

Safety Articles

Theft – Securing Valuables

Case history: A laptop computer was stolen out of a church office when the staff was out to lunch. An investigation revealed the office was unlocked.

Case history: A lawnmower and weedwacker were stolen from a storage shed. An investigation revealed the shed was not locked the night before when the equipment was put back into the shed.

Click below for a quick checklist to consider when securing valuables.

- Yes No Are buildings kept locked when unoccupied?
- Yes No Are keys to the building marked “Do Not Copy?”
- Yes No Are the keys or access cards given out in limited numbers?
- Yes No Is a record kept of individuals who have a key or access card?
- Yes No Are personnel assigned to check windows, doors and storage sheds for security before leaving the building at the end of the day?

Kitchen Safety

Case history: A member of the kitchen staff sustained a serious compound fracture of her leg when she fell on a wet floor. Just prior to this incident, another member of the kitchen staff had mopped up a spill, but failed to notify the others.

Click below for a quick checklist for kitchen safety items to consider.

- Yes No Are “Caution – Wet Floor” signs used when maintaining floors or after cleaning up a spill?
- Yes No Are rubber mats used in areas where water and grease are present?
- Yes No Is there an easy exit from the kitchen to the outside of the building?
- Yes No Is the kitchen exit located away from the potential source of fire?
- Yes No Is the kitchen area, including appliances, walls, floors, etc. free of grease accumulation?
- Yes No Is the kitchen fire extinguisher mounted on a wall near an outside exit?
- Yes No Is the fire extinguisher a Type-K?
- Yes No Are proper waste containers used for waste food accumulation?
- Yes No Are the hood, filters and exhaust duct cleaned on a regular basis?

Playground Equipment Safety

Case history: A youth broke his arm when he fell from a piece of playground equipment. An investigation revealed there was no protective surfacing under the equipment.

Case history: A youth fell when an “S” hook separated from the chain and swing.

Click below for a quick checklist to help with playground equipment safety issues.

- Yes No Do surfaces around playground equipment have at least 12 inches of wood chips; mulch, sand or pea gravel, or are mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials?
- Yes No Does protective surfacing extend at least 6 feet in all directions from play equipment? For swings, surfacing should extend twice the height of the suspending bar in back and front.
- Yes No Is all equipment securely anchored?
- Yes No Is there dangerous hardware, such as open “S” hooks or protruding bolt ends?
- Yes No Do all elevated surfaces such as platforms and ramps, have guardrails to prevent falls?
- Yes No Are there tripping hazards such as exposed concrete footings, tree stumps and rocks?
- Yes No Are playgrounds checked regularly to see that equipment and surfacing are in good condition?

Wagon and Sleigh Ride Safety

Case history: A boy, age nine, was killed during a hayride when fell from a wagon without side rails landing under the wheels of a trailing wagon.

Click below for a quick checklist to consider when planning a wagon or sleigh ride.

- Yes No Does an experienced, qualified driver operate the vehicle?
- Yes No Are the side rails at least four feet high?
- Yes No Are the riders instructed to keep their arms, heads and legs within the wagon or sleigh?
- Yes No Is only one wagon or sleigh pulled per vehicle?
- Yes No Is there at least one adult supervisor on each wagon or sleigh?

Motor Vehicle Safety

Case history: On their way to an amusement park, five youths and a driver (20 years old) were killed when their 15-passenger van crashed into the rear of a slow-moving semi-trailer. The driver had only two hours sleep the night before the trip.

Click below for a quick checklist for motor vehicle safety items to consider.

- Yes No Do you require all persons who are used as drivers to be 25 years of age or older?
- Yes No Do you review all potential drivers' records for accidents and violations?
- Yes No Does your state require operators of buses or large vans to have a valid commercial driver's license?
- Yes No On long trips, do you have enough eligible drivers available to prevent fatigue?
- Yes No Do you allow employees or volunteers to drive their own vehicles for sponsored events or errands?
- Yes No If you answered yes above, do you verify that they have a valid driver's license and carry adequate limits of insurance?

Volunteer Workers

Volunteer workers are one of your greatest assets when used properly. Otherwise, they become a legal liability.

Case history: A worker who was painting from scaffolding, fell and hit his head. He lapsed into a coma. He was not provided with the proper safety harnesses.

Click below for a quick checklist to help with volunteer workers.

- Yes No Do you select a capable person not just "any" person for the task at hand?
- Yes No Do you hire a professional for dangerous or technically difficult jobs, such as plumbing, electrical or roofing?
- Yes No Do you provide adequate, well-maintained tools and equipment?
- Yes No Do you let volunteers know what is expected of them?
- Yes No Are you selective on who may work with children? (Background screening)

For more information about creating a safe environment, go to www.uaa.org/leaders/leaderslibrary and search for Ethics and Safety under Topic.