

Safety Newsletter



Central Region
School Insurance Group

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FIRE PREVENTION AWARENESS

In the U.S. a fire department is responding to a call to a fire every 23 seconds according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Fires can cause catastrophic loss in life and property, so it is not surprising that the NFPA reserves the month of October to educate the community on fire prevention. **Inspect Fire Extinguishers.** California Code of Regulations Title 8, Section 6151, requires that fire extinguishers are available, accessible, and visually inspected monthly. When conducting the inspection, the designated inspector should look and/or consider the following:

1. The fire extinguisher should be mounted and employees should be able to access it without any possibility of harm or injury. The fire extinguisher should be mounted no higher than 60" from the floor and must have 36" of clearance in front of the unit.
2. Verify that the indicator on the pressure gauge is in the green operating range.
3. Confirm the pull-pin is intact and the tamper-seal is not broken or missing.
4. Check to make sure the fire extinguisher doesn't have any signs of corrosion, dents or leaks.
5. Verify any hoses and attachments are still in good condition and don't have any cracks or damage.
6. Ensure "Fire Extinguisher" signs are readable and present.
7. Lastly, check for the inspection tag. Initial the tag to document that the inspection was completed.

Emergency Response Evacuation maps must include primary/alternative evacuation routes, emergency exits, and primary/alternative staging areas.

Fire Safety guidelines:

1. Avoid hanging any kind of artwork from the ceiling.
2. Ensure there is clear access and a minimum of 36" in front of any electrical panel.
3. Any paper and decorative artwork hung on walls should not exceed 50% of the wall area.
4. Extension cords are designed for temporary use. Electrical equipment (i.e., projectors, radios, computers, printers, etc.) should be plugged directly into an outlet or surge protector.
5. When sinks are operable, the use of nearby electric circuits increases the risk of electric

shock injuries. The electric circuit or outlet should be equipped with a GFCI.

6. Upholstered furniture and curtains should meet flammability requirements. If the upholstered furniture or curtain is not tagged to document these requirements, it should be removed.
7. Small appliances—including coffee makers, toasters, microwave ovens, and refrigerators should not be used in a classroom.
8. Candles and air freshener plug-ins should not be allowed in any district class, office, or building.

WINTER FATIGUE

Shortened sleep duration is associated with increased risk of a work-related injury. Injuries rates are highest among workers who generally sleep less than seven hours per day and workers who typically work more than 40 hours per week. Studies show that injury rates peak among workers who regularly get less than five hours of sleep at night.

Getting good restorative sleep is crucial to combating fatigue. Sleep affects both our physical and mental health, which means improving your sleep usually also improves your overall quality of life. According to the Sleep Foundation sleep hygiene includes both environment and habits. To improve your sleep hygiene try setting a sleep schedule, follow a nightly routine, and attempt to cultivate daily healthy habits.

Sleep Schedule.

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time - even on the weekends.
- Prioritize sleep
- Avoid taking too many naps or one very long nap.



Night Routine

- Keep the routine consistent and follow the same pattern of tasks each night.
- Turn off all electronics. Checking emails and scrolling through social media before bed can cause mental stimulation that keeps your brain active and awake.
- Allow at least 30 minutes to get yourself comfortable and to relax so that you can fall asleep.
- Keep the lights dim or turn off the lights and make the room dark if possible.
- If you still can't fall asleep - do not toss and turn in bed for longer than 20 minutes. Instead get up and do another calming activity before trying to fall asleep again.

Healthy Habits

- Get as much daylight exposure as possible. Sunlight is a key driver to stabilizing circadian rhythm which helps encourage quality sleep.
- Being physically active and getting exercise can help tire you out so it's easier to sleep at night.
- Cut down on the caffeine. Caffeine is a stimulant which will keep you awake.
- Avoid large and heavy meals which will keep the body awake to digest the food.
- Avoid doing other activities in bed like working on your laptop, playing on your phone, eating in bed, or watching TV.

Getting more rest through quality sleep can help reverse the symptoms of daytime fatigue, in turn reducing the risk of accidents and work place injuries.

LADDER SAFETY – PREVENTING FALLS



Falls are the leading cause of death in construction and every year falls from ladders make up nearly a third of those deaths. These deaths are preventable. Falls from ladders can be prevented and lives can be saved by following the safe work practices

When Should You Use a Ladder? While a ladder or stepladder is commonly used, it may not always be the best option. Ask yourself these questions before deciding on a ladder:

- Will I have to hold heavy items while on the ladder?
- Is the elevated area high enough that it would require a long ladder that can be unstable?
- Will I be working from this height for a long time?
- Do I have to stand on the ladder sideways in order to do this work?

If your answer is yes to one of the above questions, consider using something other than a ladder. If possible, bring in other equipment like a scissor lift.

Whenever you use a ladder or a stepladder, follow these safety guidelines:

- Use the right ladder for the job. For example, ensure the ladder is high enough for you to reach your work area without having to stand on the top rung.
- Wear proper footwear (e.g., non-slip flat shoes).
- Place the ladder on stable and level ground. DO NOT place it on an uneven surface.
- Ensure that the ladder is fully extended before starting work.
- Prevent passersby from walking under or near ladders in use by using barriers (e.g., cones) or getting your coworker to act as a lookout.
- Maintain three points of contact with the ladder at all times.

- Do not carry any tools or materials in your hands when climbing a ladder.
- Do not lean away from the ladder to carry out your task. Always keep your weight centered between the side rails.
- Do not use ladders near doorways. If you need to use a ladder near a doorway, make sure that the door is locked.
- Check carefully to ensure there are no visible defects and that it is in good working condition.

GENERAL CLASSROOM AND OFFICE SAFETY

1. Clear the exit paths. Make sure nothing blocks the way between workspaces and emergency exits. Never prop open doors with boxes that people might trip over when trying to enter/exit..
2. Know where your first aid kits are. You never know when you'll need them.
3. Lift materials properly. Remember this any time you need to pick up something weighing more than a few pounds. Bend your knees, keep your back straight, and use both hands. When carrying a heavy load, move your feet where you want to go. Don't feel bad asking for help if you need it, and use a dolly or other machine whenever possible.
4. Step ladders stop suffering. They are the safest way to reach tall shelves or other high places. Even if one is not available, avoid stacking boxes or climbing on counters rolling chairs as these are very likely to result in a fall or injury.
5. Electrical cords must be handled with care to avoid fire hazards. Do not fasten them to floors, walls, or other fixtures in a way that might damage them, such as stapling. Do not place them under carpets or through windows.
6. Remember to store heavy objects on the shelf that is closer to the floor and only stack lighter objects on the top shelf.
7. Hydration, hydration, hydration. Drinking water is always important, but it is especially important in summer, and especially if you work outdoors.
8. Posture makes perfect. Ensure that your desk space fosters ergonomic positioning. muscles that often hold a lot of tension anyway.
9. Tidy up your space. Reduce clutter and clean spills immediately to decrease the risk of falls, cuts, or other injuries.
10. Stand up, stretch, and take walks. After an hour or two of work, get out of your chair for a short workout routine or a stroll around the building.
11. Make sure file cabinets and desk drawers are not overly full so that they are closed properly when not in use. That way, no one can trip, hit a knee, stub a toe, or get cut on a sharp corner.

