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# RISKmanager

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# CRIME PREVENTION *Through Environmental Design*

By Jake Ruziecki, Risk Control Consultant

At this time of year, the warm spring air moving in creates ideal conditions to work outside on school grounds. Whether you plan to plant additional foliage or maintain the trees and shrubs already in place, you should always consider the impacts those actions may have on your property's security. When you properly include environmental design into your security programs, you will find that you can often increase security in an aesthetically pleasing way. Crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) is an approach to security planning that generally focuses on **natural surveillance** and **natural access control**. Although these principles, designed by the International CPTED Association (ICA), can be more easily applied during new construction or renovations, they are key strategies to preventing crime at properties in virtually all neighborhoods.

**Natural surveillance** can be described simply as visibility. When there is less visibility, there is a higher risk of an individual attempting deviant actions. When possible, be sure to plant trees and shrubs in areas where they will not block visibility to and from playgrounds, storage areas, parking lots and windows. Poorly placed or maintained trees may also hinder the effectiveness of exterior lighting and security cameras. The 3–7 rule is an important part of natural surveillance. This rule indicates that shrubs should not be taller than three feet and no branches or leaves below seven feet on trees. Remember, that surveillance has value as deterrent.

The next component to environmental design is **natural access control**. As populations have grown, many schools have been renovated and received additions. These additions may have moved main entrances and walking paths around, often in impractical ways. While signage may appear to be effective, we live in a world of distractions in the

palm of our hands that takes attention away from clearly placed markers. Planting shrubs along pathways or borders is an easy and effective way to encourage visitors to walk along a certain path or avoid walking through certain areas. In addition, trees may have been placed too close to buildings or vice versa. It is often easy to forget that trees and shrubs may allow individuals unauthorized access to windows or rooftops. The National Agricultural Safety Database suggests that nothing should be planted within three to five feet of any buildings. Trees should be planted approximately ten feet apart and nothing should be planted below any tree that may act as a ladder.

During renovations, it is common to relocate a playground on the property. Keep in mind the impacts this may have on security when the equipment is moved. A playground should not be located near the woods where an individual may wander off or go out of sight. Additionally, commercial playground equipment is a large investment and dead tree limbs create the potential for property damage, not to mention the risk posed to an individual getting seriously injured. It is important to keep visibility to the playgrounds and surrounding perimeters clear so that potential dangers can be easily identified. A playground security program can most easily be successful by staying alert and becoming proactive in principles of CPTED.

These techniques can be applied to all properties including storage buildings, football/recreational fields and much more. After reading this you should take a walk around each building and take notes on any potential threats to your surveillance or building access using these new principles. See if you can apply these techniques to improve your security program.





# **THEATRE PERFORMANCES:**

## ***The Hazards Behind the Curtains!***

*By Kyle Stewart, Risk Control Consultant*

The thought of potential hazards associated with theatre performances typically would lead an individual to assume performers who are injured while conducting leaping, spinning or theoretical flying routines. While injuries to staff and participants completing these tasks may occur, school districts should also contemplate the other hazards that are often hidden “behind the scenes” that result in workers’ compensation and property/liability claims.

Before the opening show date occurs, a considerable amount of work is required to be completed by staff members and performers to ensure a safe and successful theatre performance. To reduce the risk of injury and/or property damage, the following elements should be reviewed by all applicable school district personnel to ensure the safety of participants and patrons.

## STAGE RIGGING

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- Has a third-party entity conducted an independent stage rigging and maintenance inspection annually to evaluate all rigging and hardware components?
- Have all repairs been completed by a qualified party as outlined in the annual stage rigging and maintenance inspection?
- If theatrical flying is conducted: Is rigging designed, verified and overseen for each occurrence by an individual who possesses certification from an accredited institution for theatrical flying effects?

## PROP CONSTRUCTION

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- Are free-standing props properly secured via anchors or counter-weights to prevent collapse onto performers and stage hands?
- Are props constructed by individuals who are trained on the use of power tools? Is the utilization of personal protective equipment (PPE) enforced?
- If power tools are not district owned, are they inspected and verified to ensure equipment is in proper operation and equipped with all necessary machine guards?
- Are staff trained on safe lifting practices prior to moving large, heavy or awkward items?
- Is adequate clearance provided and maintained in egress routes, doors and potential ignition sources?
- Are approved step ladders and/or scaffolding equipped with a guardrail system utilized to perform tasks requiring access to areas that cannot be reached from the walking surface?

## STORAGE

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- Is storage prohibited on catwalks and within areas to access elevated platforms, electrical panels and fire safety equipment (i.e. stairwells, electrical panels, fire extinguishers, fire hose, etc.)?
- Are flammable and combustible liquids (i.e. aerosol cans) stored in an approved flammable storage cabinet? Is a copy of the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) readily available in the area?
- Are staff and performers prohibited from bringing chemicals/hazardous substances onto school district property that were not purchased by the district?
- Is housekeeping maintained of all areas, not just the stage? Cluttered areas can contribute to slip/fall injuries and fire hazards.

## EGRESS & EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

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- Are temporary access points (i.e. stairs) affixed to the stage and equipped with handrails?
- Are individuals trained on the location of emergency exits and assembly points to utilize in the event the area must be evacuated? Are evacuation drills conducted?

## STAGE LIGHTING

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- Is adequate lighting provided at all times for performers and stage hands to walk within the rear/side stage areas during the performance and between scene changes?





# THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL AWARENESS

*By Edgar Boord, Risk Control Consultant*

Before we discuss the importance of increasing and maintaining individual awareness, it is imperative to first understand what awareness means as it pertains to safety and risk minimization. When one thinks about what it means to be aware, having an awareness of surroundings is generally the thought that would come to mind. Although this is a large part of individual awareness, there are a few other aspects that often get overlooked. A general knowledge of potential hazards and safety issues, as well as your own personal capabilities are another major part of individual awareness. Additionally, the ability to think ahead and acknowledge risks, as well as potential outcomes, is another integral aspect of maintaining awareness. When actively applied to your work and personal day-to-day life, these concepts have the potential to greatly reduce the risk of an unfortunate injury or even illness.

From a risk control point of view, many of the incidents that we see as consultants do not involve a physical hazard. For instance, an incident may occur while walking up a set of stairs, or bending over to pick up a small object on the floor. Understandably, it can be difficult to make that walk into work in the morning before you have had your first cup of coffee, or tread three flights of stairs throughout the day; however, these are the instances that call for heightened awareness the most. Here are a few aspects of awareness and other ideas to keep in mind each day that may help you avoid and prevent those unnecessary incidents.

## SELF-AWARENESS

It is important to first understand yourself. This would include your personal attributes and capabilities, such as physical strength, overall wellness, and even how tall you are or the length of your stride. The ability to properly lift your foot for each step on a set of stairs, or while stepping onto a curb will vary for everyone. In relation to lifting and other physical tasks, an individual should understand how much they are able to safely lift under normal circumstances, overhead, while bending, and when twisting or turning of the body is involved. Always stay well within those limits and ask for assistance when needed, if you are not sure. Lastly, if you have any physical ailments or prior injuries that may factor into a physical task, take extra precautions.

## AWARENESS OF SURROUNDINGS

Have you had your morning coffee yet? Excellent! Now we can discuss the importance of knowing what is around you. At this point, you may be very knowledgeable with the layout of your workplace, both inside and out; however, did you notice that small surface variation in the parking lot, raised portion of the sidewalk, or edge of the rug that someone accidentally flipped up? Your surroundings and other items have the potential to change on a daily, monthly, and yearly basis. Therefore, it is incredibly important to never allow yourself to become too complacent with your surroundings. The other important factor to consider would be the current state of your environment, including inclement weather, liquid/grease/oil spills, and clutter. Unsafe conditions can crop up unexpectedly in areas that you walk through on a daily basis. Actively taking note of your surroundings may allow you to avoid a potential incident.

## AWARENESS THROUGH EDUCATION

Simply put, it can always help to educate yourself. The more you know about a hazard or safety-related topic, the more likely you may be to take the proper steps to avoid and prevent an unnecessary incident. This not only benefits yourself, but can also keep your co-workers safe. Knowledge of safety-related topics can be applied to many of your daily activities at work and at home. This may include proper lifting, working with chemicals, or operating power tools, just to name a few.

## THINKING AHEAD

This does not necessarily mean you must plan out your day to avoid every potential hazard or risk you might encounter; however, having the ability to assess your environment and tasks to be carried out allow you to take the necessary steps to keep yourself safe. If you jump right into a task without considering the risks involved, you may be setting yourself up for a potential incident. For example, it may be time to clean your windows or the desks with a spray cleaner. Are you using the correct cleaner? Do you have the proper gloves for handling that chemical? Did you turn off the fan so that it doesn't blow the sprayed chemicals right back into your face and eyes? Taking a few seconds prior to starting new tasks may be the difference between completion of that task or a trip to the emergency room.

As previously mentioned, complacency can often be an enemy of safety. Paying a little bit of extra attention to where you are going, what you are doing, or what you WILL be doing, may make the difference between an injury and going home after work to see friends and family.



# Proper Storage

*By Derek Neubauer, Risk Control Consultant*





School district buildings were designed with useable space in mind. This provides little space for storage of equipment and supplies. However, the lack of storage space is no excuse for improper storage. There are several basics that are outlined below. Also, included are several tips to ensure that you have proper storage of materials in the theatre storage area.

## General Storage

- At all times, clear pathways and aisles should be maintained.
- Materials should be stored on proper shelves that are able to handle all the weight.
- All electrical panels, sprinkler systems, and other areas that require periodic and emergency maintenance should have a three foot clearance area.
- All flammables and combustibles should be stored in an approved flammable liquids cabinet.
- Paper that is stacked in storage rooms should not be stored higher than five feet.
- All storage rooms should be labeled as such.
- Storage rooms should be kept locked at all times to prevent unauthorized entry.
- Storage units should be correctly assembled and securely anchored.
- Maintain enough clearance overhead to allow sprinkler systems to function as needed in case of a fire.
- Store heavier items no higher than waist level or close to the floor to assist in moving to prevent shelving from becoming top heavy.

## Theatre Storage

- At all times, clear pathways and aisles should be maintained.
- Lofts that are used for storage of theatre materials should be equipped with toe boards of at least four inches and railings (to and mid-rail) should be provided to prevent staff and items from falling over the loft.
- A proper ladder should be provided to place and remove items in the loft.
- All flammables and combustibles should be stored in an approved flammable liquids cabinet.
- Wood, paints, and other building materials that are not being used should be removed.
- Storage materials on the stage should be neatly stacked and not prohibit walkways or performance areas.

Ensuring proper storage is a team effort. Every person that uses the storage area should assist in keeping the storage area clean and properly stored.



# NON-ROUTINE TASKS AND YOUR SAFETY

*By Mark Nease, Risk Control Consultant*

When was the last time that you completed a non-routine task? A non-routine task can be defined as an activity performed infrequently or performed outside of normal job duties.

There is always a degree of risk associated with your safe completion of any job task. For example, you could become injured when cleaning up a few ounces of spilled coffee; however, that percentage of risk is likely lower than cleaning a surface containing a potential bloodborne pathogen.

Think about all non-routine tasks that you have completed. They had two things in common:

1. You performed them non-routinely, and
2. There was a risk associated with your completing them safely.

Many tasks have such a low percentage risk of injury that it can be expected of you to complete them safely without guidance. These are tasks that can be grouped into a low threshold of risk that a general population would all recognize as safe. Examples could include: cleaning up a few ounces of spilled coffee or retrieving a ball from the playground after student dismissal.

Consider tasks that have a higher risk of injury or that surpass a certain threshold of risk that a general population would deem a safety risk if completed without guidance. Examples could include: cleaning up a pool of coffee from the floor containing glass shards, adding chlorine to the swimming pool or cleaning up syringes found behind the bleachers at the stadium.

These non-routine tasks would require you to first receive guidance before proceeding to begin them so that you could reduce your risk of an

injury/illness. Such guidance could include a pre-task discussion, a review of a job task procedure and a "sign-off" approval by your supervisor who would acknowledge your understanding of safely completing the task.

To acquire information to provide guidance on the non-routine task, your designated staff should first perform a hazard assessment. Staff can become familiar with the non-routine task by gathering information such as necessary tools and materials, safety data sheets (SDS), potential hazards, all potential energy sources, lockout/tagout necessities, guard controls, personal protective controls and special precautions that are necessary to complete the task safely.

Staff should then develop a written procedure that would outline all necessary steps for thorough completion of the non-routine task. Once this procedure is completed, your supervisor can then proceed to train you on how to complete the non-routine task safely.

Remember to consider your safety risk the next time you intend to perform a non-routine task. When there is an elevated degree of danger to injury, first consult your supervisor for further guidance before completing the task. Your supervisor can then take the necessary measures to ensure you are equipped to safely complete the non-routine task.



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