

Glatfelter Brokerage Services

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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

LIGHTNING PROTECTION PROGRAM FOR SCHOOLS

In the US an average of 67 people are killed each year by lightning. With high concentrations of students, teachers, and the public assembling outdoors an event can be extremely dangerous and costly from a property damage and bodily injury standpoint. It is essential that school administrators, department heads, principals, educators, and buildings/grounds staff are aware of the exposures and controls of this natural occurring phenomenon.



Areas of high risk for schools include open fields, sports fields, playgrounds, and outdoor recess areas. Marching band activities pose additional risks to each band member. School activities and operations such as golf teams, heavy equipment operations, and grounds keeping are at high risk of lightning strike events. Physical structures posing increased attraction to lightning include metal bleachers, long metal fences, and metal playground equipment.

ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT ROLE

District management, which includes key leadership personnel (i.e. business administrator, director of buildings and grounds, principals and department heads), should develop and communicate the site specific lightning protection program to the staff.

LIGHTNING PROTECTION PROGRAM ELEMENTS

✎ Weather reports should be reviewed on a regular basis before outdoor events and activities are staged. To determine if an outdoor activity should be

anceled or postponed, the National Weather Service's *Thunder-Storm "Watches" and "Warnings"*, as well as signs of nearby storm development, should be reviewed.

✎ A chain of command needs to be designated to monitor threatening weather and make the key decisions as to removing a team, spectators, and discontinuing outside events. When a decision is made to evacuate or terminate an event or activity, a systematic approach should be

in place to properly coordinate and supervise the school staff, students, and public. All such groups should clearly understand their role in this process. Effective lines of communication should be in place to properly alert all parties to orderly event dispersal.

✎ Emergency response plans should be in place addressing all related issues (i.e. decision making responsibilities, communication methods, safe structures or locations, emergency, and first aid methods).

Students and staff should know where the closest "safe structure" or location" is to outdoor fields and playing areas. The time it takes to get to these locations should be determined. Safe structures tend to be buildings normally occupied by people such as buildings with plumbing and/or electrical grounding. In the absence of an inhabited building with adequate grounding, vehicles with a hard metal roof and rolled up windows can provide an alternate shelter.

- ✎ Follow the 30/30 Rule. Count the seconds between the time lightning is seen and thunder is heard. Individuals should begin moving to a safe location if that time is less than 30 seconds. Individuals should stay in a suitably protected area until 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard.
- ✎ Seek shelter when thunder is first heard, dark threatening clouds develop overhead or lightning appears. Once the approaching storm reaches five miles or a 25 second count between lightning and thunder the evacuation to a safe structure or location should be completed.
- ✎ Prompt and aggressive CPR can be effective in victims showing signs of cardiac arrest. Individuals struck by lightning do not carry any electrical charge. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation is safe for the responder. The injured person should be moved to a safer location before starting CPR.

ACTIONS NOT TO BE TAKEN:

- Do not seek shelter under isolated trees.
- Do not seek shelter in partially enclosed buildings.

Refer to the NCAA Guideline on Lightning Safety (June 1999) for more information.

Associated websites on this topic include the following:

- www.LightningSafety.noaa.gov, National Weather Service—Lightning Safety
- www.LightningSafety.com/index.html, National Lightning Safety Institute
- www.usatoday.com/weather/resources/basics/wlightning.htm, USA Today Newspaper
- www.struckbylightning.org, Struck By Lightning
- Building/structure protection guidance can be obtained from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Code 780 – *Installation of Lightning Protection Systems*.

BACKPACK RELATED INJURIES



Backpacks are a popular and practical way to carry schoolbooks and supplies. When used correctly, they are a good tool; they are designed to distribute the weight of the load among some of the body's strongest muscles. However, backpacks that are too heavy or are carried incorrectly can injure muscles and joints, leading to severe back, neck, and shoulder pain, as well as posture problems. The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons recommends that a child's backpack should weigh no more than 15 to 20 percent of a child's weight.

When students do not have enough time to get to their lockers they rely upon backpacks and the potential for related injuries increases. Backpacks placed on floors result in many unnecessary trips and falls. A backpack safety program can reduce the potential for injury to students, teachers, and anyone traveling the halls of your school.

BACKPACK INJURY STATISTICS

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, there were more than 21,000 backpack-related injuries treated at hospital emergency rooms, doctor's offices, and clinics between 1999 and 2000. An American Academy of Pediatrics study found that it wasn't the weight of the backpacks that was the most common cause of injuries; it was tripping over the backpack, which occurred 28 percent of the time. Getting hit by the backpack caused 13 percent of the injuries. Thirteen percent of the injuries to the neck, back, and shoulders were caused by wearing the backpack. Overall, tripping, hitting, etc., resulted in 77% of the injuries in the study.

Helpful information about backpack safety can be found on the web at:

- <http://kidshealth.org>, Backpack Safety (doctor approved health info)
- www.backpacksafe.com, for Backpack Safety Student Survival Kit including Video

JUST A REMINDER

If you would like to receive the Safety Agenda electronically or if your email address changed, please fax your changes/requests to Lynn Green at 610.458.1050 or email her at lgreen@qlatfelters.com.