

Risk Manager

Answers, resources and information to help assess and reduce risk

Getting Back to School – Think “SAFETY” By Kyle Stewart

Reaching for New “Heights”

Preventing falls as a result of reaching for high places while preparing classrooms, stockrooms, closets, cafeterias, storage closets and maintenance shops can be avoided by using the proper equipment to reach shelves and locations above your head. Think twice before climbing onto the nearest chair or table in order to reach something; chairs and tables are not designed for this purpose. Instead, familiarize yourself with the location of a ladder or step stool and most important; use it.

Liquids and Slippery Surfaces

Do not underestimate the severity of injury that can occur from a slip on a liquid or damp surface. Be on the lookout for puddles and/or damp surfaces; particularly, during inclement weather when puddles can accumulate on walkways and entrances. Although wet and slippery walking surfaces can be difficult to see, the following practices could prevent a slip or fall:

- Use caution where puddles and/or spills tend to occur (i.e., entrances, water fountains, cafeteria, etc.)
- If wet locations or spills are identified, notify the appropriate personnel to clean-up spills immediately, do not leave area until signage is placed and clean-up has begun.
- Wear footwear with appropriate tread for the condition.

Housekeeping and Clutter Go Hand-in-Hand

Staff members should communicate and work with custodial staff to keep hallways and stairwells clutter-free. Instructional staff should be cognizant and continually check that classrooms are free of trip hazards commonly associated with back packs, boxes, and electrical cords. Consider classroom layout to minimize foot traffic near potential trip hazards.

Save that “Aching” Back

During the robust schedule and excitement to get the school buildings ready for the return of students, make sure you are paying attention to preventing back and soft tissue injuries. If your task requires you to move items that are an awkward shape and/or heavy, consider using safe lifting practices in addition to the use of a materials handling device (i.e., wheeled carts or dolly). Take into account the weight of the object prior to completing the lift; test the weight of the object by lifting a corner and seek assistance from a co-worker for heavy and awkward objects. Body positioning can cause injuries also, break tasks into intervals that do not require you to remain in a kneeling, seated or standing position for extended periods of time.

For additional information or training on best practices and safety management within your school entity, please contact Director of Risk Management Sharon Orr at (866) 401-6600, ext. 7152 or sorr@cmregent.com.