

# Safety Newsletter

A quarterly publication for injury and illness prevention

Fall 2023



## Ergonomics for Teachers and Paraprofessionals



### Teaching and Working with Students

**Posture**-Be aware of your posture! Good posture maintains the natural curve of your spine.

**Alternate**-Alternate between sitting and standing when possible.

**Support**-Lean when and where you can on a solid support to reduce fatigue when standing for prolonged periods.

**Devices**-Use assistive devices such as a podium or standing height desk for reading books/documents to class.

**Seating**-Use an adult-sized chair which properly supports your back and legs whenever possible as opposed to using furniture designed for small children.

**Avoid**-Avoid awkward postures, such as:

—Bending over a child's desk to help them. Use a portable stool or pull up a chair to sit beside the student instead of bending, squatting, or kneeling for prolonged periods of time.

## Custodial Safety



Custodians who provide services in schools face a variety of tasks and associated hazards. It is important to be prepared with formal instruction and training. Below are helpful safety tips for custodians.

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Clothing

Wear comfortable, slip-resistant shoes to avoid slips and falls, along with long-sleeved shirts and long pants to protect your skin. Put on chemical-resistant gloves and splash goggles when pouring, mixing, and using chemicals. Use work gloves to protect your hands when you do odd jobs. Use safety glasses to protect your eyes from debris and dust.

### Caution with Chemicals

Read the Safety Data Sheets of chemicals used to clean, disinfect, and strip surfaces. Chemicals are often concentrated, so knowing and using the proper mix ratio is critical. Stay in well-ventilated areas and never mix chemicals unless instructed by the manufacturer. Always take extra caution around hot water to avoid burns.

### Equipment

Hand trucks, rolling buckets, and housekeeping carts help move heavy loads and keep supplies nearby. Make sure to keep them in good condition with easy-rolling wheels. When moving, keep the load in front of you and lean in the direction you are going. Always push the load; pulling can lead to strains and injuries. Watch for people, obstacles, slopes, and drop-offs in your path. Remember, when working at heights, to practice ladder safety.

—Overreaching or stretching above shoulder level to write on and clean white boards. Instead position yourself directly in front of the area you are working on, stepping sideways as needed.

### ORGANIZING CUPBOARDS/ SUPPLY ROOMS

- Store lighter items on top shelves.
- Avoid lifting/stacking heavy items above shoulder height whenever possible.

### LIFTING/CARRYING BOOKS AND OTHER ITEMS



Carrying heavy books and other supplies to and from your room can take a toll on your shoulders and back.

- Use a backpack which distributes the weight equally to both shoulders rather than bags which put all the weight onto one shoulder.
- A rolling bag, tote, or small cart can also be used.
- Make a habit of asking for help when lifting students, heavy objects or moving equipment.
- Always use good body mechanics, especially when lifting or helping a student up off the ground.

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

## Facility Reviews

SISC will begin conducting the 2023-2024 Facility Reviews. This will be a Full Facility Inspection. Some safety items to check before your inspection:

- ✓ Bookcases, storage cabinets and file cabinets more than 3 feet in height should either be arranged in groups and fastened together or properly secured to an adjacent wall in order to prevent overturning.
- ✓ Materials stored overhead. California Fire Code, Title 24, Part 9, 315.3.1 requires storage maintain 24 inches of clearance along walls in non-sprinklered areas and 18 inches in a building equipped with automatic sprinklers. Storing heavy items on top of cabinets is considered an unsafe practice. Items should be removed, restrained or secured.
- ✓ Cleaning products/other chemicals. These items should be removed and stored in an area inaccessible to students. District should establish a list of district approved products. Streamlining products eases compliance with Hazardous Material Communications Plan; maintenance of Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) / Safety Data Sheet (SDS); and the Healthy Schools Act, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan.
- ✓ Playgrounds:
  - The surfacing material within the use zone of all play structures requires frequent maintenance to ensure surfacing levels never drop below the minimum recommended depth of 9 inches.
  - Equipment that is deteriorated and/or cracked should be repaired or replaced.

## Great ShakeOut Earthquake Drills

International ShakeOut Day is always the third Thursday of October (this year: October 19).

[NEW! Powerpoints for leading ShakeOut Drills \(Online or In-Person\)](#)

For Grades K-4, Grades 5-12, Higher Education, and all other Organizations

[Drill Planning Resources](#) basic instructions for how K-12 schools, districts, county offices and related organizations can plan their drill

### ShakeOut.org/schools

- Drill planning resources
- General preparedness and mitigation guidance
- Lesson plans and other educational activities



\*Information from The Great California Shakeout