

New York State School Safety Group 491

Safe Schools Agenda

___ 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

Fire Prevention Week

National Fire Prevention Week is scheduled for October 7 - 13, 2007. What is so important about it? According to the Center for Disease Control, someone died in a fire about every 2 hours and someone was injured every 29 minutes in 2005. In that year, fire departments responded to 396,000 home fires which claimed the lives of 3,030 people (not including firefighters) and injured another 13,825, not including firefighters.

When fire strikes, people need to get out fast --most deaths occur due to smoke inhalation. Plan now to make a difference by celebrating Fire Prevention Week with lesson plans and events. For materials and suggestions, type "national fire prevention week" into your search window; a large number of sites will appear. Pay special attention to the NFPA site and its instructional materials supporting the 2007 theme, "It's Fire Prevention Week - Practice Your Escape Plan."

The History of Fire Prevention Week

Fire Prevention Week was established by the Fire Marshals Association of North America on October 11, 1911 to observe the 40th anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire. The inferno killed 300 people, left 100,000 homeless and destroyed more than 17,000 structures.

In 1920, President Woodrow Wilson issued the first National Fire Prevention Day proclamation, and in 1925, he proclaimed National Fire Prevention Week, noting that 15,000 lives had been lost to fire, and "this waste results from conditions that justify a

sense of shame and horror; for the greater part of it could and ought to be prevented....It is highly desirable that every effort be made to reform the conditions that have made possible so vast a destruction of the national wealth."

Did You Know?

Firefighters are injured and die, too. In 2006, 77 volunteer firefighters and 29 career firefighters died while on duty. Remember them in your lessons for older students.

From the Courts

A former postal worker has pleaded guilty in New York State of fraudulently receiving nearly \$400,000 in workers' compensation benefits. Investigators found that while he was receiving benefits of more than \$2,000 a month, he also received income from car sales and at least two other companies. Federal sentencing guidelines call for a maximum of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine or twice the amount he defrauded the government.

A California man has been convicted for workers' compensation insurance fraud and sentenced to two years in prison for costing his workers' compensation insurer more than \$100,000 in medical, legal and investigative costs, in addition to benefit payments. In 2003, he reported that he strained his back working as a nursing assistant. He was placed on temporary total disability and received benefits. In 2004, he took a job as a carpenter while receiving temporary total disability.

Fraud costs everyone in the form of higher premiums, and costs guilty individuals as well.

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Safety Tips for the Classroom

General

- ✚ First of all, know the internal arrangement of your classroom, including the storage areas.
- ✚ Second, know the general layout of the school building, including stairways, hallways, and doorways.
- ✚ Know the building evacuation route in the event of an emergency, and the location of fire escapes and exits.
- ✚ Know where all fire extinguishers and first aid kits are located so that you will be able to find them without hesitation.
- ✚ Know the location of all fire alarm pull stations.
Learn how to operate them.
- ✚ Always be on the lookout for tripping or slipping hazards in aisles -- such things as carelessly dropped school books and materials, liquid spills and forgotten electrical cords.
- ✚ Watch for materials that have not been stored properly and that may fall and hurt someone.
- ✚ **Never** climb on a classroom chair to post classroom materials. Always get a ladder or get assistance.
- ✚ Be alert to the careless actions of students who can be involved in horseplay.
- ✚ Report all safety hazards or potential safety hazards to your school principal.
- ✚ Report all accidents and injuries to your principal immediately, even if the injuries do not require first aid, the attention of the school nurse, or the services of a doctor.
- ✚ Report all defective furniture, fixtures, or equipment on a daily basis.
- ✚ Report any damage to the classroom itself immediately. Broken windows, defective floors, and loose or torn carpeting or tile should be reported immediately.
- ✚ Report every fire immediately, no matter how small or insignificant you think it may be.
- ✚ Keep your classroom door locked when the room is not in use.

Fire Prevention

- ☞ Keep decorations for holidays, parties and other events to a minimum. (No more than 20% of wall space taken up by paper; none on or about doorways.)
- ☞ Do not use extension cords or octopus plugs.
- ☞ Consult the maintenance department before setting up aquariums, coffee pots, terrariums, etc. to be sure that the electrical system can safely accommodate them without overloading.
- ☞ Avoid the accumulation of clutter that could feed a fire.

Operating Audiovisual Equipment

- ☞ Do not operate A/V equipment unless you have been properly instructed.
- ☞ If equipment malfunctions, disconnect the electrical cord and notify the maintenance dept.
- ☞ Do not change a burnt-out lamp bulb until the equipment has cooled and been disconnected.
- ☞ Avoid positioning electrical cords across aisles or furniture.

Storing Materials

- ☞ Keep file cabinet/storage cabinet doors closed.
- ☞ Be aware that heavily laden top drawers can tip over the entire cabinet when opened/left open.
- ☞ Do not store combustibles or flammable liquids in the classroom.
- ☞ Restrict activity to one shelf or drawer at a time.
- ☞ File heavier materials in lower shelves or drawers. Do not store materials on top of cabinets.

Risk Management Support on Line

Want a ready source of safety training for your Safety Committee members, or for your administrators? Go to the Group 491 website, www.nysgroup491.com for dozens of Risk Memos on topics ranging from Adult Safety Training Mentoring to Defensive Supervision.



Have a Safe
School Year!