

Accident Prevention

Introduction

The Ministry of Labour and National Service postulated a number of principles of accident prevention in 1956, which are still valid today in the 21st Century. These are:

- Accident prevention is an essential part of good management and of good workmanship.
- Management and workers must co – operate wholeheartedly in securing freedom from accidents.
- There must be a definite and known safety policy in each workplace.
- The best available knowledge and methods must be applied.

It has been estimated that within the school environment, the number of “near – miss” and minor accidents are much greater than major injuries, the difference between them is merely a matter of chance.

School management in partnership with the employer have a crucial role to play in the establishment of a proactive safety culture within the school environment which will in time produce measurable and positive results in terms of accident prevention.

Why bother with accident prevention?

Northern Ireland Health and Safety Legislation requires that the Employer and Boards’ of Governors actively ensure that “...all reasonably practicable steps are taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare etc...” of employees, pupils, members of the public and visitors. A moral and legislative duty is placed upon all concerned parties to ensure that the likelihood of a serious accident occurring in the place of work is significantly reduced.

Key elements in an accident prevention strategy

- A school based health and safety committee (for larger schools), or liaison group (for smaller schools), should be established, meeting monthly and formally reporting to the school Board of Governors.
- The appointment of a school based Health and Safety Co–ordinator if at all feasible.
- The participation of the school Board of Governors in the form of a “champion” for Health and Safety. The latter, an individual, working in close co–operation with the school representative and Employer’s Health and Safety Adviser.
- An annual inspection of the school environment to be carried out by the Board of Governors, the inspection report to be forwarded annually to the Board.
- Weekly safety tours of the school and associated premises to be carried out.
- All of the school community, including pupils, to be encouraged to report anything likely to cause an accident, including any dangerous behaviour, to the designated school based appointee.
- All accidents should be reported to the Employing Authority within the allotted timescale and in the appropriate manner.
- The School Health and Safety Policy should be in place and clearly understood by all of the school community.

Accident Prevention is something that must be worked at on a daily and weekly basis.

Most commonly reported accidents

- Slips, trips and falls.
- Collision injuries- school playgrounds.
- P.E., indoor and outdoor.
- Entrapment of fingers and body parts, most notably in classroom and corridor doors.

Accidents waiting to happen

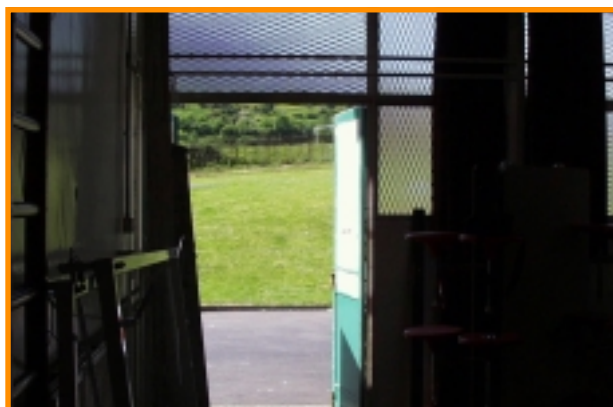


**Possible slip/trip hazard –
uneven paving stones**



**Possible collision/impact
hazard, means of escape
obstruction**

Accidents that have happened



**Entrapment of child's
finger in metal door
resulting in child losing
tips of some fingers**