May 2015

**DID YOU KNOW?**

Our department is available to do playground inspections and training of playground monitors.

According to the CDC, most non-fatal playground accidents happen at public playgrounds. Most of these happen at school.

In order to assist your school in minimizing the risk of playground accidents, we will inspect the playground to identify hazards that you may have missed. To improve supervision of students, we can observe your monitors and tailor training to meet any needs that are identified.

Contact us to schedule an appointment.

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**Fire Inspection Reporting**

Carol B Sneyd Regional Safety Technician

Many of you have received notices that the existing State Education Department fire safety system is being updated and a new system will be in place beginning July 1. Below is an excerpt from a memo from Carl Thurnau, PE, who listed four significant changes:

- Effective July 1, 2015 annual fire safety reports must be submitted to the Office of Facilities Planning electronically via the NYSED Application Business Portal. The Portal is protected from unauthorized access through the use of secure user ID’s and passwords.
- Superintendents will be required to certify the information submitted electronically – similar to the handwritten signature currently required on the written reports.
- The updated process includes an annual requirement that all school districts and BOCES verify the ownership and use for all buildings that are on the fire safety system prior to entering the fire safety report data.
- The Office of Facilities Planning will no longer be mailing labels, Certificates of Occupancy or inspection reminder letters to public schools.

To prepare for the online fire inspection report process, please ensure that all buildings (instructional and non-instructional, including sheds) have certificates of occupancy. If there are existing buildings that were never reviewed by the Office of Facilities Planning, please initiate the “discovered buildings" process.

In the Mid-Hudson Region, our inspections will be due on September 1, 2015 for this year and August 1, 2016 for next year.
For more information go to the Facilities Planning Page: http://www.p12.nysed.gov/facplan

Our department can do a preliminary fire inspection and assist you in identifying any found buildings. To schedule a preliminary fire inspection of your facilities, please contact our office.

Emergency Response
Carol B Sneyd, Regional Safety Technician

In the heat of an emergency, we may forget how to respond appropriately. That’s why training and drills are critical to emergency response. It is imperative that all staff and students understand the actions required of them in an emergency.

Lockdown is sometimes confusing for building occupants. Lockdown should only be used to indicate that there is a threat in the building such as an active shooter. The occupants of the building must, as rapidly as possible, lock themselves into an area. They need to move to a location that is not visible to someone looking through the window in the door. The teacher or adult in the room needs to maintain quiet and calm control until the occupants are released by first responders. We never use codes or verbal commands to release from lockdown.

In the new building level emergency response template rolled out by the state, the command of Hold in Place has been added. This is in response to the confusion of the expansion of the term Shelter in Place. A Hold in Place is activated to keep the students and staff in the classrooms to await release, by verbal command or further instruction. It can be used to keep students out of the halls in a medical emergency, or other events when accountability of all of the students within the building is needed.

In the new template, Shelter in Place will return to its original meaning and be used for a weather emergency or overnight stay if something is occurring that makes it unsafe to return the children to their homes.

I am frequently told that our schools are always in Lockout. While this is a true statement, the command Lockout includes several actions that are not part of a routine school day.
Depending on the situation, windows should be closed and latched; exterior doors are checked; students are brought in from outside and all outdoor activities cease; the main entrance to the building is more carefully monitored and visitors are allowed in only if it is safe to do so.

Our department recently hosted a meeting to discuss the new building emergency response template being recommended by the state. Representatives of many of our districts attended and were introduced to these suggested guidelines. Our department has extensive experience helping districts to identify the hazards that exist in their surrounding area. We are also prepared to help you to write your plans to meet the new guidelines.

If your district is satisfied with its plans, we can help facilitate training and practice drills. Finally, should you ever need assistance during an emergency, we are here to help by providing on-scene support and assistance.

Contact Carol Sneyd, csneyd@pnwboces.org or Mike Sellet, msellet@pnwboces.org, if you want to explore how we can work with you to improve your safety.

**Drug Awareness**

Governor Andrew Cuomo released a health alert last month on the dangers of Spice, or synthetic cannabis. Calls to poison control centers increased in recent weeks due to Spice use. The sale, possession and distribution of synthetic cannabis was made illegal in 2012. Michael Sellet, Regional Safety Coordinator, has developed a very powerful training on alcohol and drug awareness for teachers and staff. He also provides training for students. Please contact us to schedule an appointment.