becomes aware of harassing conduct must act even though no formal complaint has been made or the victim withdraws the complaint or leaves the work environment. Reprisals or retaliation against any person bringing a complaint, or who acts in good faith during the investigation and resolution of a workplace harassment complaint, is absolutely prohibited.

Co-worker behaviors such as ostracism, threats, taunts or abusive gossip may also violate the law.

Employers are responsible for maintaining a harassment-free work environment including the conduct of employees, visitors, vendors, suppliers, customers and clients. Regardless of the source, the employer is required to investigate and take corrective action.

It is not necessary for an employee making a complaint to demonstrate that the conduct has actually resulted in loss of pay, benefits or status, but simply that the working environment is offensive, hostile or intimidating.

When was your last in-service training on workplace harassment conducted?

