

WINTER 2022

# RISKmanager

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# CAUGHT-IN SCHOOL RISKS

By Mark Nease



**CAUTION  
PINCH  
POINT**

**Have you ever gotten “caught-in” school? How about getting caught in or between objects when working at your school? Safety risks involving caught-in hazards can be prevalent at schools.**

A caught-in hazard can cause injury when any part of a person’s body becomes pinched, crushed, squeezed or pinned in between two objects. Caught-in hazards are also called caught-in/between hazards. Sometimes it can be difficult to differentiate between a caught-in hazard and a struck-by hazard. The difference between a caught-in and a struck-by hazard is based on how the initial injury occurs. If one of the two objects strikes the person and the force of the object striking the person causes the injury, then that accident would be deemed a “struck-by” hazard. If the injury occurs when the body is pinched, crushed, squeezed or pinned, then the accident is a “caught-in” hazard.



## RISKS

Here is a list of some risks associated with caught-in hazards:

- **Cave-ins:** Bulk storage of copy paper or boxes of kitchen goods that could cave in on an employee or in excavating work, the caving in of dirt onto a person while working in a trench.
- **Unguarded equipment**
  - Food staff getting fingers caught in/between a rotating mixer arm and the mixer's bowl, severely pinching the fingers.
  - Maintenance staff working with hydraulic or electric snowplows – installing snowplow blades on vehicles can result in pinch-point injuries.
  - Staff getting clothing caught in/between a rotating belt/pulley (air compressor belts/pulleys, riding mower belts/pulleys, HVAC fan belts/pulleys), pulling their body into the nip point and resulting in injuries.
- **Pushing/pulling material handling equipment** and getting yourself or others caught in/between the equipment and a fixed object.
- **Placing your hand through a fence-type gate** to access the padlock – getting fingers caught in/between fencing and padlock.
- **Placing fingers into hinges** – cafeteria tables, doors, etc.
- **Transporting large items on a dolly** or carrying large items through a doorway and getting fingers caught-in/between the item and the doorjamb.

## BEST PRACTICES

Here are some best practices to consider in reducing the risk of caught-in accidents:

- Develop and implement a **training program**, teaching employees how to recognize caught-in hazards so an accident can be averted. Maintaining an awareness of your work environment in relation to nearby moving objects is important.
- **Inspections:** Identify workplace situations where objects can roll, slide or shift and result with a person getting caught-in/between that object and an adjacent fixed object.

- **Guarding:** Use equipment with guards in place. For commercial mixers in kitchens, be sure to place the fence guard over the bowl to prevent your hand from entering the vicinity of the mixer arm and mixer bowl.
- Work on equipment with **power off** and locked/tagged out.
- When doing maintenance repairs, such as mounting snowplow blades to vehicles or handling heavy parts to equipment, **use material handling equipment** and/or get assistance from co-workers.
- **Policies:** Staff should implement policies, such as specifying that no person should stand at or near the loading dock when a freight truck is operating near it. This is to prevent a person from getting caught-in/between the rear of the truck and the loading dock wall or fixed railing.
- **Keep warehousing storage loads stable.** Avoid tiered storage of copy paper (one pallet upon another). If multi-tier storage is necessary, rather than stacking pallets of paper on one another, install warehouse racks so the second tiered pallet will remain stable on the upper rack.
- **Keep clearly marked aisles** in storage rooms so staff do not have to maneuver in between items and place themselves in a caught-in risk.
- **Warning signs:** Post warning signs or adhere warning stickers to equipment to notify operators of potential pinch points.
- **Push material handling equipment** such as carts, pallet jacks or dollies. Never pull!

Although caught-in hazards can be prevalent in schools, that does not mean that you should have an accident involving a caught-in hazard. Take some time to familiarize yourself with various types of caught-in risks in your work environment and begin to take actions in reducing your risk of a caught-in accident.



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By Kyle Stewart

## School Sanctioned Field Trips & Extracurricular Activities

As end-of-school year activities are in the final planning phases, more than likely, several school sponsored field trips are being considered to reward student achievements or provide a learning experience to coincide with the curriculum taught in the classroom. School sanctioned field trips are often viewed as a day of fun-filled excitement and exposure to new experiences; however, these experiences have risks that can result in injury to students, staff and/or chaperones. Identifying and mitigating risks associated with a school sanctioned field trip can present its own challenges when the various components involved are considered, including transportation to/from the site, field trip vendor/site and the physical activities associated with the field trip. Although potential injuries and a multitude of risks exist with school sanctioned field trips, with careful planning, preparation and implementation of control measures, field trips can allow the student learning experience to extend outside the classroom.

### Potential Risks

Prior to engaging in a school sanctioned field trip, the following parameters should be evaluated and reviewed by all personnel associated with the trip (i.e., staff member(s), building administration, district administration, chaperones, transportation and site vendor personnel):

- **Selection of Field Trip Activities**  
Some field trip activities pose the potential for bodily injury and liability due to associated hazards not typical within a normal school environment.
- **Transportation**  
If feasible, transportation should be provided by your school's transportation department or transportation contractor. Has action been taken to secure motor vehicle records (MVRs) of any driver(s), certificates of insurance (COI) obtained, and is there a means to account for all passengers in the event of an accident?
- **Medical Emergencies**  
Situations may arise that require a staff member to respond appropriately to medical emergencies; including, but not limited to summoning emergency responders and/or performing first aid/CPR. Are procedures in place should medications need to be dispensed or medical aid administered to student(s)?
- **Field Trip Vendor/Site Evaluation**  
Has the field trip site been evaluated for potential hazard(s), special requirements and/or accommodations that may be necessary for the activity?
- **Supervision/Chaperone(s)**  
Is a sufficient number of staff and chaperones available to accompany students on the field trip and assist with assigned duties?

- **Insurance Coverage(s)**

Are written contracts/agreements in place for all parties involved, including but not limited to the field trip site/vendor, transportation provider, chaperones, and other non-school personnel? Potential exposure includes both liability and workers' compensation insurance coverage.

- **Parental/Legal Guardian Consent**

Has the parent/legal guardian of each student provided a signed permission slip allowing the student to attend/participate in the field trip? The parental consent form should disclose risk(s) and danger(s) associated with the field trip activity.

- **Emergency Action Plan**

Is a plan in place to notify parent(s)/legal guardian(s) in the event of an emergency? Emergencies could involve a single student, multiple students, or the entire group.

## **Best Practices/Actionable Items**

Below are best practices your organization can employ to reduce exposure while providing school sanctioned field trip opportunities:

### **Review, Selection and Approval of Field Trip Activities**

- The potential for injury to staff and students should be considered prior to approving any field trip activity.
- Activities that involve low-impact movements should take precedence over field trips involving high-impact movements (i.e., strenuous, jumping, quick movements).
  - Consider the potential for injury if staff and/or chaperones participate in the activity.
- The type of activity may require additional safeguards. Activities that require significant physical endurance or involve high-impact movements should be avoided. These may include:
  - Water activities (i.e., canoeing, kayaking, water parks).
  - Wilderness activities (i.e., rock climbing, orienteering, rappelling).

- Amusement park activities (i.e., amusement/carnival rides, dunk tanks, mechanical bull riding, inflatable bounce houses).

- Animal activities (i.e., donkey basketball, horse riding, petting zoos).

- Other high-risk activities (i.e., skiing, snowboarding, snow tubing, trampoline parks, challenge courses).

### **Transportation Arrangements**

- Review and verify acceptable motor vehicle records (MVRs) are obtained for each person who will be transporting staff, students and chaperones to/from the field trip site.
- Ensure a current attendance roster is located with each transportation vehicle. Maintain a digital copy in the event the attendance roster hard copy is misplaced.
- Designate and provide a current attendance roster to a secondary contact who will not be accompanying the field trip.
- The attendance roster must be current and verified prior to departing for the field trip to ensure all participants can be accounted for in the event of an emergency and/or vehicular crash.
- If a contractor is used for transportation services, have certificates of insurance been obtained and reviewed to ensure appropriate coverage limits are in place?

### **Medical Emergencies**

- It would be a best practice to have staff member(s) present who possess a current first aid/CPR training certificate.
- Are staff members and/or chaperones apprised and have access to applicable student health information records (i.e., medical conditions, medications, allergies) during the field trip?
- If necessary, staff should only distribute medications, including over-the-counter medications, in accordance with your school's procedures and policies.
- The student's parent/legal guardian shall provide all medications and direct the dispensing protocol (i.e., dosage, type) in written form as prescribed by a licensed medical professional.

### Field Trip Vendor/Site Evaluation

- Prior to the planned field trip, the trip organizer and/or school administrator should visit the field trip site to evaluate potential hazards.
- As part of the field trip evaluation, special requirements and accommodations should be discussed and a plan implemented to accommodate before an administrator approves the field trip.

### Supervision/Chaperone(s)

- All chaperones accompanying the field trip should be advised of their expectations and duties according to your school policy.
- Chaperones who are not school employees should meet all state and federal statutory requirements regarding background clearances, training, etc., where applicable.
- Is an adequate number of staff and chaperones available and present? Specific field trip activities/sites may warrant additional personnel.
- Have chaperones received instruction/training on your internal reporting procedures and are they familiar with emergency procedures should an emergency occur?

### Insurance Coverage

- School administrators should review all written contracts/agreements to ensure applicable parties (i.e., field trip site vendor, transportation provider) have provided verification of possessing liability insurance. A Certificate of Insurance (COI) with the acceptable liability insurance coverage should be obtained in accordance with your school policy and/or insurance carrier.
- If a staff member is injured accompanying and/or participating in field trip activities, the injury may be considered a workers' compensation claim dependent on state statutes.
- Consult with your insurance broker representative to verify the activity is not excluded and coverage is available prior to approving the field trip.

### Parental/Legal Guardian Consent

- Prior to allowing a student to accompany the field trip, your school should provide each student's parent(s)/legal guardian(s) a detailed itinerary

outlining the risks and dangers of the activities and the student's expected responsibilities.

- A signed informed consent form and a medical disclosure form should be returned and maintained on file for each field trip participant. This form should include a hold-harmless clause.

### Emergency Action Plan

- Field trip organizers (i.e., staff, chaperones) should have a primary and alternate emergency contact number to inform parent(s)/legal guardian(s) in the event of an emergency involving individual students.
- School administrator or other assigned school personnel who are not accompanying the field trip should be designated and be available throughout the duration of the field trip to be contacted in the event of an emergency. This designee will serve as a liaison with the field trip organizer(s) and communicate with parent(s)/legal guardian(s) and/or emergency services should an emergency occur.
- The field trip emergency action plan should outline personnel to be notified if/when an emergency occurs, reunification locations if an emergency occurs contrary to the field trip itinerary provided to the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of students.

Although school sanctioned field trips present a potential for injuries, many of these risks can be mitigated through the planning, preparation and implementation of preventative risk control measures. Prior to approving a field trip, thought should be given to selecting activities that pose less risk of injury to students, staff and chaperones while supplementing the curriculum taught within the classroom.

## BLOG

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# Preventing Fires in Structures

## UNDER CONSTRUCTION OR RENOVATION

By Jake Ruziecki

With winter now here and the school year well underway, have all your summer construction and renovation projects been completed? With global supply shortages still affecting project timelines, many organizations have been feeling the weight of unfinished projects that carry on longer than planned. Now that projects may be ongoing through the winter, it's important to be aware that fires involving construction and renovation projects are highest during the months of November, December and January. According to the National Fire Protection Association, local fire departments responded to approximately 3,840 fires in structures under construction, and 2,580 fires in structures under major renovation each year from 2013–2017. Annually, these fires resulted in \$408 million in direct property damage, 101 injuries, and 12 deaths during this same time frame.

### Risks

Upon investigation, the leading causes of fires in construction and ongoing renovation projects included:

- **Electrical distribution and lighting equipment** such as temporary electrical wiring or lighting that can emit heat or sparks if not properly installed or maintained.
- **Heating equipment** used for warmth during colder months.
- Intentionally set fires caused by **arson**.
- **Cooking equipment** used to warm food on the jobsite.

### Best Practices/Actionable Items

Considering the historical data of the most common causes of construction and renovation fires, the National Fire Protection Association recommends the following best practices to reduce the risk of



fires related to electrical distribution and lighting equipment, heating equipment, cooking equipment, metal work or intentional causes:

- Ensure that temporary electrical service lighting follows installation requirements set forth in the *National Electrical Code*, and that electrical equipment is maintained and regularly inspected, that use of extension wiring is kept to a minimum, and that machinery and equipment do not overload available circuits.
- Prohibit the use of temporary cooking equipment (such as hot plates or grills) or the use of improvised heating devices for warming food at the construction site.
- Ensure that unauthorized temporary heaters are restricted from the worksite, that heaters permitted on the worksite are placed at safe distances from combustible and flammable materials and used in conformity with the manufacturer's instructions. Regularly check that heaters are being safely operated and do not pose a hazard (such as being overturned).
- Require a permit system for hot work activities and enforce 30-minute (or longer) cool-down intervals following use of torches, burners or soldering irons.
- Reduce the risk of arson by safeguarding construction sites with fencing or other controls, such as lighting or after-hours security personnel, as needed.

Further guidance for preventing fires at structures under construction or renovation is available in *NFPA 241, Standard for Safeguarding Construction, Alteration, and Demolition Operations*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> NFPA 241, Standard for Safeguarding Construction, Alteration, and Demolition Operations.



# STOP!

## CAN'T TOUCH THIS!

### A Guide to Hand Safety

*By Edgar Boord*

Have you ever sustained a cut or burn on your hands that prevented you from using them to complete even a seemingly simple task? Whether handling heavy materials or typing on a keyboard, your hands are a vital part of many tasks you perform on any given day. With these tasks can come a wide range of hazards that pose risks to your hands. This includes one of your body's most important and largest organ—your skin! This protective layer keeps the good stuff in, and the bad stuff out. That is why taking care of your hands ensures you can continue using them day-in and day-out.



## Risks

- **Cuts** while working with or handling knives/sharps, equipment/tools, paper, or just on a sharp edge.
- **Burns** from kitchen equipment, power tools, chemistry experiments, steam producing equipment, or from hot work and welding operations.
- **Chemical burns and absorption** from chemicals containing a variety of hazardous characteristics.
- **Caught-in/between injuries** while handling materials or working on/with equipment containing pinch points.
- Other injuries can include coming into contact with **extreme cold temperatures**, infections from **lack of hygiene**, or other illnesses from **broken skin** that allows germs/bacteria to enter the system.

## Best Practices/Actionable Items

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** – Gloves should

always be considered prior to conducting tasks that may put your hands at risk. Proper gloves that offer the right type of protection from the hazard(s) should be selected. This can include gloves that are puncture/cut-resistant, vibration/impact-resistant, burn-resistant, coated gloves for grip, thermal gloves, and a variety of chemical-resistant gloves.

- Please note that chemical-resistance properties vary by the type of chemical, the Safety Data Sheet should be referenced prior to handling to ensure the glove (i.e., nitrile vs. latex vs. neoprene vs. butyl gloves) affords adequate protection.
- Gloves, and other PPE, should always be checked prior to use to assure they are in good/safe condition.



- **Physical Controls** – Any equipment or tasks that contain a specific hazard(s) should be assessed to determine what physical controls should be in place. This may be guarding for pinch points and other types of hazardous energy (i.e., heat/cold, cuts, chemicals).
- **Safe Procedure** – Safe operating procedures can have a huge impact in minimizing hazard potential through a safe work process. For example, having two individuals handling cafeteria tables that contain pinch points and strain potential instead of by yourself. A safe procedure will also generally include use of physical controls and PPE selection prior to commencing work.
  - Lock Out/Tag Out procedures should always be used while servicing or maintaining any equipment containing pinch points and hazardous energy.
- **Planning Ahead** – Knowing what type of tasks are carried out in your line of work (or at home) allows you and the district to make decisions on what type of protective gloves to make available, and other controls to implement before starting the work.
- **Awareness** – Knowing your environment, what hazards exist around you, what your physical capabilities are, and how to prevent an incident can have a big impact on your safety.

As mentioned, your hands and skin are essential to everyday life and your work. That is why it is so imperative to protect them. Using the information above, as well as taking the time before and during tasks that involve use of your hands, can help assure you are taking the correct steps to keep yourself and your hands safe!



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# KILN SAFETY

By Derek Neubauer

Many school districts use their ceramic kilns frequently throughout the school year. Kilns can be safe to use when basic precautions are taken. However, remember that kilns produce high temperatures and release fumes into the air, many of which are toxic. Even when a kiln has adequate installation, the outer surface can be hot enough to seriously burn someone.

## Venting

- All kilns should be vented to the outside. Every time a kiln is fired, gases are released which can be irritating to the body.
- Vent kilns properly according to the kiln manufacturer's instructions.
- Always turn on your kiln hood or vent prior to loading the kiln.

## General Safety Tips

- Do not allow students near kilns in operation or otherwise, still hot.
- If the kiln is located in an area where students could possibly enter, a gate should be used.
- Do not open the kiln lid when the kiln is firing.
- Do not try to empty the kiln until the outside of the kiln has cooled.
- All kilns should maintain a minimum clearance per the manufacturer's installation instructions (usually found on the side of the kiln or the manual).
- Do not plug in an electric kiln unless the circuit is in the off position.
- When the kiln is not being used, the circuit should be turned to the off position.
- The kiln top is not a work bench or storage shelf.
- When a kiln is fired after hours, the overnight staff should be notified of this so the situation can be monitored.

## Unsafe Practices

- Poor housekeeping that can create a trip/fall accident.
- Area around the kiln cluttered with combustible and storage items.
- Wood shelves used for storage of ceramic projects.
- Wood cabinets and/or wood shelves closer to the kiln than the kiln manufacturer's specified clearances for safe operation.
- Unsupervised students are able to be near the kiln.
- Kiln room or area not properly marked.

When kilns are used properly, this part of an art education can spark a student's interest in the arts. Using a kiln properly will allow all projects to be completed safely. Learn how to use a kiln safely and always be aware when one is firing.

## BLOG

Learn more about employee and student safety at [cmregent.com/blog/](https://cmregent.com/blog/).





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