

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

Ten Thousand Steps to Good Health

The American Council on Exercise (ACE) is a non-profit organization that promotes its “Shape Up America” program. An essential part of the program is its recommendation that everyone take 10,000 steps every day. Recently, ACE commissioned researchers at the University of Wisconsin to measure the amount of workday physical activity in ten different occupations including teachers, secretaries and custodians.

Ninety-eight volunteers were equipped with pedometers, and were asked to complete a daily log recording the number of steps taken, total distance covered, and a brief description of the duties they performed on that day.

The researchers found that secretaries and teachers, lawyers and police officers walked significantly fewer steps and less distance than other occupations. Secretaries walked only an average of 4,327 steps per day, far short of the recommended 10,000 steps. Custodians and mail carriers tallied significantly more daily steps and mileage, exceeding the recommendations.

It is hard for this writer to believe that teachers walk less than most workers, but the misconception about how much we move in the course of a normal day was the target of the researchers. The best way to check it out? Get a pedometer, and clock yourself.

491 Website Adds Risk Control Bulletins

www.nysgroup491.com

Click on: Risk Control Newsletters

Bulletins that support your school's risk management program.

Pandemic Guidance

A pandemic is an epidemic that spreads rapidly around the world with high rates of illness and death. An influenza pandemic is caused by an entirely new strain of flu virus, making it impossible to prepare a vaccine in advance. There is current concern about one strain of Avian influenza (bird flu) because it is causing severe disease in wild birds, chickens and other poultry on several continents. Some people in close contact with birds have become infected and have died. The concern is that bird flu will be able to mutate (change) so that it will be easily spread from birds to humans and from human to human.

OSHA is recommending that employers plan now for an influenza epidemic, and has released a paper, “Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for an Influenza Pandemic.” The guidance divides workplaces into four levels of risk ranging from high to low based on proximity of workers to infected people and offers specific recommendations for each risk level. The OSHA guidance is available at www.osha.gov.

The New York State Disaster Preparedness Commission is conducting comprehensive planning for a potential pandemic. Staff from the State Health and Education Departments and a workgroup of county health officials have collaborated in the development of a Pandemic Flu Action Kit for Schools in New York State. See www.health.state.ny.us/diseases/communicable/influenza/pandemic/ Also www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/crisisplanning.pdf for a planning checklist developed by the Centers for Disease Control.

Visit our Website at www.nysgroup491.com

Email: info@nysgroup491.com

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

Safety Training for CBRNE

NIOSH has published a report on a conference conducted by the Johns Hopkins Education and Research Center for Occupational Health and Safety at which 200 expert participants were asked to identify health and safety training needs related to weapons of mass destruction, including chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons and explosives (CBRNE).

Among the findings of the conference:

- ✓ Some workers, especially emergency responders, may receive considerable training while many others receive little or no applicable training.
- ✓ Training for new CBRNE threats should be integrated into basic safety and health training programs.
- ✓ All training should reflect a high degree of coordination between emergency response and the public health sector.
- ✓ “Real-life” rehearsals must be an essential part of all training plans.

Recommended Pre-Event Training for all workers:

- ☑ Basic health and safety training on exposures, legal, regulatory and hazard communication.
- ☑ Basic knowledge and recognition of hazards/threats.
- ☑ Ability to access emergency notification systems and notify appropriate parties.
- ☑ Knowledge of the Incident Command System (ICS).
- ☑ Knowledge of the worker’s specific functional role in an emergency, the limitations of that role, and the roles of others.
- ☑ Emergency evacuation and egress.
- ☑ Ability to use personal protective equipment (PPE).

Recommended Post-Event Training:

- ☑ Site-specific and event-specific hazards and threats.
- ☑ Site-specific and event-specific safety and health plan requirements.
- ☑ Ability to use PPE.
- ☑ Site-specific command and communication.
- ☑ Training as outlined in the Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) standard (29CFR 1910.120 and 1926.65).
- ☑ Critical Incident debriefing and stress management.

Preventing Outdoor Slips, Trips and Falls

We cannot control the environment, but we can reduce the incidence of falls by improving design of sidewalks, curbs and parking areas and by improving lighting and maintenance to increase awareness and eliminate hazards.

The Iowa Transportation Center at Iowa State University promotes these guidelines:

- ✦ Plow, shovel and use de-icing, salting or ice melting chemicals to remove ice and snow.
- ✦ Pre-apply de-icing chemicals before a storm, followed by snow/ice removal during and after the storm. Use plenty of de-icing materials, as using “barely enough” will leave patches of ice.
- ✦ Check the surface regularly. For parking areas, this can be time-consuming, but well worth the effort.
- ✦ Aim for evaporation. If the water can drain (i.e., drains are not blocked) and there is full sun or even reasonable wind, the water (even ice) will evaporate. A dry pavement is a clear indication there is no ice.
- ✦ Use a friction additive. Sand is the most popular because it is cheap. Use a lot of it. Make certain that anyone walking on the surface has a lot of traction.
- ✦ Check and treat surfaces every morning, especially around snow piles where melting may have created new problem areas. Reevaluate during the day and re-treat as needed.
- ✦ Remember that a clean-looking surface is only “safe” if it is dry. A wet surface can contain ice and also can turn to ice in the shade or overnight.
- ✦ Hold facility managers, custodians, grounds maintenance staff and contracted snow removal personnel responsible for snow and ice removal.
- ✦ Train those responsible in procedures for safely maintaining walkway surfaces, including the location of equipment and supplies.

Trips are caused when the foot strikes an obstacle, disrupting the body’s center of gravity. Trips are often caused by abrupt changes in the level of the surface, as when individual concrete slabs are raised. These need to be beveled to minimize or gradualize the change in elevation. Slips are caused by aberrations in the surface. Maintenance is the key -- filling and patching cracks and surfaces, reducing surface water, clearing surfaces before employees arrive, and painting curbs.