

Over the Edge

A quarterly publication for injury and illness prevention

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Back to School and Back to Sharing the Road

More children are hit by cars near schools than at any other location. According to the National Safety Council, most children are hit by a motorist illegally passing a stopped bus. Slow down and be more cautious by following these tips:



- Don't block the crosswalk when stopped at a red light or waiting to make a turn, forcing pedestrians to go

around you; this could put them in the path of moving traffic

- Always stop for a school patrol officer or crossing guard holding up a stop sign
- Take extra care to look out for children in school zones, near playgrounds and parks, and in all residential areas
- Never pass a bus from behind – or from either direction if you're on an undivided road – if it is stopped to load or unload children
- If the yellow or red lights are flashing and the stop arm is extended, traffic must stop
- The area 10 feet around a school bus is the most dangerous for children; stop far enough back to allow them space to safely enter and exit the bus
- Be alert; children often are unpredictable, and they tend to ignore hazards and take risks

Children riding bikes create special problems for drivers because usually they are not able to properly determine traffic conditions. The most common cause of collision is a driver turning left in front of a bicyclist.

Here are more defensive driving tips to follow when sharing the road with bicyclist:

- When passing a bicyclist, proceed in the same direction slowly, and leave 3 feet between your car and the cyclist
- Watch for bike riders turning in front of you without looking or signaling; children especially have a tendency to do this
- Be extra vigilant in school zones and residential neighborhoods
- Watch for bikes coming from driveways or behind parked cars
- Check side mirrors before opening your door

By exercising a little extra care and caution, drivers and pedestrians can co-exist safely in school zones.

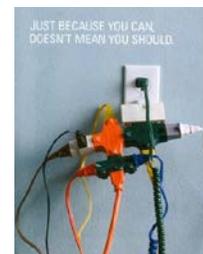
Playground Safety

The National Recreation and Park Association and the National Playground Safety Institute have come up with the Dirty Dozen - 12 playground hazards you should watch out for while supervising students on playground equipment:

1. **Improper protective surfacing:** Fall surfaces should be made of wood chips, mulch, wood fibers, sand, pea gravel, shredded tires or rubber mats. Loose fill materials should be at least 12 inches deep.
2. **Inadequate use zone:** The area under and around play equipment where a child might fall should be a minimum of 6 feet in all directions.
3. **Protrusion hazards:** Beware of hardware that is capable of impaling or cutting a child (bolts, hooks, rungs, etc.), or catching strings or items of clothing. Children should never wear drawstring hoodies at the playground.
4. **Head entrapment hazards:** There should be no openings that measure between 3 ½ and 9 inches.
5. **Overcrowded play area:** Swings should be set far enough away from other equipment so children won't be hit by a moving swing.
6. **Trip hazards** – watch out for anything that creates a trip hazard – including barriers, tree roots, or uneven asphalt/concrete.
7. **Lack of supervision:** Keep moving as you supervise children on the playground. You have a lot of lives in your hands and a lot of ground to cover.
8. **Age inappropriate activities:** Children under age 4 shouldn't play on climbing equipment or horizontal ladders. Spring-loaded seesaws are best for young children. A traditional seesaw should not hit the ground.
9. **Lack of maintenance:** Swing seats should be inspected for cracks or signs of wear and tear.
10. **Sharp edges** – Sharp edges at the entrance to tunnels or slides can cause severe injuries. Notify maintenance immediately if you identify any sharp edges on the playground equipment.
11. **Platforms with no guardrails:** Platforms greater than 30" should have guardrails or protective barriers.
12. **Equipment not recommended for public playgrounds:** Make sure that the playground equipment is compliant with the recommended guidelines found in the U.S. **Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)** Public Playground Safety Handbook.

Extension Cords

One of the common electrical issues found in classrooms and school offices is the misuse of extension cords. Extension cords come in handy when there are not enough outlets to plug in all of our equipment and appliances. However, extension cords should only be used on a temporary basis. As you finalize arrangements in your classrooms and offices prior to kicking off the new school year, keep in mind the proper way of using the extension cord.



When choosing an extension cord make sure the extension cords are properly rated for their intended use, (indoor or outdoor), and meet or exceed the power needs of the appliance or device being used. Ensure that all extension cords are certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory such as UL, CSA, or ETL, and read the manufacturer's instructions.

Always inspect cords for damage before use. Check for cracked or frayed sockets, bare wires, and loose connections. Never use a cord that feels hot or is damaged in any way. In addition, do not run extension cords through walls or ceilings. This may cause the cord to overheat, creating a serious fire hazard.

Try to keep extension cords out of high-traffic areas like doorways or walkways where they pose a tripping hazard. Also, do not place cords in areas where it can be pinched by doors, windows, or under heavy furniture, which could damage the cord's insulation.

Lastly, insert plugs fully so that no part of the prong is exposed when the extension cord is in use.

Ladder Safety Tips

Ladders can be dangerous when used improperly. Consider taking the time to plan out your project to ensure you have the right ladder and tools to work safely. Accidents can occur when a piece of equipment is used in a manner other than what it was designed for.

Do not grab any piece of furniture to stand on as a substitute for a ladder just because it is convenient. Many falls occur from standing on a chair, desk, counter, or table. When you need to work at an elevated height, take the time to get a ladder. Ask yourself: Is this the right height? Will I be working around electrical energy, do I need a non-conductive ladder?

Check the load capacity of the ladder. Each ladder is designed to only hold so much weight. Make sure your ladder has the capacity to carry your weight and the weight of the tools and object you may be holding.

Be sure to inspect the ladder once you have chosen the right one.

- Make sure the steps or rungs do not have oil or slippery substance on them.
- Are the rungs and rails intact? Is the ladder split, broken, or damaged in any way?
- Check to make sure the ladder feet and spreaders are in working order to keep the ladder stable when in use.

Now that you have inspected the ladder and are ready to use it make sure that the ladder is placed on a hard,



even surface. If the ground is too soft there is a possibility of sinking and shifting the ladder which can throw you off balance. If you are working on a tall ladder, consider barricading off the area to prevent pedestrians from walking beneath the ladder. This will also prevent you from injuring someone if you accidentally drop something as a pedestrian is walking by.

Remember to keep three points of contact at all times with the ladder: one foot and two hands, or two hands and one foot. As you climb or descend from the ladder you should only take one step at a time and never stand on the top step and top cap of an A-frame ladder.

Do not attempt to overreach while on a ladder. If you cannot reach comfortably within an arm's length you need to climb down and move the ladder closer to your intended target. Never attempt to move a ladder while you are on it by rocking or hopping to shift the ladder.

Shelf Loading Safety

1) **Top Shelf** – Should be reserved for 10 pounds or less. Store infrequently used items and small packages or bundles for ease of handling. Eliminate overhead storage whenever possible. Storage should not exceed 24" from ceiling.

2) **2nd Shelf from the top** - 20 pounds or less. Shelf items should be bundled in small packages that can be easily removed. Reduce overhead lifting by using a proper footstool or step ladder.

3) **3rd shelf from the top** – 30 pounds or less. Load heavy items directly from the shelf to a cart or hand truck. Do not overload boxes. Pull the box close to your body when loading or unloading the shelf. Turn your feet in the direction you are walking or turning; do not twist and turn!

4) **4th shelf from the top** - 20 pounds or less. Storage for awkward sized items

5) **Under Shelf Storage** Heavier items that will be moved with a hand truck or dolly can be stored at the level best accessed with the hand equipment. Heavy items are difficult to lift from the floor.



Brace shelving units. Place file cabinets or shelving units over 4 feet tall in low occupancy areas. Book cases taller than 3' high should be placed back to back and fastened together. Shelving units 5' tall should be braced to the floor and wall.