

School Administrator's Risk Management Newsletter

Volume I, Issue 2

June, 2004

Welcome to the second issue of the *School Administrator's Risk Management Newsletter*, brought to you by **Camp and School Consulting**. The newsletter has been very well received, with 34 new subscribers added since the previous edition. Circulation now includes over 1650 private school administrators.

This periodic newsletter provides information on risk management tips, current risk management issues, new workshops and faculty in-services, and other services that may be of interest to you and your school community. I hope you find the information helpful.

Risk Management Tips

This month's subject area: Your School's Emergency Supplies

Summer vacation, either in June shortly after school lets out, or in August just prior to the opening of the new school year presents a great opportunity for an annual inventory and review of your school's emergency supplies. Often when I visit schools, I find that in a particular year emergency preparedness coordinators have focused a great deal of time and energy on updating and replacing supplies. However, after this initial effort, there is often no plan in place for regular updating and replenishing, and it is not uncommon to encounter schools where major supplies have not been inventoried, restocked or refreshed in the last three to five years.

Inventory can be a tedious process, particularly if your supplies are not labeled or organized by task or team use. I recommend that schools clearly mark and separate supplies for each of the school's crisis response teams (Search and Rescue, First Aid and Triage, etc.) not only for inventory purposes, but also for easy access and location during an emergency.

During summer break, it is often possible for administrators to enlist the assistance of a part-time employee such as a recreation supervisor or coach to assist with this process, as their regular duties cease with the end of classes, and they often welcome the opportunity to earn additional income.

Emergency Supply Storage

Ideally, your school's supplies are stored in a separate shed, cargo container, or other structure used exclusively for this purpose. If this is the case, I recommend a seal or sticker be placed across the door opening of this shed or container, so that it is readily apparent when the contents have been accessed. The plastic loops used in hotel mini-bars can be very effective for this purpose, or you can use something as simple as a mailing label placed across the door seam.

It is also ideal if the emergency supplies are used exclusively for emergency response. I recommend that schools have separate first aid supplies available for daily minor injury care rather than accessing the main trauma kit and disaster response supplies. Again, this facilitates inventory and controls access to the disaster supplies.

Inside your storage area, supplies should be organized by emergency response team, and stacked in order of need. Immediate supplies for the Emergency Operations Center, Search and Rescue team, and First Aid and Triage should be closest to the front of the storage area, while food, water and shelter supplies (secondary response tasks) should be located behind these immediate need items.

Each team's supplies should be packed in an easy to carry, color coded bag or container. (Suggestion – RED for Search and Rescue, GREEN for First Aid/Triage, BLUE for Emergency Operations Center, YELLOW for Security/Checkout). Some schools are using rolling duffel bags for each team's supplies, making them easy to locate and transport to the team's setup areas.

Inventory list

You need a list of what supplies should be on hand.

To carry out an inventory, you need a list of what supplies **should** be on hand. The American Red Cross, the Department of Homeland Security, as well as local fire departments and county offices of emergency services have recommended lists of emergency supplies for families, schools, businesses and other groups on their website.

Are your supplies adequate to meet the needs of your current school enrollment?

It is not uncommon for me to encounter schools where emergency supplies were stocked for a school population of 200, yet during recent years the school's enrollment has increased to over 300 students with a corresponding increase in the number of faculty. In this scenario, it is likely that quantities of food, water and other emergency supplies stored would not be adequate to meet the school's current needs in the event of a major disaster.

Camp and School Consulting has developed a comprehensive list of recommended supplies for schools based on numerous authoritative services. Provided to client schools as part of an on-site emergency preparedness assessment, this list in Excel spreadsheet format is keyed to a current enrollment number, so that as enrollment changes from year to year, quantities of specific items to be stocked are easily updated. A column is provided for current inventory, which is easily compared to the recommended quantity of each item that should be stored.

Tagging and Dating

Prior to conducting an inventory, print out a page or two of regular mailing labels, with "**Inventoried June, 2004**" printed on each label. As each item or container is checked, place a label across the box opening, zipper of the bag, or some other location that will clearly indicate when the container has been opened.

Food and Water

Water stored in bulk containers should be replaced annually. Although chemical treatment may render the water useful and safe to drink for more than one year, it is a very minor expense to replace with fresher, better tasting water each year.

I have visited a number of schools where bottled water is used to meet the school's emergency supply needs. In some schools, a rotation is established as water is provided for the faculty room and other locations: New monthly deliveries are placed to the rear of the emergency supplies, and the cases or bottles in front are placed into use in the faculty room or other location, creating a constant fresh supply in storage for emergency use.

Similarly, many schools stock energy or protein bars for emergency food supplies. Some schools distribute these to students during the last week of school as snacks during finals, end of the year achievement tests or other events, and begin the year with a fresh supply.

The above information from "**Emergency Preparedness for School Administrators**, a workshop designed for school administrators by Camp and School Consulting, 2003.

New School Emergency Preparedness Technology

Effective Communication in an Emergency Situation

One of the greatest challenges for schools is effectively communicating with all segments of the school population during an emergency. Consider the difficulty in updating faculty during a school-wide lockdown without using the PA system and broadcasting the same information to students and other individuals on the school site.

Recently, I had the opportunity to preview an exciting new technology for emergency communications. Vasona Technology, a local northern California company, is marketing the PASS[®] System for effectively distributing emergency information to occupants of large venues such as airports, convention centers, hospitals, colleges, universities and government buildings.

I was immediately impressed with the possibilities for schools, and I have done some limited consulting with Vasona and have had the opportunity to contribute ideas for increasing the usefulness and suitability of this technology for schools.

I consider this technology to be one of the most significant developments for school emergency response to become available in recent years.

Vasona Technology has developed an innovative emergency alert system that ties into an organization's existing computer network, and in the event of an emergency, broadcasts emergency information to select computers, or every computer tied in to the school's network. There are several truly amazing features to the system:

1. Different computers can receive different information (administrators and security staff receive one level of information, while teachers (or even student laptops) receive a different level of information.
2. Information can be displayed on public display monitors that might be installed in a school's cafeteria, gymnasium, and other common areas. When not in alert mode, this level of the system functions as a school bulletin board and can flash rotating announcements (today's games, faculty meeting at 4 pm today, etc.). This same bulletin information is also available as a pop-up on every computer tied in to the school's network.
3. The system can be connected to the school's intrusion and fire alarm system so that pre-selected warnings and instructions are automatically broadcast. The EDIS (State of California Electronic Digital Information Service) and EAS (Emergency Alert System) alerts can also be fed into any or all levels of the system (can be set so only administrators get this information, then custom tailor a message to go out to faculty)
4. Computers can be used for regular functions, but a pop-up appears when the system goes into alert, and can be combined with an audible alert. (Teachers who were not at their desk during class would instantly know that an alert had been received)
5. When the system goes into alert, administrators on or off campus can receive notification by cell phone, PDA, or any other device capable of receiving text messages.

The possibilities are endless for school applications, and it also allows administrators to send out custom, specific information to all computers tied in to the network. Imagine being able to instantly broadcast an alert that a virus has entered the school's computer network and that all users should not open a particular file.

The product is ready for rollout to schools, and the company will be offering some very attractive pricing to the initial schools utilizing the product as they work to establish market identity and recognition. For a school that already has a computer network established, software and license costs should be very reasonable.

If this is of interest to any of you, please let me know, and I would be happy to facilitate an introduction and product demonstration. I see the technology as having tremendous potential for large schools and multi-site school operations, and I am pleased to be working with Vasona Technology in bringing the product to the attention of schools.

Planning ahead for the opening of school

Workplace Safety

As school administrators, we are not only responsible for the safety of our students, but also for our faculty and staff. Cal/OSHA regulations regarding workplace safety are in effect for all but the smallest of schools.

Does your opening faculty meeting include a session on Workplace Safety?

By law, all employees must receive an orientation to workplace safety rules and procedures. This applies to your faculty and staff. Many schools choose to include this in their opening of school faculty meetings. This session might include information on proper lifting techniques, use of ladders rather than chairs for reaching tall objects, and ergonomics in regard to computer use. Your school's insurance carrier can be

an excellent source of speakers for this topic, as they have a vested interest in reducing the occurrence of workplace injuries.

Does your school meet current requirements for posting regulations regarding Cal/OSHA, workplace safety, employment, discrimination, etc.?

Do your faculty and staff members know the procedures for reporting workplace safety hazards? I recommend to my client schools that they clearly differentiate the procedures for reporting a safety hazard versus a routine maintenance item. This is helpful to facilities staff in identifying high priority items, and helps to ensure that required documentation for safety items is completed.

We can help!

Camp and School Consulting has several workshops addressing Cal/OSHA compliance and workplace safety. This is an important and often neglected area for schools, and the consequences can be very high as fines for violation of workplace safety regulations are based on the number of days the school or organization has operated out of compliance. The workshop on ***Developing and Implementing a School Safety Committee*** has been very well received by schools.

For more information, visit www.campandschool.com and click on Workshops.

Thank You to all the private schools in California for your continued enthusiastic support of ***Camp and School Consulting***. Since forming the company in 2002, **CASC** has presented to hundreds of school administrators at area seminars and has conducted a number of on-site trainings for faculty and staff. The CASC Emergency Preparedness Guide is gaining wide acceptance at a variety of schools from small single-site elementary schools to multi-campus programs and large single-site high schools.

Dan Gelineau

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