

SAFETY NOTICE

END OF SCHOOL-FUN DAY SAFETY

After a long and successful school year, with summer on the horizon, many districts look for a way to reward both staff and students for all their hard work. Fun Days are a longtime staple in many schools, where a variety of entertaining activities are planned for everyone in the school community. We just want to remind everyone that while these events are fun for all those involved, safety is a critical part of the overall success. The JIF has experienced many claims because of Fun Day activities, including injuries to students and staff. No one wants to start their summer off being injured. Please review the following information to help your district plan a safe and accident-free event.

Bounce Houses/Inflatables

We have sent out several information bulletins and reminders about the hazards of bounce houses and other inflatables. If not properly anchored and operated, they can lead to serious injuries or death. If you plan to use these during your Fun Day events, please make sure you are renting from an established and experienced company. They should be licensed and inspected by the NJ Department of Community Affairs. Inflatables are considered amusement rides and are subject to the same requirements as any other ride, including annual inspections. You should obtain Certificate of Insurance from the vendor, and they should be responsible for all delivery, set-up, operations and take down. Do not sign waivers of liability or hold harmless agreements that may offset vendor liability. Districts should not rent or buy their own inflatable units as they would fall under commercial operator regulations and must be approved and inspected by the state.

Water Activities

Activities such as inflatable water slides, dunk tanks, portable splash pools and sprinklers can provide much-needed relief on a hot day. However, these varied activities also create additional risks that need to be properly managed. An inflatable water slide falls under the same amusement ride regulations as noted above. Slides over 15 feet tall require two qualified operators stationed at the top and bottom of the ride. Again, these should only be rented from qualified companies.

Dunk tanks must be placed away from any electrical sources. Water must be filled to the proper fill line. Those being dunked must be 18 years of age or older and typically must be over 5 feet tall. There is usually a weight limit for the seat that must be followed. Arms and hands must be kept away from moving parts to avoid getting caught. Dunk tanks should NEVER be left unattended.



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Water activities such as portable kiddie pools, sprinklers, slip N slides, etc. for younger children all present varying degrees of injury risks. The main concerns are constant adult monitoring, sufficient space for the activity and clearances to any nearby hazards.

Staff versus Student Activities

Popular Fun Day events involve staff and student athletic challenges. This may include softball games, volleyball, basketball, tug of war and similar events. While these can be exciting and fun activities, they pose a serious injury risk to all of those involved. Liability and worker's compensation claims are a real risk and common occurrence. Individually, staff need to evaluate their own physical condition and ability to participate in these types of events due to the stress that can be placed on the back, neck and various joints. Any event should be suited to the age group of staff and students that are participating.

Food Trucks



Food trucks have become a common site in every conceivable location. As the popularity of these trucks grow, so does the competition. The owners look for any opportunity to get their names and product out to the public and school events can be one of those occasions. But, as the competition gets more difficult, it also attracts a few truck operators that do not follow the rules or maintain their vehicles as well as they should.

Most towns are now very familiar with food truck operations and have established rules that must be followed including permits, health inspections, fire permits/inspections and operational restrictions. Cooking operations can create serious fire and explosion concerns. Improper food handling can expose people to various food-borne illnesses. It is important to thoroughly vet these vendors, ensure they are fully licensed to operate and have all necessary permits, inspections, and insurance.

Outside Vendors

The use of outside vendors for these events can be an endless list of possibilities. Whether it is a parent-owned business that volunteers their services, a local business the district likes to support or the employee that says, "I know someone that knows someone that will give us a good price", there are many possible safety traps that can be triggered.

Whether the district is paying for a service or that service is being donated, the risks do not change. It is important that contractual agreements, certificates of insurance, indemnification clauses, hold harmless agreements and other risk shifting documents are in place. The district should never absolve any vendor from liability simply because they are offering a service for free or reduced rates. Always refer to the JIF Third Party Relationship Management Guide on the SPELL JIF website for detailed guidance on how to best protect the district in these situations.



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Weather Watch

Most Fun Days will be, at least in part, outdoors. Weather becomes a critical partner in the success of these events. Be mindful of potential rain, lightning, high winds, and excessive heat conditions.

Direct sunlight and elevated temperatures and heat can lead to sunburn, cramping and heat exhaustion. Monitoring the length of outdoor events is important. Ensure access to shade and cool down areas. Water coolers should be readily available in various locations for easy access. Monitoring wind conditions is critical if any bounce house, other inflatable equipment, or tents are in use.



Cooking Operations

Outdoor cooking, such as propane or charcoal grills, pose potential fire and injury issues. Open flame cooking is not recommended, but if a decision is made to provide this kind of food service, it is critical to contact your local Fire Official for guidance. Fire permits may be required and safe positioning of the grills away from buildings and structures is paramount. Closing nearby windows to minimize smoke infiltration to the school may be required. Access to portable fire extinguishers and trained personnel may also be necessary.



Emergency Response

When events are held outdoors, there may be possible delays in notification of emergency services or access to medical and emergency equipment. Have a plan to ensure basic safety and medical services are available. Since Fun Days typically involve some form of athletic activities, an AED should be in the care of someone attending the event, such as a nurse or designated CPR certified responder. Epi-pens should be readily available with a trained administer for students or employees that may have serious allergic reactions. The school nurse should be present at the event or in direct radio/phone contact.

Other Safety Issues

Fun Days require massive amounts of preparation and logistical support. While it is likely a large committee will be involved in the planning, it is usually best to have a couple leaders to oversee the critical elements of the event and ensure information flows properly to all involved. These selected personnel usually have all the critical contact information and are poised to respond quickly to any issues or concerns.

Large, outside events create obvious security concerns. It is important that an adequate number of personnel are assigned to monitor the student movements and surrounding areas for suspicious activities. School entrances should not be left open or unlocked unless someone is assigned to guard it from unauthorized access. Ensure key people have access to radios or phones for fast response.



Fun Days are a great way to celebrate the end of a successful year. Like most activities, there will always be risks involved. However, with proper planning, preparation and oversight, these risks can be significantly reduced to manageable levels so that the event goes off with minimal issues.

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