



Risk Management Matters



Preparation Pays Off

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From his position he noticed movement off in the distance. He got out his spotting scope and aimed it in the direction where he had observed the object moving across the field. Quickly he had his target in focus.

Sound like a Northwest hunting story? It does, but this time the "hunter" was a WISHA inspector and the "prey" was a school district employee. The story goes something like this.

Last September a school district employee was operating a 28 horsepower Kubota riding lawnmower to mow a new athletic field behind the high school. The WISHA inspector observed him from a distance and, using his spotting scope, noticed that the employee was not wearing the mower's seat belt. The inspector went down to the field, confirmed his suspicion that the employee was not wearing the seat belt, and spoke with the employee. The inspector asked to meet with a supervisor and was directed to the district office. The inspector arrived at the district office where he met with the district's safety officer. The inspector announced that he was going to open an investigation. He then told the safety officer what he had observed and explained why it was a violation of the state health and safety rules. The violation was classified as serious. The Washington Administrative Code (WAC) violated was 296-800-11035, and the assessed penalty was \$250.

It is interesting to note the cited standard does not specifically address the issue of wearing a seat belt while operating equipment. Instead the violation asserted that the employer failed to "establish, supervise, and enforce rules that lead to a safe and healthy work environment that are effective in practice." An employee has a responsibility to follow safe work practices, to comply with the employer's safety rules, and to wear required personal protective equipment; however, the employer has the ultimate responsibility of providing a workplace free from recognized hazards (WAC 296-800-11005).

The WISHA inspector then asked to visit the maintenance shop where one potential hazard was observed and two more violations were recorded. The potential hazard observed was an overloaded shop-built storage shelf. It was the inspector's opinion that the shelf was not constructed well enough to hold the weight of the items stored on it. The district agreed to remove the shelving and replace it with engineered shelving installed in accordance with the manufacturer's standards.

The next violation stated the employer did not ensure that the work area and storage area were kept in a clean, orderly condition as required by WAC 296-800-22005. Upon inspection, the maintenance shop was observed to be cluttered and disorganized to the extent that access to storage shelves was difficult without moving boxes or stepping over and around boxes and debris. The district corrected the violation at the time of the inspection and no monetary penalty was assessed.

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The last item violated WAC 296-800-28025(1). The employer did not ensure that each outlet box had a cover or faceplate. Upon inspection two electrical outlets and one junction box for an exhaust fan were observed that did not have the required covers or faceplates. Once again the district corrected these violations at the time of the inspection and no monetary penalty was assessed

After his visit to the maintenance shop, the inspector met again with the safety officer. At this time the inspector asked to see the district's written safety programs. The safety officer provided the inspector with a nicely organized binder that contained the district's Accident Prevention Program, the Hazard Communication Program, the Control of Hazardous Energy program as well as other required written programs. The inspector complimented the district with the completeness of its

documentation. The inspector then inspected the building's safety bulletin board where he found no deficiencies. All the required posters were in place. Lastly he interviewed some of the maintenance staff and asked them about safety training received and the district's overall safety program. Satisfied with their answers the inspector completed the inspection with a closing conference.

This story illustrates several important points. One, an inspection can happen at anytime and at any district. Two, it shows the need for periodic inspections of your facilities to identify hazards. Three, it also shows the importance of following general safety rules such as wearing your seat belt. Lastly it shows how being prepared, in this case by having the required written programs and posters in place and available, saved this district from possible further violations and monetary penalties. The inspector

upon seeing that those required elements of this employer's safety program were in place felt good enough to close the inspection. What would have happened if those written programs were not produced for his viewing? More than likely the inspector would have sharpened his pencil and continued on with a more extensive inspection.

This district had asked for assistance with its WISHA-required written programs just a couple of months before this inspection. A Loss Control Specialist from ESD 112 responded to that request and helped the district with its written programs compliance. If your district would like the same kind of assistance call Scott La Bar, Senior Loss Control Specialist at 360-750-7504.

Thanks to Castle Rock School District for sharing their story and congratulations for making safety a priority in your district.

Parking lot injuries, heart attacks, and stress – are these workers' compensation claims?

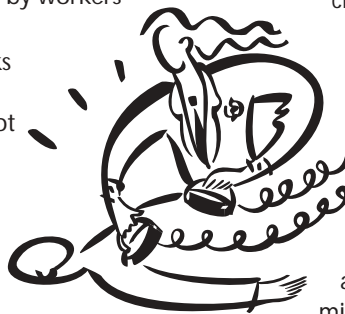
We often think of a workers' compensation injury claim as a traumatic event that occurs on the job, a repetitive type of injury, or exposure to chemicals. However, there are many elements to consider when determining if an employee has a valid workers' compensation claim. Following are some unique categories of claims often denied in Washington State.

When an employee is injured in a parking lot, whether coming to work or just getting something out of his/her car, that type of workers' compensation claim may not be allowable by law. Claims adjusters will investigate thoroughly by obtaining a detailed description of the injury, including why the employee was in the parking lot, and getting a parking lot diagram indicating where the

injury occurred. Perhaps this employee is a bus driver on his/her way to the bus garage, after having clocked in. Perhaps the employee is on his/her way to a meeting in another building. The specifics of the injury are important in determining whether the claim can be allowed. If an employee is injured while arriving at or leaving from work in a parking area used by the general public, the injury generally would not be covered by workers' compensation.

Heart attacks that occur on the job have not been allowed under workers' compensation laws except in very special circumstances.

An employee must be performing strenuous tasks, and the heart attack must have occurred as a result of that strenuous work. However, most heart attack claims are denied with supporting medical documentation that the



employee would have suffered a heart attack whether on the job or not.

Claims for mental stress can be allowed only if the condition was the result of a single, traumatic event. Bank employees may be exposed to extreme stress in the course of a robbery. An explosion or witness to a life-threatening event or death of a co-worker may be an allowable stress claim. Perceived harassment on the job, discipline, or inability to get along with a co-worker is not an allowable stress claim under Washington State workers' compensation law.

There are more gray areas in workers' compensation claims administration, but these are three that are often misunderstood. Please know that claims adjusters treat each claim individually and investigate it thoroughly to ensure that each injured employee receives the benefits they are entitled to under workers' compensation law.

Executive Committee Highlights

Southwest Washington Risk Management Insurance Cooperative

DECEMBER 13, 2005

Kevin Wick from PricewaterhouseCoopers explained the actuary report for FY 2004-2005.

Loy Dale and Kevin Wick discussed the option of purchasing re-insurance. Shaun Mettler reviewed with the committee the current administrative budget compared to actual expenditures for year to date as of Oct. 31, 2005. Jim Rochel gave an overview of current open claims as of Nov. 30, 2005. Peggy Sandberg gave an overview of the 2005-2006 loss control focus of cyber safety. The committee ratified the 2004-2005 financial statements. The next meeting date is set for Mar. 28, 2006.

Southwest Washington Workers' Compensation Trust

JANUARY 13, 2006

Loy Dale explained the PricewaterhouseCoopers actuary report for FY 2004-2005. The committee ratified the 2004-2005 financial statements. Shaun Mettler reviewed with the committee the current administrative budget compared to actual expenditures for year to date as of Nov. 30, 2005. The next meeting date should be held during the last week of March 2006.

GETTING A GRIP ON SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

Maybe it's a slick surface. A tool left on the floor. A ladder with a broken step.

Falls account for more than 400,000 workplace injuries each year. In the majority of these the worker slipped, tripped or fell right on the same level where they were walking.

Slips and falls are the cause of 20% of all SW Washington school district employee injuries. Slips can result in head or back injuries, lacerations, fractures, pulled muscles and deep contusions.

SLIPS

Loss of traction causes most slips. Most trips happen when feet encounter something that shouldn't be on the floor.

TO PREVENT SLIPS:

- Clean up spilled liquids or tracked-in water immediately.

- Wear slip-resistant shoes when wet surfaces are likely.
- When walking, keep your center of balance under you.
- Take smaller steps and make wider turns.
- Fix leaky equipment and use drip pans to catch ongoing leaks.
- Mark or barricade slick areas until they are cleaned up. Warn your co-workers by posting signs and giving verbal warnings about spills or other flooring problems.
- Wipe your feet on entrance mats when it is raining, snowy, icy or muddy outside.
- Walk carefully on waxed floors.
- Be aware of where spills are most

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Just Who is Sponsoring Those Summer Sports Camps?

Summer athletic camps, for both middle school and high school students, are offered in a variety of sports including football, basketball, baseball, cheerleading and softball. When a coach proposes a summer sports camp or clinic, one of the questions that must be asked early in the process is whether it will be a school district sponsored summer camp or be sponsored by another organization or an individual. Defining that up front clarifies who will be in control of the activity, and potentially liable in the event of an injury.

SCHOOL DISTRICT SPONSORED SPORTS CAMPS

If the district's coach is operating the camp through Community Education or through the district with the approval of the school board, he/she as an agent of the district enjoys liability coverage provided through the school district. In order for this to be a school district sponsored event, all money charged for the camp would have to either go through the ASB or to the district directly. The district would be responsible for supervising the camp. As with other school district athletic events, the Athletic Director must ensure that the district's policies and procedures and WIAA rules (including those addressing summer sports camps and clinics – see *WIAA Handbook*, Rules 17.6 & 17.7) are observed and followed. Require signed parent permission and informed consent forms, proof of medical insurance, and up-to-date medical clearance.

NON-SCHOOL DISTRICT SPONSORED SPORTS CAMPS

If a district coach operates his/her own camp during the summer without the approval of the school board, his/

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her activities are to be treated as the district would treat any other outside user requesting to use school district facilities. The coach may be an independent contractor, or be hired as a paid employee of another legal entity. He/she would not be covered by the school district's general liability coverage; he/she should provide proof of at least \$1,000,000 in liability insurance coverage naming the district as an Additional Named Insured on the policy. (Some professional organizations offer this liability insurance.) He/she would be subject to the same rules that any other facility user would be subject to, and the activity would have to fit within the scope of the district's policies on facility use.

However, a summer camp may *appear* to be school-sponsored if the school is not diligent to make sure that it is clearly designated as school-sponsored or not. Three steps to help clarify school sponsorship include the following:

- Ask the sponsor to include a statement that "this is not a school-sponsored event" on information connected with non-school sponsored activities that is distributed to students.
- Do not allow use of any district equipment (copiers or telephones) or district supplies (letterhead, postage, etc.) to advertise a non-school sponsored event.
- Ensure that staff who may attend the event know that it is not school-sponsored.

Keep in mind WIAA's philosophy of summer activities: "Students may be afforded the opportunity to participate in activities during the summer if they so choose. Students should also be provided with an opportunity to participate with their families during the summer or simply take a break from sports prior to the start of fall sports turnouts. Limiting participation during the month of August for fall sports athletes helps to ensure that all students begin the fall sports season on an equal basis."

Cyber Safety

a Loss Control Focus This Year

Increasingly, our youngsters are becoming more vulnerable to sexual predators on the Internet. According to a Youth Internet Safety Survey, 14-17 year olds were the most likely to receive sexual solicitations online, which over 77% of them report that they have. Teenagers are the most vulnerable to be solicited and exploited on-line.

"The Internet has had a tremendous impact in our lives. But as it continues to evolve, both kids and adults must keep learning new ways to protect themselves from online predators," said Terry Bergeson. "While it is a wonderful resource, it can present potential dangers and we hope by providing these resources that we can protect and empower both parents and teenagers to take the necessary precautions to be safe."

In mid-December 2005, OSPI distributed a brochure on Internet safety to all junior high and middle schools in Washington. This brochure, "Cyber Safety: Tips for Safe Surfing, A Guide for Parents and Students," provides tips to both parents and students on keeping safe online. (Copy enclosed with this newsletter.) Electronic copies of this brochure can be obtained online at [http://](http://www.k12.wa.us/SafetyCenter/pubdocs/InternetSafety.pdf)

www.k12.wa.us/SafetyCenter/pubdocs/InternetSafety.pdf; hard copies are available from Peggy Sandberg at ESD 112.

The Executive Committee of the Southwest Washington Risk Management Insurance Cooperative also identified Cyber Safety as this year's loss control focus. Loss control staff plan to assist school districts in Cyber Safety with a five-part strategy:

1. Establishing best practices for electronic screening in schools
2. Educating school administrators on the issues and options
3. Training students in Cyber Safety (offering the iSafe curriculum)
4. Educating parents in Cyber Safety (including offering evening regional training in Cyber Safety for parents conducted by law enforcement)
5. Keeping schools current with new Cyber Safety issues and developments

More detailed information is forthcoming. In the meantime, if you have questions or would like more information, please contact Peggy Sandberg, Director of Risk Management, at (360) 750-7504.



Ten ways to maintain a healthy back

We don't think very much about our backs — that is, until they start to hurt. And many of us are hurting, as back pain is now one of the most common medical complaints in the United States. The good news is that, in many cases, back pain can be prevented. Here are the American Council on Exercise's top 10 ways to maintain a healthy back.

1. *Maintain a healthy weight.* Excess weight tends to creep up slowly, so we may not be aware of how it affects us. But try carrying a 20-pound pack on your back all day and you'll have a better idea of how extra weight takes a toll on the whole body.

2. *Strengthen the abdominal and back muscles.* You've heard it before, but strengthening the abdominals really does help protect the back. In fact, a strong core — which includes all the muscles of the trunk — is important for avoiding injury, whether you're cleaning your house, playing tennis or sitting at a desk all day.

3. *Lift items properly.* Protect your back when lifting anything by standing close to the object with your feet apart to give you a stable base. Squat down while keeping the spine in proper alignment and contract your abdominals as you lift using your legs.

4. *Strengthen the leg muscles.* Along with the core muscles, the leg muscles play a vital role in helping you maintain good posture and body mechanics. And strong leg muscles can take much of the burden off the back when you're lifting heavy items (see above).

5. *Stay flexible.* Inflexibility in the form of tight hamstrings and a limited range of motion in the trunk can increase your risk of injury or make existing back pain worse. Some forms of exercise, such as yoga, Pilates and tai

chi, may help relieve or prevent back pain by increasing flexibility and reducing tension. These exercises should not be done, however, if they are uncomfortable or place a strain on the back.

6. *Maintain good posture.* Correct posture and body mechanics play a vital role in preventing back pain because pressure on the discs and strain of the muscles, ligaments and back joints is aggravated by incorrect posture and body mechanics. When your posture is good and you move your body correctly, you reduce the strain on your back.

7. *Buy a comfortable mattress.* Most of us spend a good deal of time in bed, which is why a good mattress is such a wise investment. Do some research, test the mattress out at the store and ask for recommendations. Remember—what works for one person may not work for you so take the time to find the mattress that suits your needs.

8. *Reduce stress.* Stress increases tension in all your muscles including your back. Reduce or better manage your stress and you may literally feel as if the weight has been lifted from your shoulders.

9. *Warm up before activity.* Beginning any activity with cold muscles and joints puts you at risk for injury. Jumping right into intense activity increases your risk of injury, so take the time to get your muscles and joints warm and limber first.

10. *Support the lower back when sitting.* Use a rolled towel, small pillow or specially designed seat support available at medical supply stores. Remove the support every half hour for five minutes to give your lower back a change of position. After sitting for a prolonged period, straighten your back to an upright position and, if possible, stand and walk around to give your back a break.

For more information on health and fitness, visit the American Council on Exercise website at: <http://www.acefitness.org/>.

Effective Safety Training



Employee safety training is mandated by WISHA, so it must be done. But more than just fulfilling a requirement, safety training can be a means of encouraging safe behavior and thereby reducing employee injuries. But safety training has a reputation for being just plain boring. So, how can a supervisor make this training effective? Here are a few suggestions:

1. *Effective safety training is organized and interesting.*

Good training begins with a goal in mind. Preparation is essential to a good presentation, and organization is evidence of the preparation. Specify the objectives, and let participants know what they will get out of the training.

Someone has said that relevance, credibility, and humor are the keys to effective training. Use entertainment in small doses so the importance of the training is not diminished. When you use humor, use the kind of humor that suits your personality (and doesn't offend).

2. *Effective safety training allows adult learners to participate.*

There is often so much content to cover in safety training that the presentation is a "talking head" format, the least effective way to teach. Focus on passing on a few key points, and make time for learners to

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*Effective Safety Training
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talk to each other. You may want to assign specific parts of topics to more experienced participants to present, so peers are listening to each other.

Varying the method of presentation can help a presentation if there is a reason to do so. Actually putting on a harness and connecting it as part of fall protection training is an effective teaching method.

3. *Effective safety training uses “war stories” to illustrate the why of the requirement.*

Hearing the story of someone who was injured *not* following a safety rule or practice often makes more of an impact than all the related statistics. Tasteful “war stories” can’t be the meat of the presentation, but they are very effective in making a point.

4. *Effective safety training requires the presenter to “walk the talk.”*

Not only does the trainer need to know the subject matter and how it applies to the attendees at work, but she/he also needs to model safe behavior. Employees can’t connect with the credibility of the speaker and what she/he is saying if the speaker doesn’t follow the safety rules.

5. *Effective safety training sets a standard of behavior with consequences for not following that standard.*

It has been said that “people don’t change because they see the light – they change because they feel the heat.” As part of the overall safety program, there needs to be consequences for not following the safety rules – and employees need to know what these consequences are. Couple that with recognition when the rules are followed, especially when it is difficult or unpopular to do so. Try to make it a team effort to be successful.

Safety training doesn’t have to be boring, if we’ll take the time and make the effort to make it interesting and relevant.

The Buzz About Bee Stings



Spring is in the air, and soon that air could be abuzz with swarms of biting, stinging insects.

Most bees and insects will not attack if left alone. If provoked, a bee will sting in defense of its nest or itself. Thousands of people are stung each year and as many as 40 to 50 people in the United States die each year as a result of allergic reactions.

HOW TO REDUCE THE RISK OF BEING STUNG

1. Wear light-colored, smooth-finished clothing.
2. Avoid perfumed soaps, shampoos, deodorants. Don’t wear cologne or perfume. Avoid bananas and banana-scented toiletries.
3. Wear clean clothing and bathe daily. Sweat angers bees.
4. Cover the body as much as possible with clothing.
5. Avoid flowering plants.
6. Check for new nests during the warmer hours of the day during July, August and September. Bees are very active then.
7. Keep areas clean. Social wasps thrive in places where humans discard food, so clean up picnic tables, grills and other outdoor eating areas.
8. If a single stinging insect is flying around, remain still or lie face down on the ground. The face is the most likely place for a bee or wasp to sting. Swinging or swatting at an insect may cause it to sting.
9. If you are attacked by several stinging insects at the same time, run to get away from them. Bees release a chemical when they sting. This alerts other bees to the intruder. More bees often follow. Go indoors or jump into water. Outdoors, a shaded area is better than an open area to get away

from the insects.

10. If a bee comes inside your vehicle, stop the car slowly, and open all the windows.

WHAT TO DO IF A PERSON IS STUNG

1. Have someone stay with the victim to be sure that they do not have an allergic reaction.
2. Wash the site with soap and water.
3. The stinger can be removed using a four x four inch gauze wiped over the area or by scraping a fingernail over the area. Never squeeze the stinger or use tweezers. It will cause more venom to go into the skin and injure the muscle.
4. Apply ice to reduce the swelling.
5. Do not scratch the sting. This will cause the site to swell and itch more, and increase the chance of infection.

ALLERGIC REACTIONS TO BEE STINGS

Allergic reactions to bee stings can be deadly. People with known allergies to insect stings should always carry an insect sting allergy kit and wear a medical ID bracelet or necklace stating their allergy. See a physician about getting either of these.

There are several signs of an allergic reaction to bee stings. Look for swelling that moves to other parts of the body, especially the face or neck. Check for difficulty in breathing, wheezing, dizziness or a drop in blood pressure. Get the person immediate medical care if any of these signs are present. It is normal for the area that has been stung to hurt, have a hard swollen lump, get red and itch. There are kits available to reduce the pain of an insect sting. They are a valuable addition to a first aid kit.



CHEERLEADING SAFETY – Minimizing the Risks

In high school sports, the physical demands of competition and practice contribute to the risk of injuries to student athletes. Cheerleading has become a competitive sport. In this era, cheerleading has evolved into an activity involving higher levels of gymnastics skill and athleticism.

Coaches and school districts play a key role in minimizing the amount of risk student athletes will encounter in the course of their sport season. This article will discuss cheerleading injuries that occur and preventive measures that school districts can take to minimize those injuries.

A study published in the January 2006 issue of the journal *Pediatrics* estimates 208,800 young people ages 5 to 18 were treated at U.S. hospital emergency departments for cheerleading related injuries during the 13 year period of 1990-2002. Most (85%) of the injuries were suffered by 12 to 17 year olds. Of these injuries, over 37 percent were injuries to the lower extremities (foot, ankle and leg). Upper extremity (26.4%), head/neck (18.8%) and trunk (16.8%) accounted for most of the remainder of injuries. Injury diagnoses were strain/sprains (52.4%), soft tissue injuries (18.4%), fractures/dislocations (16.4%), lacerations (3.8%), concussions/closed head injuries (3.5%), and other (5.5%). The majority (61.9%) of the cheerleading-related injuries occurred at school.

According to the researchers, the increase in the number of injuries has occurred in response to the change from previous cheerleading styles to more gymnastic-type cheerleading styles. Also, cheerleading differs from many other sports because it is a year-round activity. Although other sports may involve a greater risk of injury, cheerleading-related injuries tend to

result in greater amounts of time lost because cheerleading requires the use of all the extremities.

The factors contributing to the safety of cheerleaders include the experience levels of cheerleaders, coaches, and spotters; the conditioning of the cheerleaders; the types of maneuvers being performed; the type of surface on which the cheerleaders practice and perform; the appropriate use of properly trained spotters; and the supervision present during practice sessions and performances.

The American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Advisors (AACCA) offer the following general guidelines for cheerleading safety:

1. Cheerleading squads should be placed under the direction of a qualified and knowledgeable advisor or coach.
2. All practice sessions should be supervised by the coach and held in a location suitable for the activities of cheerleaders (i.e., use of appropriate mats, away from excessive noise and distractions, etc.).
3. Advisors/coaches should recognize a squad's particular ability level and should limit the squad's activities accordingly. "Ability level" refers to the squad's talents as a whole and individuals should not be pressed to perform activities until safely perfected.
4. All cheerleaders should receive proper training before attempting any form of cheerleading gymnastics (tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids and jumps).
5. Professional training in proper spotting techniques should be mandatory for all squads.
6. All cheerleading squads should adopt a comprehensive conditioning and strength building program.
7. All jewelry is prohibited during participation.
8. A structured stretching exercise and flexibility routine should

precede and follow all practice sessions, game activities, pep rallies, etc.

9. Tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids and jumps should be limited to appropriate surfaces.
10. As a general rule, all programs should qualify cheerleaders according to accepted teaching progressions. Appropriate spotting should be used until all performers demonstrate mastery of the skill.

The AACCA suggests that copies of these guidelines be distributed to all squad members and any administrators involved with the cheerleading program. All guidelines should be understood and accepted by all parties involved in the cheerleading program including advisors, coaches, assistants, squad members, parents, and administrators.

There are three groups responsible for safety in school cheerleading. The groups are the cheerleaders themselves, the coaches and the administration. It may be noted that often the coach and the administrator are the same person.

The mental and physical well-being of the cheerleaders is of primary importance. A goal of any safety program should be to ensure that cheerleaders are fully aware of their responsibility for safety. Participants must be constantly reminded that they share a role for safe and controlled execution of their cheerleading activities.

The coach should be an active participant in the daily process of the cheerleading program and the primary implementer of safety training and awareness. The coach should be technically trained to instruct, supervise, and evaluate performance.

The administrator or advisor should set clear expectations and limitations for the program. Administration should evaluate the competency of the coach, assure that adequate safety procedures are implemented and provide the

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Cheerleading
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necessary equipment, space and support to meet the program's goals.

The AACCA provides this list to determine if your school is doing what is necessary to minimize the risk to participants and provide a productive activity to the student athlete:

KNOWLEDGEABLE COACH

- Attends training camps with team
- Participates in local, state or national coaches' conferences
- Completes a Safety Certification Course

APPROPRIATE PRACTICE FACILITIES

- Adequate matting
- Adequate space
- Adequate height
- Safety procedures
- Written emergency plan
- Access to Athletic Trainers
- Staff member certified in CPR/First Aid

TRAVEL

- Cheerleading coach should be aware of and follow school travel policies for safety and proper insurance coverage

LEGAL ISSUES

- Pre-participation physicals should be required in accordance with policies on all student athletes

- All forms should be completed for each participant
- Medical release
- Informed consent/liability waiver
- Insurance information
- Parental contact information

Similar to any school sport activity, cheerleading deserves to have preventive measures in place to prevent and minimize injuries to the cheerleaders. It is essential that everyone involved understand as well as appreciate the inherent risks associated with cheerleading and develop a positive attitude toward safety that is then translated into a consistent routine of safe practices. The true measure of a successful program is determined by the degree to which the responsibility for safety is shared by all.

Further information on cheerleading safety can be found at the following websites:

- Washington State Cheerleading Coaches Association, www.wscca.com
- American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Advisors, www.aacca.org
- www.cheerleadingsafety.com
- The National Council for Spirit Safety and Education www.spiritsafety.com.

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Slips, Trips, and Falls
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likely to occur: hallways leading to outside doors; maintenance areas; restrooms; lunchrooms; lounges and waiting rooms; facilities where water is in use.

- Prevent spills by covering all liquids. If a container, such as a pail, can't be covered, don't fill it to the top.
- Mats may provide a way to reduce slip hazards when keeping the floor dry is difficult, such as in the kitchen area or at building entrance and exit areas where there can be constant traffic of wet shoes from rain or snow. Be careful- mats can become tripping hazards themselves. Use mats with beveled, colored borders that alert persons that they are approaching a different floor surface or level of flooring.

TRIPS

Most trips also happen when feet encounter something that shouldn't be on the floor.

TO AVOID TRIPS:

- Watch where you are going.
- Keep pathways and work areas clean.
- Sweep up loose debris. Put trash in the trash bins.
- Properly store tools that aren't in use.
- Inspect flooring surfaces for holes, chips or other trip hazards and make necessary repairs.
- Report to maintenance any loose or missing tiles, warped or cracked flooring, and turned up rugs.
- Securely attach rugs and runners to the floor.
- Hold down cables and cords with rubber coverings or reroute them.
- Tape down and mark temporary cords and cables.
- Close file cabinets and drawers.
- Inspect the grounds and parking lots for trip hazards and make necessary repairs.
- Pay attention when flooring is

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Preventing the Transmission of Disease in Wrestling

Many sports, especially wrestling, involve close physical contact between participants, and with that comes the risk of infectious skin disease transmission. Some of the diseases that are commonly contracted within the sport of wrestling, either through skin-to-skin contact transmission or from unsanitized or improperly sanitized wrestling mats include shingles, chicken pox, cold sores, conjunctivitis and skin lesions.

The following hygiene recommendations can help to reduce the possibility of spreading such diseases:

USE DISINFECTANTS AND CLEANERS

This is an important step in your school's hygiene protocol. Use a disinfectant that according to the bottle label kills the following: *human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)*; *herpes simplex type 1*, *streptococcus faecalis*, *streptococcus silvarius*; *staphylococcus aureus*; and *trichophyton mentagrophytes*.

Make sure the entire wrestling mat surface remains damp with the proper ratio of disinfectant solution for the contact/dwell time listed. This is a vital step in the disinfecting process. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requires each manufacturer to specify this contact time on the product's label for the listed organisms to be killed.

If the solution is pre-mixed, be aware of its life expectancy and discard old mixtures that have expired. A solution of one part bleach to ten parts water is commonly used to disinfect equipment. Once bleach is diluted, it must be replaced every 24 hours to be an effective disinfecting agent.

When the disinfectant is taken from its original container and put into a secondary bottle (such as a spray bottle), make sure the secondary bottle is labeled with the name of the

product and any hazard warnings as found on the original container.

ATHLETIC MATS AND EQUIPMENT

Clean and disinfected mats are essential in stopping the spread of infectious organisms. Wrestling mats should be in a state of good repair. Repair any rips/tears according to the manufacturer's recommended procedures. Germs can migrate through the rips in the mat to the foam padding beneath, potentially perpetuating problems. Companies are available that can professionally resurface or repair torn or cracked mats.

Clean and disinfect wrestling mats daily after team use. This same protocol of daily cleaning/disinfection also applies to exercise equipment, weight training equipment, and children's toys. Wall mats should also be in a state of good repair and properly cleaned/disinfected after each use.

CLEAN WRESTLING GEAR AND CLOTHING

Include all wrestling gear that is used on a daily basis in the team's overall daily hygiene protocol to ensure that it is clean and potentially germ free. Athletes should refrain from sharing wrestling gear, towels, razors, water bottles and any other equipment that could potentially harbor infectious agents.

Clean and disinfect the soles of wrestling shoes, headgear, knee sleeves and pads daily. During athletic practices and contests, an ample supply of towels should be available. Disposable towels and tissues are recommended. Towels must be used for one individual only and then disposed of in an appropriate receptacle. If the towels used are not disposable then proper washing after use must occur. The most important factor in laundering clothing contaminated in the school setting is elimination of potentially infectious agents by using soap and water. The addition of bleach will further reduce the number of infectious agents. If the material is bleachable, add 1/2 cup of household bleach to the wash cycle. If the material is not colorfast, add 1/4

cup non-chlorine bleach to the wash cycle. Universal precautions and personal protective equipment, i.e.; gloves, must be worn when handling blood or objects contaminated with blood.

All athletes must practice in freshly washed and properly dried clothing. This is vital. Athletes should not reuse unwashed towels.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

The best way to avoid an unwanted disease comes down to personal hygiene. Before entering the wrestling room for practice, and before every scheduled match, coaches should conduct daily screening of every athlete. Athletes with rashes or other potentially infectious skin conditions should seek medical attention. No wrestling should occur with an active skin infection. Many coaches require athletes to shower before they participate in practice or a meet.

After wrestling is over, it is recommended that the athletes take showers at the school where they wrestled. If this practice is not followed, encourage athletes to shower the first thing when they return home, using antibacterial body and hair products.

SUMMARY

Developing an infection control program providing education, improving hygiene practices among athletes, utilizing recommended practices for cleaning/disinfection and handling of blood will reduce risks of disease transmission among student athletes.

Further information regarding guidelines for handling body fluids in schools can be found in the OSPI "Guidelines for Implementation of Hepatitis B and HIV School Employee Trainings" handbook.

Thanks to Sally Logue, Nurse Corps Supervisor, ESD 112 for contributing this article.

TIPS FOR HEALTHIER AIR QUALITY IN CLASSROOMS

Good indoor air quality is an important component of a healthy school indoor environment. Regular and thorough classroom cleaning is one of several important steps to ensure good indoor air quality. While custodians typically clean the classroom, teachers can also play an important role in promoting and maintaining classroom cleanliness. The following “tips” are provided by the Washington State University Extension Energy Program to help improve the air quality in your school.

- Educate yourself on Indoor Air Quality and Asthma & Allergy triggers.
- Try to maintain cleanable horizontal surfaces.
- If your room has carpet:
 - Don’t allow food or beverages in the classroom
 - Check to make sure the custodial staff use high efficiency vacuums to capture the particles
 - Help the custodians by having students put chairs on the desk at day’s end (if possible)
- Check with custodial staff to ensure the carpet is cleaned appropriately (hot water/steam “extraction” is the best)
 - No strong chemicals or soaps
 - Carpet dried thoroughly within 24 hours after cleaning
 - Carpet cleaned at least quarterly
- Wet-wipe dusty surfaces weekly, pick up on Fridays so janitor can dust, (do not use a feather duster)
- Avoid clutter, put loose items and piles into plastic boxes that can be wet-wiped.
- Avoid hanging items that collect dust: streamers, projects, papers, piñatas, etc.
- Pets should be visitors, not permanent residents.
- Remove fleecy items that can harbor allergy triggers, old overstuffed furniture, area & throw rugs, pillows, blankets or stuffed animals that can’t be properly and regularly cleaned.
- Avoid use of “stinky” dry-erase board markers and cleaners.
- Avoid use of spray adhesives, contact cement, and volatile paints. Use non-toxic water based materials when ever possible.
- Avoid bringing chemicals, paints, or sprays from home without clearing them first with the maintenance or custodial staff.
- Avoid use of room deodorizing sprays or plug-ins.
- Do not use Ozone machines in occupied areas.
- Inventory your supplies and materials in terms of indoor air quality: Consider:
 - Are they low-odor?
 - Can they create dust or other particles?
 - Do they harbor allergens?
- Report water leaks, water stains, damp materials, or “musty” or “moldy” smells immediately.
- Don’t allow stained ceiling tiles to remain – they can harbor mold, and it’s hard to tell if or when they get wet again.
- Communicate with the facility staff regarding the mechanical systems for your classroom. Keep your room comfortable – learn how to operate your heating/cooling system for comfort and energy efficiency.
- Help ensure your students are getting adequate fresh air ventilation.
 - Do not block air supply or exit grills.
 - Do not turn off ventilators – work with maintenance staff to fix noisy units, control temperatures, control drafts.
 - In with the fresh, out with the stale: if your classroom doesn’t have mechanical ventilation then at least open windows and/or doors frequently to provide a quick “flush-out” of the stale air.
- Monitor your windows – they should not show condensation except on the very coldest of days – condensation suggests either a moisture problem or not enough ventilation or both.
- Notify maintenance if you smell odors or particle matter from other zones in the building: shops, science, laminator, locker room, graphics, custodial, storage areas, combustion equipment, kitchen, buses at the curb, etc. Air should move from “clean areas to dirty areas”.
- Install walk-off mats that provide “4 good footsteps” at all outside entry doors.
- Hallways should be hard-surface, not carpet.
- Have a designated Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) person that IAQ (moisture, odor, mold, etc.) issues can be directed to.
- Make sure all staff knows who to contact for Indoor Air Quality concerns in the school.

For more information contact:

Rich Prill, WSU Cooperative Extension: 509-477-6701

Scott LaBar, ESD 112: 360-750-7504

The Purpose of the Three-Point Contact on Workers' Compensation Claims *(Or "Why do I get asked all those questions?")*

Often we are asked why claims adjusters ask all the questions they do when an employee calls in to open a new workers' compensation claim. Claims adjusters ask questions because they need to get specific information quickly to meet important deadlines set forth by the Department of Labor and Industries, and to assure that an injured employee receives treatment and/or benefits without delay.

This is a good time to clarify the role of the three-point contact that is done by the Workers' Compensation Claims Department of ESD 112. To gather all the needed information, the claims staff speaks with (1) the injured employee, (2) the worker's supervisor, and (3) the attending physician's office or the emergency facility. The three-point contact will usually be made within 24 hours of the notification of a claim.

Contact with the injured employee will establish information reflecting personal data that is needed to record the injury. Other information obtained includes a description of the injury, who it was reported to and when,

history of any prior injuries or motor vehicle accidents, where the worker treated, who the worker treated with, and the extent and nature of the previous treatment. This information is very important because the claims adjuster must determine if the employee is losing time from work due to the injury, so that payment of time loss compensation benefits may be considered. If there are any prior injuries that may have an impact on recovery, the claims adjuster will need to know what the injury was and the injury date. The adjuster also needs the treating medical professional's name, address, type of treatment rendered, and any referrals or the date and time of future appointments.

Contact with the medical professional's office, or the emergency room itself, is essential. This contact will also establish any potential diagnostic testing, assignment of a nurse case manager, or even surgery in emergent cases. Claims adjusters need to know who will be the treating physician so that an open line of

communication can be developed, as well as knowledge of who will be providing other services to the injured party.

The injured employee's supervisor is an important contact when establishing a new claim. The supervisor should have a description of the incident, not only for the injury claim, but for potential third party involvement as well as the identification of safety hazards that may have contributed to the injury. Vital information regarding the injured person's return to work, be it regular duty or modified duty, is important in the process of the claim. The supervisor may also have questions surrounding the validity of the claim and the three-point contact is a good time to express those concerns.

In summary, the three-point contact is a vital component in a workers' compensation claim. If you have any questions regarding the claims process contact the claims department at ESD 112.

Slips, Trips, and Falls, continued from page 8

uneven, changes level or changes surface (for example, from flooring to carpeting).

- Turn on lights before entering an area. If entering a dark area with no lights, use a flashlight and walk slowly.
- Replace used bulbs and repair faulty switches.
- Stick to proven pathways and don't take shortcuts.
- Do not carry a load that blocks your vision.

LADDERS

Using ladders improperly or using makeshift ladders is another cause of falls at work. Never use boxes, shelves, chairs or student desks to reach a height. Get a ladder.

WHEN USING A LADDER:

- Lock the legs into position.
- Make sure the legs are stable.
- Check for loose or broken rungs and rails.
- Make sure it is tall enough.
- Never use the top two steps or rungs.
- Place the base of an extension ladder one foot away from the wall for every four feet of height.
- Keep your body centered on the ladder. Face the ladder at all times.
- Place both feet firmly on the ladder rungs or steps.
- Before working on a ladder in a doorway, lock the door or prop it open so no one will open the door and knock you over.

STAIRS

Every year 2,500,000 people are injured walking up and down stairs.

- Take steps one at a time.
- Make sure your forward foot is firmly planted before you shift your weight.
- Always use the handrail.
- Never use the stairs to store things.
- Keep stairways free of clutter.

PREVENTING SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS IS IN YOUR CONTROL!

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Contact Insurance Programs

During normal business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., call (360) 750-7504, or 1 (800) 749-5861. Contact us via the internet at: www.esd112.org/insurance/staff.html

Emergency Paging

Member districts need to report emergencies at the time of the event.

Off Hours Access to ESD Insurance Programs is available by paging (360) 408-0373.

Objective

The objective of *Risk Management Matters* is to provide useful information to our member districts. Your contributions and comments are welcome! Please call Loy Dale, Executive Director, with comments.

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