

School Summer Closings

PRIMEX³ RISK MANAGEMENT BULLETIN

It's time for school doors to close for the summer. So take advantage and do some deep cleaning, repair and maintenance of unoccupied buildings. But please keep in mind that this is also a time that presents a higher risk of theft, arson and vandalism.

The following are safety and maintenance hints to keep in mind as summer nears:

■ Building Access

Check with all teachers, teacher aides, school secretaries, coaches, and other personnel before they leave for the summer to ensure that all school keys are returned or access cards are deactivated. If any of the staff has legitimate reasons for keeping keys or access cards during the summer, keep a record of their names and the reasons for maintaining building access.

■ Money

Remove money from the school building. Minimal amounts of petty cash can be retained if needed in the summer. Keep petty cash in a locked safe and reconcile periodically.

■ Building Maintenance

Inspect all buildings and document the inspections. Correct any deficiencies found during inspections.

■ Appliances - Gas and Electric

Help reduce the possibility of fire or electrical damage by turning off gas. Close all gas valves, including pilot lights, and do not forget the ones in the science labs and welding classrooms. Unplug all electric appliances and equipment that will not be used during the summer (including computers).

■ Computers and A/V Equipment

Store moveable equipment out of the line-of-sight from exterior windows. Store all other equipment in a secure area, preferably in rooms without windows. If equipment cannot be moved, close curtains or blinds. Inventory the equipment and permanently mark the district's name on each piece of equipment. Backup important documents and store off-site.

Keep an accurate list of all equipment loaned to staff for the summer. Check TV/AV carts to ensure that TV sets are securely attached with either bolts or straps, and that the cart's wheel casters turn freely. If wheels are pneumatic be sure they are properly inflated. Summer is a good time to make a video inventory of the school's contents. Store these videos off-site for use in the event of a loss.

■ Fire Alarms and Sprinkler Systems

Plan for and schedule testing, inspection and maintenance of fire alarms and sprinkler systems. Have the district's fire extinguishers inspected, tested and maintained.



■ **Lighting - Interior and Exterior**

Check all lighting, inside and out. Replace lights and lighting equipment as needed. Periodically check night lighting to ensure it is properly functioning. Remember to include illuminated exit signs and emergency lighting (including battery packs) in your inspection and maintenance routine.

■ **Construction Renovation**

If renovation is planned, be sure to do a thorough inventory of all equipment, as well as supplies, prior to allowing contractors access to the building. Keep the inventory list in a secure place off-site. If people are going to use the building during renovation, make sure they are made aware that contractors are working, and that the contractors know other people are using the building.

■ **Athletic Equipment**

Remove and store any equipment from the fields and gymnasium in a locked room or cabinet (including portable soccer goals and volleyball stands). We do not recommend loaning district equipment to outside groups such as summer athletic camp participants or community members. If you decide to loan out your equipment, protect against potential liability by taking the following actions:

Ensure that safety/protective equipment is reconditioned (if needed) and inspected prior to loaning; document the condition of each piece of equipment to be loaned; have both the loaner (the district) and the borrower (the outside group) attest to the condition of each piece of equipment (with a date and signature) both before it is loaned out and upon its return; require the outside group to provide the district with a certificate of liability insurance and an endorsement naming the school district as an additional insured.

■ **Playground and Fields**

Inspect all playground equipment. Perform planned maintenance and repairs. Add additional protective surfacing. Maintain fields, fill holes, and water grass surfaces regularly — or as permitted — within watering restrictions. Remove pieces of equipment that have been the source of frequent injuries or that create unsafe conditions and cannot be repaired. Contact Risk Management Services for assistance or forms.

■ **Summer Use**

If district buildings, equipment and property are used during the summer, adequate supervision is still required, unless the district has entered into a contractual agreement where the group/user will provide their own supervision. Districts are still liable for summer activities in or on their premises and are responsible for inspections/maintenance. For example, school may not be in session, but playgrounds and athletic fields are still used. This use requires the district to provide regular maintenance to correct hazards.

For more information on this or any risk management-related material, please contact your Primex³ Risk Management Consultant at 800-698-2364 or email RiskManagement@nhprimex.org.