

Safety Newsletter

A quarterly publication for injury and illness prevention

Summer 2026



Congratulations to the 2025-2026 Facility Inspection Award Winners

K-8 School District
Columbia Union School District

High School District
**Bret Harte Union High
School District**

Multi-Site School District
Curtis Creek Elementary School

Unified School District
**Calaveras Unified School
District**

Office of Education
**Tuolumne County
Superintendent of Schools**

The Tuolumne JPA recognizes and appreciates the hard work and dedication from each and every one of you. You have all done a tremendous job at keeping your district sites safe.

Keep up the good work!



***The 2025-2026 Follow-up
Facility Inspections will begin
in the Fall.***

Summer Safety



Summer Safety Tips

Beat the Heat and Sun

- ✓ **Stay Hydrated:** Drink fluids consistently throughout the day without waiting to feel thirsty. Custodial and outdoor workers should aim for 8 ounces of water every 20 minutes in direct heat.
- ✓ **Sun Protection:** Apply SPF 30+ broad-spectrum sunscreen 30 minutes before going outside and reapply every two hours. Wear wide-brimmed hats and UV-rated sunglasses.
- ✓ **Schedule Around the Sun:** Avoid strenuous outdoor activities or work during the hottest afternoon hours. Schedule campus yard work or student activities for the cooler morning hours. Check daily forecasts using the [HeatRisk Dashboard](#).

Building & Facility Safety

- ✓ **Cooling Off Zones:** Set up or identify shaded, well-ventilated, or air-conditioned rest areas on campus so staff and students can cool down and avoid heat-related illness.
- ✓ **Equipment Maintenance:** Ensure custodial staff operating lawn mowers and grounds equipment wear proper PPE and strictly follow district safety guidelines.

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Energize Your Workday: Healthy Habits for Desk Workers



Adopting healthy habits is not only essential for maintaining overall health but can significantly enhance productivity and job satisfaction.

- ✓ **Regular Movement Breaks:** Incorporate short breaks throughout the day to stretch and move. Simple exercises like neck rotations, shoulder stretches, and leg lifts can prevent stiffness and boost circulation.
- ✓ **Ergonomic Workspace Setup:** Ensure your desk and chair are ergonomically designed to support good posture. Adjust the height of your chair and monitor to reduce strain on your neck, shoulders, and back.
- ✓ **Stay Hydrated:** Keep a water bottle on your desk and stay hydrated throughout the day. Proper hydration supports cognitive function, helps prevent fatigue, and contributes to overall health.
- ✓ **Mindful Eating Habits:** Be mindful of your eating habits at your desk. Opt for nutrient-dense snacks and take time away from your screen to enjoy a balanced lunch. This promotes healthy digestion and avoids mindless snacking.

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- ✓ **Pest Awareness:** Check for and clear out standing water to reduce mosquito breeding grounds on school property. Watch out for ticks and stinging insects during campus cleanups.

Clothing & Gear:

- ✓ **Minimize exposure:** Dress in lightweight, light-colored long sleeves and long pants. Light colors make it easier to spot ticks.
- ✓ **Seal the gaps:** Tuck pants into socks and shirts into pants to block ticks and biting insects. Avoid open-toed shoes in grassy or wooded areas.
- ✓ **Avoid attractants:** Do not use fragranced soaps, lotions, or hairsprays, as flowery scents attract bugs.

Preparedness & Emergency Protocols:

- ✓ **Recognize Warning Signs:** Train staff to identify symptoms of heat exhaustion (dizziness, nausea, heavy sweating) and the life-threatening signs of heat stroke (confusion, lack of sweating, hot/dry skin). Call 911 immediately for suspected heat stroke.
- ✓ **Review District Policies:** Familiarize yourself with updated district-wide heat protocols, outdoor activity thresholds, and [Cal/OSHA Heat Illness Prevention Guidelines and Resources](#).

SNAKE SAFETY



Precautions and First Aid Recommendations

Most bites occur between April and October, when snakes and humans are most active outdoors. About 25 percent of bites are “dry,” meaning no venom was injected, but they still require medical treatment.

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- ✓ **Eye Care:** Practice the 20-20-20 rule to reduce eye strain. Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds. Additionally, ensure your screen is at eye level to prevent neck strain.
- ✓ **Desk Exercises:** Incorporate discreet desk exercises to strengthen muscles and improve flexibility. Seated leg lifts, desk push-ups, and seated torso twists are examples of exercises that can be done discreetly at your desk.
- ✓ **Mindfulness and Stress Reduction:** Integrate mindfulness practices into your work routine. Short meditation sessions or deep-breathing exercises can help manage stress and enhance focus.
- ✓ **Take Advantage of Breaks:** Utilize lunch and coffee breaks effectively. Step outside for fresh air, go for a short walk, or engage in a quick stretching routine to recharge both physically and mentally.
- ✓ **Proper Screen Ergonomics:** Adjust the brightness, contrast, and font size on your screen to reduce eye strain. Consider using anti-glare screens, and position your monitor at a comfortable distance to avoid unnecessary strain.
- ✓ **Prioritize Mental Health:** Establish boundaries to prevent burnout. Set realistic goals, prioritize tasks, and communicate effectively to manage work-related stress. If needed, seek support from colleagues or a mental health professional.

Depending on weather and other threatening conditions, such as wildfires, rattlesnakes may roam at any time of day or night.

To avoid rattlesnake bites, some safety precautions will help:

- ✓ Avoid approaching any snake.
- ✓ If snakes are common in the area, posting warning signs will help notify individuals of the potential presence of snakes.
- ✓ Wear appropriate over-the-ankle shoes/boots; never go barefoot or wear sandals when walking through wild areas.
- ✓ Stick to well-used pathways if possible.
- ✓ Avoid tall grass, weeds, and heavy underbrush where snakes may hide during the day.
- ✓ Look at your feet to watch where you step.
- ✓ Do not step or put your hands where you cannot see.
- ✓ If a fallen tree or large rock is in your path, step up onto it instead of over it, as there might be a snake on the other side.
- ✓ Check out stumps, logs, or outdoor seating before sitting down.
- ✓ Do not turn over rocks or logs. If you must move a rock or log, use gloves and roll it toward you, giving anything beneath it the opportunity to escape in the opposite direction.
- ✓ If you hear the warning rattle, move away from the area and do not make sudden or threatening movements in the direction of the snake.
- ✓ Remember, rattlesnakes do not always rattle before they strike!
- ✓ Do not handle a freshly killed snake - it can still inject venom.
- ✓ Be on the lookout for snakes when children are playing outdoors. Remind them to watch where they step and reach, in case snakes live in the area.
- ✓ Teach kids not to approach any snakes in the wild and how to identify the snakes that may be more common in their city/area.

Symptoms of a Rattlesnake Bite

- ✓ Rattlesnakes may bite without injecting venom, called a "dry bite," but the painful bite can still get infected.
- ✓ Some bites may prevent blood from clotting properly, and others (from the Mojave rattlesnake) can affect the nervous system, leading to paralysis.

Bus Driving Ergonomics



Driving a bus for long periods of time or even for short spurts all day can be hard on the body. This obviously comes on top of other difficult tasks such as controlling activities on the bus and constantly opening and shutting the doors as well as checking and securing surroundings at each stop. There are several things that can be done to lessen the risk for injury.

Seat Positioning:

- ✓ Take time to get familiar with seat adjustments and ensure they are positioned correctly.
- ✓ Adjust the seat until there is a comfortable reach to the pedals and steering wheel; arms should be at a slight angle.
- ✓ Ensure knees are not in higher alignment than hips.
- ✓ The driver's entire back should be able to comfortably rest against the seat for support.
- ✓ The front of the seat should not press into the back of the knee.
- ✓ Thighs should be completely supported by the seat.
- ✓ Ensure the seat and the suspension beneath are in good condition.
- ✓ Provide lumbar support either through the chair controls or with an additional cushion.

Tips for Driving Comfortably:

- ✓ Make slight changes in hand positioning often and be mindful that grip is not too tight.

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- ✓ If a rattlesnake injects venom into the wound, a variety of symptoms develop, including swelling, pain, bleeding at the site, nausea, vomiting, sweating, chills, dizziness, weakness, numbness or tingling of the mouth or tongue, changes in the heart rate and blood pressure, excessive salivation, thirst, swollen eyelids, blurred vision, muscle spasms, and unconsciousness.

First Aid (If bitten by a rattlesnake)

DO:

- ✓ Stay calm
- ✓ Call office/dispatch via radio or 911
- ✓ Wash the bite area gently with soap and water if available
- ✓ Remove watches, rings, etc., which can constrict swelling
- ✓ Immobilize the affected area
- ✓ Keep the bite below the heart if possible
- ✓ Transport safely to the nearest medical facility immediately

DO NOT:

- ✓ Do not make incisions over the bite wound
- ✓ Do not restrict blood flow by applying a tourniquet
- ✓ Do not ice the wound
- ✓ Do not suck the poison out with your mouth

These DO NOT methods can very well cause additional harm.

End-of-Year School Safety Checklist



As the school year winds down and the promise of summer break fills the air, rushing through those final classroom tasks is easy.

However, taking a few extra moments to prioritize safety during your end-of-year breakdown can significantly reduce

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- ✓ Make minor adjustments in the sitting position every 30 minutes to relieve pressure to any one area for additional support.
- ✓ If needed add an extra pad or cushion for additional support.
- ✓ Adjust mirrors to avoid leaning to see.
- ✓ Have all regularly used items within direct reach before departing.

After the drive:

- ✓ Take care to exit the vehicle safely using the provided grab bars and steps.
- ✓ Give the body time to adjust once the trip is complete; get out, walk around, stretch and loosen up.

Maintaining District Contacts



Communicating with our member districts is a top priority for the Tuolumne JPA. Communicating items such as coverage summary memos; Memorandums of Coverage (MOC); insurance and school industry updates and memos; and information of training opportunities are types of information important to share with our members. In that effort, we strive to maintain current contact information for our district administrative contacts. If you have changes in administrative staffing, e-mail addresses, phone numbers or mailing addresses for your district, please e-mail Jean Wolfgang, at jwolgang@tcsos.us

The material in this newsletter should be part of your Injury & Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP).

the risk of injuries and ensure a healthy and happy start to your well-deserved time off. Utilize this checklist to keep yourself safe:

Moving and Lifting:

- ✓ Avoid the risk of back strains and other musculoskeletal injuries by teaming up with a co-worker. Coordinate your movements and lift with your legs, not your back.
- ✓ Navigate stairs with caution. When carrying items on stairs, always use the handrail. Ensure your vision is not obstructed by what you are carrying. Take your time and maintain a secure footing to prevent falls.
- ✓ Elevate heavy loads safely. If your school provides an elevator, utilize it to transport bulky or heavy items between floors. This simple step can significantly reduce the strain on your body and prevent potential injuries.

Reaching new heights safely:

- ✓ Use proper equipment for elevated tasks. When reaching for items on high shelves or taking down decorations, always use a stable footstool or ladder. Never stand on chairs, desks, or makeshift supports. Remember the three-point contact rule – keep two feet and one hand in contact with the ladder to maintain balance and prevent falls.

Maintaining a safe environment:

- ✓ Keep emergency exits clear. Before locking up for the summer, conduct a thorough check to ensure all fire exits, fire extinguishers, and alarm pull stations are completely clear, unobstructed, and easily accessible. This is vital for the safety of anyone who may need to access the building.
- ✓ Dispose of waste safely. Never use your hands or feet to compress garbage in trash cans. This practice can lead to cuts, punctures, and exposure to potentially harmful substances. Utilize appropriate trash bags and ensure they are properly tied and disposed of.

By consciously incorporating these safety measures into your end-of-year routine, you are not just tidying your classroom but actively mitigating risks and safeguarding your well-being. A few extra moments of attention now can translate to a summer free from preventable injuries.

Thank you for your incredible dedication throughout the school year. We wish you a happy, healthy, and safe summer break!