WILDFIRE PREVENTION

Is Your Campus Ready for Fire Season?

Due to this year’s low precipitation levels, we are seeing a rise in Fire Danger levels state-wide. Is your campus wildfire ready? Here are a few tips to help you prepare your campus to avoid or limit any possible fire damage:

• Did you know that hot embers can travel 5-10 miles? Your best defense is to clear leaves and dry vegetation from roofs, gutters, and porches.
• Eliminate ladder fuels (fuels that allow a fire to travel from the ground up) by keeping grasses and vegetation mowed, limb tree branches 4-5 feet from the ground, and limb back any overhanging branches or branches that are touching buildings.
• You can create a defensible space of 30-50 feet around your facilities by planting low growing vegetation or xeriscaping with gravel, sand, or rock. If you are in an area with a lot of juniper and pinon trees, contact your local fire department and request a wildfire assessment. They can review the area and make recommendations for thinning any dead trees and vegetation.
• Clear or trim any vegetation around playground equipment.

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• Check your facilities for open vents and other openings, vents should be protected with 1/8” mesh (metal) screen to keep embers from getting into crawl spaces or attics.

If your campus is located in a wildfire area, does your safe school plan include wildfire hazards? What is the plan if there is a wildfire in your area?

These preventive measures can also been used to protect your homes. For more information on creating a defensible space you can visit the National Fire Prevention Association or the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Julie Garcia Wins NMASBO Award

Poms & Associates’ own Julie Garcia was recently awarded with the New Mexico Association of School Business Officials (NMASBO) “Friendship” Award at the Winter Conference. The award is given by the Board of Directors to “recognize there are individuals who, by their words and deeds, have provided special and noteworthy support as we pursue the fulfillment our mission.”

Individuals who meet one or more of the following criteria are considered eligible for this award:

• Have made a significant contribution—whether by means of pro-active involvement in the legislative process, or the creation of a model program/procedure, or the establishment of an exemplary standard or practice, etc.—in facilitating the process by which school business officials contribute to the education of students in their school districts;
• Have consistently, and on a long term basis, provided significant assistance to NMASBO in the implementation of its various functions and responsibilities;
• Have provided assistance to NMASBO, which is considered “above and beyond” expectations.

Poms & Associates as a whole was also given the Presenting Partner award for their efforts in supporting the mission of NMASBO.

Has your school or charter won any awards recently? Or would you like to nominate a staff member for a good deed or heroic act?

Contact us at pomsconnects@pomsassoc.com and we will highlight them in the next newsletter!
The Technical Assistance Program (TAP) is funded by NMPSIA in collaboration with Cooperative Educational Services. TAP provides school districts in New Mexico the opportunity to receive free consultation, professional development training, and technical assistance in all topics related to special education.

TAP seeks to:
- Improve the knowledge base of educators in “Individual with Disabilities Education Act” (IDEA) and NM state rules and regulations
- Improve the quality of IEP delivery and special education services
- Decrease the exposure of potential litigation statewide
- Provide support in special education topics in a clear, timely, and concise manner

TAP offers various services, including:
- Email and phone consultations services
- School site visits
- Classroom observations
- File and IEP reviews
- Workshops at school sites on requested special education topics
- Ongoing workshops provided at the CES office in Albuquerque throughout the school year
- Webinars and recorded presentations

All services mentioned above are complimentary!

TAP also has many topics they specialize in, including:
- Legal compliance of the IEP
- Special education legal basics
- Preschool compliance and IEPs
- Discipline, MDR, 10-day rule, in-school suspension
- Gifted 101
- Autism: researched-based methods for instruction, visual strategies, social skill support
- Developing measurable student goals
- Behavior: FBAs/BIPs, behavior management, programming for emotional disturbance
- Accommodations and modification in the classroom and for state-mandated testing
- Guidelines in developing a 504 plan
- Inclusion and collaboration strategies
- Emotionally disturbed vs. socially maladjusted
HAZARD COMMUNICATION

Employers with hazardous chemicals in their workplace must have a hazard communication program, per OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard (HCS), 29 CFR 1910.1200. The program must include:

- Labels on containers of hazardous chemicals;
- Safety data sheets; and
- Training for workers

An effective hazard communication program can be followed through these 6 steps:

1) Learn the Standard/Identify Responsible Staff
   - Obtain a copy of OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard
   - Become familiar with its provisions
   - Make sure that someone has primary responsibility for coordination implementation
   - Identify staff for particular activities, like training

In order to ensure that you have an effective hazard communication program, and address all the necessary components, responsibility for the implementation of hazard communication should be assigned to someone to coordinate. The person designated for overall program coordination should then identify staff to be responsible for particular activities, like training.

2) Prepare and Implement a Written Hazard Communication Program
   - Prepare a written plan to indicate how hazard communication will be addressed at your facilities
   - Prepare a list or inventory of all hazardous chemicals in the workplace

This requirement is to help ensure that compliance with the standard is done in a systematic way, and that all elements are coordinator. The written program must indicate how you will address the requirements of labels and other forms of warning, safety data sheets, and employee information and training.

The written program also requires employers to maintain a list of the hazardous chemicals known to be present in the workplace. Using the product identifiers (such as: product name, common name, or chemical name) to prepare a list will make it easier for you to track the status of safety data sheets (SDSs) and labels of a particular hazardous chemical. Remember, the product identifier must be the same name that appears on the label and SDS of the hazardous chemical.

3) Ensure Containers are Labeled
   - Keep labels on shipped containers
   - Label workplace containers where required

Chemical manufacturers and importers are required to provide labels on shipped containers with the following information:

- Product identifier
- Signal word;
- Pictograms;
- Hazard statements;
- Precautionary statements; and
- The name, address, and phone number of the responsible party.
This system allows an employer to use the same label from the supplier, or the employer can also label workplace containers with alternatives, such as third-party systems (e.g., National Fire Protection Association or Hazardous Materials Identification System). Any container of hazardous chemicals in the workplace must at a minimum include the product identifier and general information concerning the hazards of the chemical. Whichever method you choose, all your workers must have access to the complete hazard information.

4) Maintain Safety Data Sheets (SDSs)
   - Maintain safety data sheets for each hazardous chemical in the workplace
   - Ensure that safety data sheets are readily accessible to employees

Safety data sheets are the source of detailed information on a particular hazardous chemical. Employers must maintain copies of SDSs for all hazardous chemicals present in their workplaces. If you do not receive an SDSs from your supplier automatically, you must request one. You must also ensure that SDSs are readily accessible to workers when they are in their work areas during their work shifts. This accessibility may be accomplished in many different ways; you must decide what is appropriate for your particular workplace.

Some employers keep the SDSs in a binder in a central location, such as outside the safety office, or in the lab closet. Other worksites provide access electronically; however, if SDSs are supplied electronically, there must be an adequate back-up system in place in the event of a power outage, equipment failure, or other emergency involving the primary electronic system. In addition, if the SDSs are stored electronically, the employer must ensure that workers are trained on how to use the system to access the SDSs. In the event of a medical emergency, hard copies of SDSs must be immediately available to medical personnel.

5) Inform and Train Employees
   - Train employees on the hazardous chemicals in their work area before initial assignment, and when new hazards are introduced
   - Include the requirements of the standard, hazards of chemicals, appropriate protective measures, and where and how to obtain additional information

OSHA requires all trainings to be conducted in a manner and language that employees can understand. Workers also must understand they are exposed to hazardous chemicals, and that labels and safety data sheets can provide them with information on the hazards of a chemical. Workers need to be aware of the protective measures available in their workplace, and how to use or implement these measures, and whom they should contact if an issue arises.

6) Evaluate and Reassess Your Program
   - Review your hazard communication program periodically to make sure that it is still working and meeting its objectives
   - Revise your program as appropriate to address changed conditions in the workplace (e.g., new chemicals, new hazards, etc.)
A new claims workbook has been rolled out, it was designed to help your school quickly find information to report Worker’s Compensation, Property, and/or Liability claims. The workbook also provides an overview of procedures, claim forms, and the reporting process requested of members participating in the NMPSIA insurance program. A copy of the workbook can be found on NMPSIA’s website under the Risk Division > Claims Workbook section.

Section One of the workbook provides workers’ compensation flow charts. It also describes procedure options your school has regarding your right to make the initial selection of health care provider, initiate protective leave, modified duty work program, and whether to allow injured workers access to their PTO while they are disabled as a result of a work-related injury.

Hypertext links to the pages and fillable forms listed in the workbook can easily be found by clicking on the Bookmark symbol.

Although Property and Liability claims are reported using paper forms, workers’ compensation claims should be reported electronically using the Internet Claims Edge (ICE) reporting system. If your school does not already have an individual designated to report workers’ compensation claims electronically using ICE software, we encourage your school to email our workers’ compensation supervisor, Jerry Mayo at jmayo@ccmsi.com and request an ID and password.

Section Two of the workbook provides forms your school needs to report the various types of liability and property claims. The page before each reporting form provides an example list of reasons to use that particular form. If you have any questions regarding the liability or property reporting forms, we encourage your school to email our Property/Liability Supervisor, Greg Ramirez at gramirez@ccmsi.com.

We hope you are pleased with this new workbook and look forward to receiving your feedback!
The vast majority of the nation’s students will complete their schooling without ever being touched by peer violence. Nevertheless, recent school attacks carried out by students have shaken the image of schools as reliably safe and secure environments in which the qualifications of teachers and the efficacy of the educational curricula are the most pressing concerns of educators and parents. Televised images of frightened and injured students fleeing school grounds have imprinted themselves on the American consciousness.

Every school should understand the risks it faces. By first understanding its risks, a school can then make smart decisions about how to manage those risks, including developing needed capabilities. Risk is the potential for an unwanted outcome resulting from an incident, event or occurrence, as determined by its likelihood and the associated consequences. By considering changes to these elements, a school can understand how to best manage and plan for its greatest risks across the full-range of the threats and hazards it faces.

Poms & Associates frequently works with schools on their Safe School Plans, and a large majority of the Plans we see are coming back unapproved because there is no, or a weak, Threat & Hazards response. The School Threat & Hazard Vulnerability Analysis Worksheet can be extremely helpful when conducting all Threat and Hazard Assessments, including Behavioral Threat Assessment.

Behavioral Threat Assessment analyzes communication and behaviors to determine whether or not a student, staff, or other person may pose a threat. The primary purpose of a behavioral threat assessment is to prevent targeted violence.

There are six guiding principles of a school-based behavioral threat assessment:

1. Targeted violence is the end result of an understandable, and oftentimes discernible, process of thinking and behavior.
2. Targeted violence stems from an interaction between the individual, the situation, the setting and the target.
3. An investigative, skeptical, inquisitive mindset is critical to a successful threat assessment.
4. An effective threat assessment is base on facts, rather than characteristics or traits.
5. A threat assessment is guided by an “integrated systems approach.”
6. The central question in a threat assessment inquiry is whether a student poses a threat, not whether the student made a threat.

Schools should provide all school-based personnel who interact with students with effective professional development and ongoing support, as well as match professional learning opportunities with the needs of various school personnel, including: teachers, principals and specialized support personnel, such as social workers and SROs. All school staff should have regular training on their roles and responsibilities in maintaining a positive school climate/culture.
Upcoming PED training and events:

- **Psychological First Aid Training for Teachers and Staff- Supporting Students During Times of Disaster and Emergency:** This 2-hour training, which is being hosted by the PED and presented by the University of Colorado’s Institute of Behavioral Science, is open to all school staff. For more information on the class and to register, please follow these links: **Albuquerque:** Monday April 30th, 9:00am-11:00am or 1:00pm – 3:00pm or **Roswell:** Tuesday, May 1st, 9:00am-11:00am.

- **FEMA’s AWR-148 Crisis Management for Rural School Based Incidents:** This session is being held in Silver City on March 27, 2018 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. To register, please visit the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Calendar.

- **FEMA’s AWR-148 Crisis Management for Rural School Based Incidents:** This training session is being held in Gallup on March 15, 2018 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. To register, please visit the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Calendar.

- **New Mexico Youth Preparedness Council:** The NM Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM) is currently accepting applications for the New Mexico Youth Preparedness Council. Candidates must be entering either their junior or senior year in the 2018-2019 school year and are selected based on their dedication to public service, their efforts in improving emergency preparedness and response within their communities, and their potential to expand their impact as national advocates for youth preparedness. Applications will be accepted through March 31, 2018. For more information, please contact Lisa Hecker.

- **DOH Guidance for Schools and Childcare Facilities on Response to the Widespread Influenza Activity in New Mexico**

- **FREE Youth Mental Health First Aid Training:** This training is provided by CYFD and is available for school workers. To request training in your region, please contact Lisa Hecker, Safe Schools Program Coordinator.

Active Shooter Training for School Personnel: This training session is provided by the New Mexico State Police or by James Vautier, from Poms & Associates. To request this training at your school or district, please contact Lisa Hecker or James Vautier.

- **FEMA’s G-364 Multi-Hazard Emergency Planning for Schools:** To request this training in your area, please contact Lisa Hecker, Safe Schools Program Coordinator.

**For questions about Safe Schools Plans, please contact:**

Lisa Hecker, MS, NMCEM  
Safe Schools Coordinator  
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You Made it Through Flu Season, Now What?

This is one of the worst flu seasons we have seen in a while. For the first time schools had to shut down in order to thoroughly clean the facility to prevent the spread of the flu. The CDC has put together the following tips together for schools to properly clean and disinfect to slow the spread of the flu virus.

1. Know the difference between cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing.

Cleaning removes germs, dirt and impurities from surface and objects by using soap and water. This process does not necessarily kill the germs, but removes them and lowers the risk of spreading infection.

Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces or objects by using chemicals. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but combined with cleaning helps further reduce the risk of spreading infection.

Sanitizing lowers the number of germs on surfaces and objects to a safe level (by public health standards and requirements).

2. Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are touched often.

Follow your school's standard procedures for routine cleaning and disinfecting. Typically, this means daily sanitizing surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones, and toys. Some schools may actually require daily disinfecting of these items. Some procedures may also call for disinfecting specific areas of the schools, such as bathrooms.

If surfaces or objects are soiled with blood or body fluids, use gloves and any other required personal protective equipment to avoid coming into contact with the fluid.

3. Simply do routine cleaning and disinfecting.

It is important to match your cleaning and disinfecting activities to the types of germs you want to remove or kill. Most studies have shown that the flu virus can live and potentially infect a person for only 2 to 8 hours after being deposited on a surface. Therefore, it should not be necessary to close schools to clean or disinfect every surface in the building in order to slow the spread of the flu. If students and staff are dismissed because the schools cannot function normally (i.e. high absenteeism during a flu breakout), it is not necessary to do extra cleaning and disinfecting.

Flu viruses are relatively fragile, so standard cleaning and disinfecting practices are sufficient to remove or kill them. Special cleaning and disinfecting processes, including wiping down walls and ceilings, frequently using room air deodorizers, and fumigating, are not necessary or recommended. These processes can irritate eyes, noses, throats, and skin; aggravate asthma, and cause other serious side effects.

4. Clean and disinfect correctly.

Always follow label directions on cleaning products and disinfectants. Wash surfaces with a general household cleaner to remove germs. Rinse with water, and follow with an EPA-registered disinfectant to kill
germs. Read the label to make sure it states that EPA has approved the product for effectiveness against influenza A virus.

If an EPA-registered disinfectant is not available, use a fresh chlorine bleach solution. To make the solution:
- Add 1 tablespoon of bleach to 1 quart (4 cups) of water. For larger supply of disinfectant, add ¼ cup of bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water.
- Apply the solution to the surface with a cloth.
- Let stand for 3-5 minutes.
- Rinse the surface with clean water.

If a surface is not visibly dirty, you can clean it with an EPA-registered product that both cleans (kills germs) and disinfects (removes germs) instead. Read the label directions carefully, as there may be different procedures for using the product as a cleaner or disinfectant. (i.e. disinfection usually requires the product to remain on the surface for a certain period of time).

Before using disinfecting wipes on electronics, read the label directions. It may be necessary to use more than one wipe to keep the surface wet for the stated length of time. Make sure that the electronics can withstand the use of liquids for cleaning and disinfecting.

5. Use products safely.
Pay close attention to hazard warnings and directions on product labels. Cleaning products and disinfectants often call for the use of gloves or eye protection. For example, gloves should always be worn to protect your hands when working with bleach solutions.

Do not mix cleaners and disinfectants unless the labels indicate it is safe to do so. Combining certain products (such as chlorine bleach and ammonia cleaners) can result in serious injury or death.

Ensure that custodial staff, teachers, and others who use cleaners read and understand all instruction labels and understand safe and appropriate use. This might require that instructional materials and training be provided in other languages.

6. Handle waste properly.
Follow your school's standard procedures for handling waste, which may include wearing gloves. Place no-touch waste baskets where they are easy to use. Throw disposable items used to clean surfaces and items in the trash immediately after use. Avoid touching used tissues and other waste when emptying waste baskets. Wash your hands with soap and water after emptying waste baskets and touching used tissues and similar types of waste.

By following these practices and your school's standard procedures, you can make a difference in slowing the spread of the flu. For more information on the flu virus in schools, you can go to www.cdc.gov/flu/school.
We all realize the important role that facilities management plays in our schools—our students need a safe, healthy, comfortable environment. We are also aware how facility costs can negatively impact our budgets when we least expect it, but we know that those costs can be decreased with good maintenance practices. Just as NMASBO strives to lead the New Mexico school business profession, the New Mexico Public Facilities Management Association (NMPFMA) aspires to do the same for our facilities professionals.

Following quite a few years of work and planning, the NMPFMA was officially organized in October 2017. Membership consists of school district and charter school Operations and Maintenance professionals and is also open to city and county facility managers. NMPFMA is governed by a seventeen-member board with four officers, eight regional representatives and five ex-officio members.

NMPFMA has prepared a strategic plan with goals in place to:

- assist facilities management personnel in effecting the best possible programs for construction, operations, maintenance of physical property and equipment at facilities and public buildings;
- develop and implement training programs designed to improve the management, supervisory and technical knowledge, skills and abilities of public facilities professionals both statewide and regionally;
- provide an Operations Staff Certificate Program with access to seven training modules for new custodial, maintenance, and operations staff;
- advocate for plant and facilities management by providing positive, professional relationships with Superintendents, Business Officials, legislative representatives and other community leaders; and
- provide statewide networking for facilities professionals for the exchange of ideas and best practices.

In order to become successful, the NMPFMA needs the support of Business Officials and Superintendents. In June, districts will see an invitation via an invoice from CES for membership dues for the NMPFMA. Dues are structured according to enrollment size, much like NMASBO. Please consider joining this organization to help our facilities staff grow professionally.

For more information, contact David@ces.org.