



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

There Is Value in Health Management

With health insurance costs continuing to rise at double-digit rates, many employers are adopting health management and consumer-directed health care programs to help control costs. These programs are sure to have beneficial effects on the costs of workers' compensation, too.

The 10th annual survey of large employers by the Watson Wyatt Corporation and the National Business Council on Health found that nearly 70% of the respondents are using a disease management program and 40% are using lifestyle behavior change programs through their health plans. Thirty-two per cent offer obesity reduction programs.

The survey found that employers that are doing the best job of controlling health care costs trends have a much greater focus on health management than those who don't use these programs. The best performing companies – those with a two-year average cost increase in the lowest quartile – kept cost increases at a remarkably low 5% rate, whereas poor performing companies saw a 15% increase.

The survey found that large employers have also begun offering financial incentives to encourage employees to complete health risk appraisals, use better health care providers, and improve their personal health.

More Tips for Cutting Workers' Compensation Costs

- ✓ Safety training works best when it is seen as a partnership between the employer and the employee.
- ✓ Safety training is an ongoing enterprise, not a once-a-year safety meeting.
- ✓ Everyone in the partnership, from the executive level to the supervisors to the employees has responsibility and accountability for workplace safety.
- ✓ The analysis of every injury report can lead to corrective actions that prevent additional injuries.
- ✓ Summer heat is coming. Physical Education teachers, playground supervisors and buildings and grounds staff will be spending more time out in the sunshine. Bring in a dermatologist to your next safety meeting to talk to employees who work outside about skin cancer and provide sun hats and information on other hazards such as ticks.
- ✓ Begin the workday with stretching exercises for employees who do heavy physical work.
- ✓ The first 48 hours after an injury is reported are more important than all of the other actions taken during the life of the claim. Get on it!

Visit our Website at www.nysgroup491.com

Email: info@nysgroup491.com

Program Administrator: Professional Underwriters, 1-800-833-8822



Arson Awareness and Prevention Insights

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has issued a special report that explores the causes and characteristics of school fires. According to the report, there were approximately 6,000 school structure fires in the United State during 2002. Thirty-seven percent of all school structure fires and 52 percent of middle and high school fires are caused by incendiary or suspicious activity.

FEMA believes that school fires are largely preventable through increased community prevention, outreach and student supervision. The full report can be downloaded from <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/>.

Along the same line, **May 1-7 is Arson Awareness Week**. The theme this year is Juvenile Arson Prevention. Arson Awareness Week is sponsored by the United States Fire Administration (USFA) and the International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI).

A significant number of fires are set by children. According to USFA, 55% of all arson arrests in the U.S. are of children

Arson Awareness Week
May 1-7

Are Your Staff and Facilities Ready for Safe Outdoor Activities?

If you haven't done it already, it's time to review your playground maintenance program, your behavior management program, and your emergency management program in order to make sure you have done everything possible to prevent playground and athletic field injuries during the spring, summer and fall months.

Playground Maintenance:

- ✧ Inspect and repair all equipment for cracks, loose or worn bolts, wood splinters, etc.
- ✧ Inspect and repair the cushioning material under playground equipment. Nearly 8 out of 10 playground injuries result from falls to hard surfaces, making this your first priority.
- ✧ Evaluate the accessibility of playground equipment for students with handicapping conditions.
- ✧ Require teachers and playground supervisors to inspect equipment and grounds daily before their use by students. Take damaged equipment out of use immediately.

Behavior Management:

- ✧ Duties of supervisors must be clearly stated and re-enforced in training sessions.
- ✧ Playground rules are clear and are taught both in the classroom and on the field.
- ✧ The S.A.F.E. Playground Supervision Kit, an instruction guide for supervisors, is available from the National Program for Playground Safety. See www.playground-safety@uni.edu.

Emergency Management:

- ✧ Supervisors need to have protocol and means for rapid communication with the principal, the nurse, and the parents of the injured child.
- ✧ First Aid protocol and supplies are in place.
- ✧ For more on maintenance and operation of playgrounds see: <http://cpsc.gov/> and type in "Playground Safety" in search box