

# **SAFETY & RISK MANAGEMENT**

## **LOSS PREVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS**

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### **Slip-Trip-Fall Prevention:**

- **Maintain good housekeeping. Keep aisles clear of materials and equipment. Have students place books, book bags, and other personal items in designated storage bins or under the chair. Keep clutter away from desks.**
- **Tape down power and extension cords or use cord runners, especially if they must cross paths of travel.**
- **Ensure exterior walking surfaces are in good condition. Identify raised sidewalks, potholes, broken curbs, unlevel walking surfaces and other trip hazards around the building and repair promptly.**
- **Inside the building, be aware of broken tiles, frayed carpeting, loose rugs, damaged expansion joints, curled mats and raised door tread plates.**
- **Review floor cleaning and maintenance procedures. Make sure the cleaning chemicals are commercial-grade and meet industry standards for slip resistance. Train facilities personnel in proper floor stripping and waxing methods. Do not allow wax to build up in excess. Ensure mop water and mop heads are changed frequently to avoid excessive dirt and grease accumulation.**
- **Consider floor care methods that minimize the use of corrosive chemicals.**
- **Review inclement weather procedures including what entrances receive priority clearing. Funnel staff and students to the designated entrances that have been cleared. Pre-treat walking surfaces with approved ice melt in advance of storms. Use extended walk off mats to ensure shoes are clean before stepping onto tile and terrazzo surfaces.**
- **Consider stationing a custodian with a mop and bucket at the designated entrances during foul weather during morning arrival times to keep the area clean. Use blowers or fans to help quickly dry the floor area around entrances.**
- **Place umbrella stands at entrances to hold umbrellas, allowing them time to dry and avoid spreading water down the halls. Or better, place plastic umbrella bags at the entrances that allow a person to place the wet umbrella in a bag prior to walking down the hall.**
- **Ensure wet floor signs are readily available and used for spills and floor maintenance. Stress to employees the need to obey the signs and avoid walking through the area being cleaned.**



- Review the district dress code and consider more restrictions on types of acceptable footwear. Heel height restrictions, mandatory secured shoe backs (closed back or straps) and prohibiting flip-flops and sandals should be considered. Flat or low heel, non-slip rubber soled shoes are the best for most surfaces.
- Placement of non-slip, water absorbent mats under water coolers and around sinks and other areas prone to wetness should be considered.
- Ensure all stairs and steps have secured handrails.
- Ensure adequate lighting is maintained inside and outside the building including all walking areas, parking lots, hallways, stairs and steps. Avoid shutting off lighting in areas of buildings to “save money” as this leaves your staff exposed to injury. Instead, use motion sensors in areas that may not need continuous lighting.
- Make sure stair treads are in good condition. Worn or broken treads, loose tread plates and worn edges can lead to trips. Ensure the step surfaces and risers are uniform, especially the top or bottom steps which may be a different height, creating a fall potential.
- Make sure approved step stools or step ladders are available to all staff to avoid having employees climb on chairs, boxes, desks or other non-approved items.
- Maintain clean, uncluttered and well-organized storage areas.
- Have maintenance personnel inspect ladders periodically to ensure they are in good condition and safe to use.
- Check for areas of poor drainage around exterior walking areas to avoid wet and slippery surfaces. Re-direct downspouts to drain away from sidewalks and walkways.
- Use high visibility paint or tape to highlight changes in elevations and other potentially dangerous conditions. Use signage on doors to warn of step up or step down hazards immediately on the other side. Many older buildings do not meet current building codes requiring large extended pads in front of doors to prevent unexpected drops.
- Reinforce personal choice factors such as walking too fast for conditions, not paying attention, carrying loads that obstruct view, etc.
- Conduct periodic documented inspections of all facilities on at least a monthly basis to identify hazardous conditions.



**Lifting-Pushing-Pulling:**

- Provide safe lifting training to at-risk employees, especially facilities, mechanics and food service personnel. Special lifting training should be provided to those teachers and paraprofessionals that may need to lift children.
- Ensure an adequate number of material-handling equipment for various types of lifts including hand trucks, desk movers, chair racks, carts, dollies and pallet jacks.
- Make sure material handling equipment is strategically stationed around the school for ease of access. It should not all be stored in one room where employees may find it more difficult to retrieve.
- Breakdown larger package items into smaller units when possible to make it easier to handle.
- Lifting trash bags causes numerous injuries each year. For larger trash cans, have custodians tie off the trash bags when half full and leave in the can. Then place another trash bag on top until full. This reduces the weight and makes them easier to lift.
- Instruct teachers not to overfill trash cans and boxes when cleaning out classrooms at the end of the year. Stacks of old books and papers can be very heavy and a custodian is likely to get injured.
- When teachers leave for the summer, make sure they leave keys to locks on any cabinets and desks that have to be moved for summer cleaning so custodians will not attempt to move loaded furniture.
- Arrange storage areas so that heavier items are located on lower shelves and light-weight items are located higher. Equipment and supplies that are used regularly should be closer to the front of the room for easier access. This also applies to walk in coolers and freezers. Rotate stock so that frequently used or ready-to-expire product is up front.
- Inspect folding lunch tables regularly for signs of wear. Keep well lubricated so you do not have to strain to fold. Pocket tables should have secured latches to prevent the tables from falling back out of the wall where someone may attempt to “catch” it.
- Do not place dumpsters on elevated pads where it would be more difficult for the employee to place the trash in the container. Employees should not have to “swing” the trash bag into the dumpster.
- If you have a storage warehouse, consider investing in a forklift. Used forklifts are not expensive and can increase productivity, while minimizing injuries. One serious back injury will cost much more than a forklift.



**Other Safety & Risk Management Suggestions:**

- **Make sure your staff has the proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to do their job safely and efficiently. Items such as safety glasses, safety goggles, chemical-resistant gloves, cotton/leather gloves, hearing protections, hard hats and dust masks will help protect the workers. Training must be provided and use must be enforced.**
- **Fight intervention by teachers and administrators has resulted in serious claims. Make sure you have a detailed policy on proper intervention and train staff in the basics of breaking up fights to minimize injury.**
- **Interventional and restraint training for employees dealing with special needs children can minimize injuries resulting from children that are in crisis.**
- **Make sure observation panels in classroom doors are unobstructed so anyone opening the door can avoid striking a person on the other side. It can also be advantageous to place high visibility markings on the hallway floor indicating the arc of the door swing to warn those in the hallway they may be in the path of the door. These can be easily sealed with a wax coating for longer life span.**
- **Make sure cafeteria staff uses commercial grade pot holders and oven mitts that are certified by industry standards (ANSI 1060/NFPA 1971). Towels and residential grade mitts do not have the thermal protection of commercial grade mitts and wet towels can create scalding steam burns.**
- **Ensure all power machinery such as those in vocational shops and facilities garages is properly guarded to prevent injury. Any defective equipment should be tagged and removed from service until repaired.**
  - **Review bus routes and bus parking areas and try to minimize backing. Improper backing is one of the leading causes of bus accidents in the JIF and can almost always be prevented with proper controls in place.**
- **Review policies and procedures related to critical areas of liability including bullying, sexual harassment, cultural diversity and employment practices to ensure they are current. Train staff accordingly and ensure proper follow up on any reported infractions.**
- **Form a district-wide safety committee with representatives from all major job classifications to meet on a regular basis to discuss loss concerns, safety issues and promotion of safety throughout the district. Solicit safety suggestions from all levels to get total involvement.**
- **Investigate injuries to promote remedial actions that may prevent a reoccurrence of similar injuries.**
- **Make training a priority. Safety training, risk management reviews, job-specific task instruction and regulatory compliance training can all reinforce safety and prudent work practices.**

