

# 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  
\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

Volume 15, Issue 1/January 2008

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

### Avoiding Colds and the Flu

Cold and flu season is in full swing. However, we can greatly reduce our chances of getting a cold or the flu, and help prevent the spread to family and coworkers at the same time by employing this action plan:

1. **Get a flu shot.** Flu kills thousands of people around the world every year. You cannot get the flu from the shot because it is made up of dead viruses. Flu shots are particularly important for young children, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems.
2. **Wash your hands often.** Regular hand washing with soap and water is more effective than drugs in preventing the spread of respiratory viruses such as the flu. Alcohol-based gels and wipes can also be used.
3. **Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.** These are major points of entry for all kinds of germs.
4. **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.**
5. **Practice other good health habits to help your immune system stay strong.** Get plenty of sleep, eat nutritious food, drink plenty of water and other fluids, and learn how to manage your stress.
6. **Cover your nose and mouth.** Cover sneezes and coughs with your hand or a handkerchief, or sneeze or cough into your sleeve.
7. **If you are sick, stay home.** Do this especially if you are running a fever or sneezing and coughing.

### Add This to Your Accident Investigation Protocol

Poor safety performance can be the result of a training deficiency. Even if it is not, this protocol can help you determine root cause.

#### Question 1

#### **Does the employee know how to accomplish the task safely?**

If yes, are resources adequate?

If no, has the employee performed the task before?

If no, provide initial safety training.

If yes, does the employee do the task frequently?

If no, conduct practice session.

If yes, provide feedback.

#### Question 2

#### **Is supervision adequate?**

If no, improve supervision.

If yes: GREAT.

#### Question 3

#### **Is enforcement adequate?**

If no, improve accountability.

If yes: GREAT.

#### Question 4

#### **Is leadership adequate?**

If no, improve safety and health leadership.

If yes, consider discipline.

Visit our Website at [www.nysgroup491.com](http://www.nysgroup491.com)

Email: [info@nysgroup491.com](mailto:info@nysgroup491.com)

Professional Underwriters, 1-800-833-8822

## Avoid Counterfeit Electrical Products

The Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) has issued a warning that counterfeit electrical products and decorations pose significant safety hazards that can cause death, injury and substantial property loss. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has recalled over 1 million counterfeit electrical products in recent years. Here are tips to help you avoid counterfeit electrical products.

- Avoid no-name electrical products or products sold at “deep discount stores.”
- Check to see if the packaging contains contact information for the manufacturer. Reputable companies are proud of their product and will provide a phone number and address.
- Examine the warning label. It should be free of grammatical errors and not conflict with information elsewhere on the package.
- Beware of bargains that seem too good to be true. Products may be cheap because they are counterfeit or defective.
- Purchase electrical products directly from the manufacturer, a reputable distributor or retailer.
- Look for the Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL), Canadian Standards Association (CSA) or Intertek (ETL-SEMKO) Certification marks. If you have concerns about the marks, contact the certifier.
- While packing up your holiday decorations, dispose of old, unused lights and fixtures.

ESFI reminds us that electricity is a powerful tool, but it can also be a lethal hazard. Practice good safety habits.

## Perk Up Your Employee Wellness Program

Studies have shown that for every dollar spent on employee wellness programs, the employer receives \$2 to \$3 in return. Two thirds of public employers offer some form of wellness program to their employees. But are you getting your full return in terms of increased productivity, employee fitness and reduced healthcare costs?

Here are some thoughts on how you can evaluate your program and use the results to perk up your program. First, do you have an employee wellness committee? A broad based wellness committee can be an invaluable asset in evaluating current programs, services and policies already in place. The committee should also be charged with assessing employee needs and preferences, developing a health promotion operating plan, and goals and objectives.

The committee should assist in implementing, monitoring and evaluating the plan's activities. Members should also be charged with being knowledgeable about the many activities available in wellness programs around the country. There is a wealth of information available on the web. See [www.cdc.govT](http://www.cdc.govT) for starters.

Use the powerful risk management technique of analyzing frequency and severity of health insurance claims for your organization and use the findings to develop targeted programs; implement them; and evaluate their effectiveness. Don't hesitate to demand this kind of service from your health insurer. You may also be able to get your insurer to offer on-site health fairs, brown bag lunch sessions, participation in community-based walk/run events, 24 hour nurse hotlines and coaching sessions. Don't be afraid to invest in your wellness program. It's a good investment!

