

# Glatfelter Public Practice

A Division of Glatfelter Insurance Group  
(Formerly Professional Underwriters)

## Route to:

— Superintendent  
— School Business Off.  
— Athletic Director  
— Supt. Bldgs/Grounds  
— Site Administrators  
— Transportation Dir.  
— Lunch Director  
— Classroom Teachers

## Safe Schools Agenda

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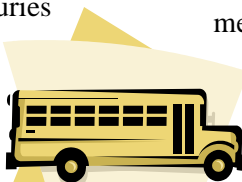
*A monthly service provided to help you with your efforts to make your school safe for students, staff and the public*

### Insights on Managing School Safety

Over the years, we have studied schools that have experience modifiers to their Workers' Compensation premiums that are more than 20 percent above the "expected" rate. In other words, they have more injuries per 100 employees than are expected in the school classification. These school districts pay higher premiums for their Workers' Compensation insurance, or have high expenditures for their self-funded insurance. The real issue, though, is that their employees are injured more often and/or more seriously than is warranted.

Some of the insights we have developed from these studies:

1. Management of workplace safety is not a separate endeavor – it is imbedded in all of the management policies and practices of the organization.
2. There is no substitute for commitment from the chief school officer and leadership from the risk manager (usually the school business official). A workplace safety program is destined for failure if it lacks either of these factors.
3. In most school organizations, the school business official has line authority over the physical factors that contribute to injuries. However, most injuries have behavioral factors at the root cause level. The SBO has little authority here unless the superintendent is knowledgeable and on board.
4. That is one reason why it is a mistake for the SBO to delegate safety to the superintendent of buildings and grounds – who has virtually no influence over the behavioral factors exhibited by the professional staff.



5. Workplace safety begins with strong board policy and administrative regulations that implement policy for delegating responsibility for safety at all levels, and job descriptions that specify those responsibilities.
6. Reflecting a job safety analysis in job descriptions provides a valuable tool in screening job applicants as well as designing early return-to-work programs. A good job safety analysis specifies the physical requirements of the position. This is extremely useful in communicating with examining physicians.
7. In addition to reviewing policies and regulations that impact on workplace safety management, it is useful to review contracts with bargaining units to identify and perhaps correct provisions that provide disincentives for injured employees to return to work as soon as they have recovered.
8. A valuable tool is prompt investigation of accidents for root cause by managers.
9. There is probably no more effective way to demonstrate management commitment to employee safety and the correction of unsafe conditions than accident investigation. The conclusion that "It was just an accident" is not accepted.
10. As in other areas of management, "that which is measured is improved upon." Aggregation and analysis of accident data identifies problem areas so that safety efforts can be targeted.
11. Safety awareness is constantly enforced, beginning in every staff induction program and continuing on a regular basis.
12. Safety is "on the agenda" for every meeting of the administrators and faculty.

## Personal Safety Tips for Staff

1. Wear appropriate shoes. Watch out for wet floors, especially in entryways. Never wear flip-flops.
2. Watch out for slippery parking lots. Take your time getting out of your car, and let us know if we have failed to have the parking lot in shape before you arrive.
3. Report all unsafe acts and conditions promptly. You owe it to your students and your colleagues.
4. Pace yourself. Get regular exercise, but don't overdo it on weekends. You are getting older each day, but your charges are not!
5. Be aware of your surroundings at all times; keep your valuables locked up: don't work in the building alone, or exit alone to a dark parking lot.
6. Don't climb on chairs. Get help. Practice good lifting techniques.
7. Share responsibility for control of transition areas (cafeterias, hallways, and sidewalks). Your quality of life is affected by the culture of the school.
8. Help control access to the school. If there is a stranger in the building, ask if you can help. Direct the person back to the office for clearance and issuance of a visitor badge. Notify the office that there is a stranger in the building.
9. Supervise students consistently. We have legal and moral duty to supervise responsibly. Many liability suits are based on allegations of "failure to supervise".
10. Supervise playgrounds vigorously. Severe injuries are incurred on elementary playgrounds; attorneys always claim lack of active supervision.
11. Plan, plan, plan. Well-planned lessons which actively involve the student go a long way to controlling classroom behavior. Be sure to include hazard identification and control in you plans; especially in lab or field trip situations.
12. If there is a fight between two students;
  - Keep calm, identify yourself.
  - Pick an onlooker by name and tell him/her to get help from a specific faculty member or administrator.
  - Dismiss the other onlookers.
  - Find out who is the aggressor. Then direct the loser to another location.
  - Don't intervene physically unless you are very confident that you can do so without sustaining injury to yourself.
  - Document your recollection of the events as soon as possible.
13. Know and follow district policy on physical contact with students.
14. Support your colleagues.
15. Learn and practice conflict diffusion and mediation strategies. Don't be part of the problem.
16. Respect your students and their parents, but let there be no doubt the school rules apply here and we are the adults in charge.
17. Be consistent in dealing with your students. No favorites.



### **JUST A REMINDER**

**If you would like to receive the Safety Agenda electronically or if your email address changed, please forward your changes/requests to Lynn Green at 610.458.1050 or email her at [lgreen@glatfelters.com](mailto:lgreen@glatfelters.com).**