

Safety Tips

Classroom Safety



When it comes to workplace hazards, the classroom is not the first place that comes to mind, but it does have its share of potential problems. Many of these problems can be eliminated, however, by following good safety practices.

Fire Safety is an important part of classroom management all year round – not just during inspections.

- **Fire Drills** – To make sure that everyone is prepared for what to do in case of fire, a minimum of 12 fire drills are required during the school year, with eight of them completed by December 1. Two drills are required during extended year programs. Classroom staff is responsible for accounting for all students and maintaining calm. It is important for you to know both your primary evacuation route as well as alternate routes to get out in case there is a fire. Also, remember to prevent fire spread, make sure that the classroom door is closed behind you when you leave the room in a fire or drill. Do not lock the door.
- **Sound the alarm at the first sign of fire.**
Make sure you know where the fire alarm pull stations are in your building.
- **If you, a student or another person should catch on fire:**
 - **STOP** — where you are—do not run
 - **DROP** — to the floor
 - **ROLL** — or wrap the victim in a blanket, etc. to smother the flames

Fire Prevention Starts with You

- Light weight extension cords are not allowed under any circumstances, even temporarily.

Heavy-duty surge protector power strips may be used for low voltage electronic equipment only. Heat producing devices, fish tanks, and refrigerators must be plugged into a dedicated outlet, not a surge protector.

- Surge protectors may not be plugged into each other. Gang plugs and “octopus” outlets are also prohibited. If you need more outlets, they must be requested through your administrator by a work order to Facilities.
- Keep combustibles away from heat producing devices such as stoves, electric heaters, coffee makers and toaster ovens and make sure they are unplugged when not in use. Open element appliances such as toasters and hot plates are not allowed in schools.
- Exits must not be blocked in any way, even partially. They must always be accessible. This includes room exits, as well as building exits.
- Rescue windows are exits and must be kept clear at all times. The windows and their sills may not be blocked in any way by furniture, books, plants, toys, papers or anything else, even temporarily. Rescue windows may not have any decorations on them of any kind other than the rescue window sticker. It is okay to decorate other exterior windows, just not the rescue window.
- Classroom doors must be kept closed. Door chocks such as wood wedges or other makeshift hold-open devices may not be used to prop open doors.
- Evacuation routes must be posted in each classroom near the exit.

Classroom Safety Tips *continued*

- A minimum of 24 inches clearance must be maintained between storage and the ceiling – even in closets.
- Decorations may not be hung from ceilings, beams, electrical fixtures, or electrical conduits.
- Hallways must be completely clear of obstructions. Student projects may not be displayed on desks in hallways.
- Hallway decorations may take up no more than 20% of wall space and must be at least 10 feet from hallway exits. Decorations should be at least 1 foot from classroom doors and should never be placed above the door. An over-abundance of decorations are especially a problem at the beginning of the school year, during holidays and during summer programs. This includes decorations on classroom doors. Doors may not be wrapped like a gift or be covered with combustible decorations. View panels may never be covered, except when privacy is an issue.
- Good housekeeping in all areas, including storage rooms, is required. Aisles must be maintained in storage rooms.
- Hasps and padlocks are not allowed on walk-in closets and rooms as the locking/security mechanism. If a space can be occupied, a person must be able to get out from the inside at all times.
- Do not bring personal items such as sofas, bean bags, chairs, shelving units, and area rugs into school. Such items may not meet fire codes.

Other Classroom Safety Tips

- Maintaining good housekeeping is an essential classroom activity that is everyone's responsibility and can help reduce hazards and prevent accidents. Pick up objects you, your co-workers or students may have dropped or left on the floor.
- Report spills, defective flooring and tripping hazards to your custodian as soon as you find them.
- When storing things, place heavy or bulky items on the bottom and don't overfill bookcases and closets.
- Always use a step stool or step ladder to reach high places. Never use chairs, desks or stacks of boxes as ladders.

DISCLAIMER:

This Safety Tips Sheet is being provided for educational purposes only and addresses common reasons for accidents. It is not intended to imply fault or negligence on the part of any employee. It is the law, policy, and intent of Nassau BOCES to provide a safe and healthful workplace. However, the basic responsibility for safety and health rests with all BOCES employees. The measures contained herein can help employees to ensure their safety.

Although the information and recommendations contained in this Safety Tips Sheet have been compiled from sources believed to be reliable, the Office of the Nassau BOCES Safety Coordinator makes no guarantee as to the correctness, sufficiency or completeness of such information or recommendations. Other or additional safety measures may be required under particular circumstances.

For more information call the Safety Hotline 396-2400.

- Do not bring chemical products such as cleaners and disinfectants from home into work. Nassau BOCES will provide all necessary products for employees to do their jobs safely.
- Wear stable shoes with non-slip soles.
- To protect your back and prevent a chair from slipping out from under you, avoid excessive bending, twisting, and leaning backward while seated. Instead, squat and stand whenever you have to retrieve something from the floor.
- When sitting don't lean so far back in your chair that the wheels or legs lift up off the floor. Also, do not put all your weight at the very front edge of the chair so that the chair can tip over and do not use wheeled chairs as a means of locomotion.
- Back injuries can come from improper lifting. Always bend at the knees, not the back. Lift with your legs and don't try to lift more than you can safely handle.
- Avoid using and storing food in the classroom. If food must be stored, seal it in sealed glass or heavy duty containers, so as not to attract pests.
- Classroom staff frequently note that they get many colds. This is due to working with children. Practice good personal hygiene to help prevent the spread of germs. Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly throughout the day and always before eating.