

SAFE WORK PRACTICES for SPECIAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTIONAL ASSISTANTS

*Contra Costa County Schools Insurance Group
Workers' Compensation/Health & Safety Services & Health Benefits Program Provider*



When lifting, keep load close to body,
bend knees, lift with legs
& keep your back straight



SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS

- Pay particular attention to wet/slippery floors around sink areas.
- Use caution near entry areas and on cement walkways during rainy/icy weather.
- Do not place electrical cords across walkways.
- Unplug and roll up long cords when not in immediate use.
- Wear closed-toe, rubber-soled shoes with no heel (or low block heel).
- If you need to reach high places, never stand on a chair or desk. Use a ladder or footstool, or ask a custodian for help.
- Keep classrooms free of clutter.
- Make sure shelves and storage racks are stable and secured.

ERGONOMIC

- Learn proper use of the mechanical lift. Make sure the student is properly balanced in the sling to avoid having to catch them in an awkward or off balance position. Get assistance when needed.
- Before beginning to lift a student:
 - Make sure adequate space exists.
 - Properly position the student.
 - Make sure adequate personnel is available.
- When lifting, keep students close to your body; bend at the knees and lift with your legs; keep your back straight; and do not twist.
- Ask for help when lifting students, heavy objects or moving equipment.

FIRE

- Know where a fire extinguisher is and how to use it.
- Do not block exits in classrooms.

ELECTRICAL SHOCK

- Any outlets near water or liquid sources should be Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) type outlets. Report any unprotected outlets.
- Do not hang artwork or other materials from light fixtures.

SAFETY AT THE CENTER OF IT ALL

Whether you are a teacher or paraeducator, you have a strong commitment to the well-being and academic success of your students. Taking care of your own health and safety at work helps you meet these goals by avoiding injuries and illnesses that could mean time away from work.

Did You Know?

- The most common accidents in schools are slips, trips and falls. These injuries can be caused by slippery or uneven walking surfaces.

Keep yourself safe and healthy on the job by following the tips in this flyer on how to identify and avoid potential hazards.

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VEHICLE ACCIDENTS

- Use only properly equipped vehicles when transporting special needs students.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Watch out for fingers when operating a mechanical lift to avoid crushing them between the machine and wall.
- Be aware of proper use of hydraulic lifts on specialty equipped buses. Keep feet out from under the lift and wheelchair.
- Maintain control in classroom to minimize intentional and accidental striking and biting by students.
Learn and practice CPI
Nonviolent Crisis
Intervention techniques and skills.
- Maintain ventilation in areas where toileting occurs. Report ventilation problems to your supervisor.
- Do not work alone whenever possible.



INFECTIOUS DISEASE

- Wash your hands frequently.
- Teach students to cover their mouths when they cough or sneeze.
- If you may come into contact with blood or other bodily fluids:
 - Wear disposable gloves
 - Wash your hands with soap and water
 - Disinfect any equipment or work areas that are affected
 - Report incident to supervisor.

CHEMICALS

- If you use chemicals in your class:
 - Use the least toxic chemical you can.
 - Make sure all chemicals are labeled. If you put chemicals into a different container, label the new container.
 - Obtain a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for each product.
 - Ventilate your classroom.

INJURY PREVENTION THROUGH PHYSICAL CONDITIONING

Three Easy Steps (5-10 min. total!)

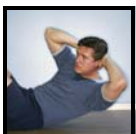


WARMING YOUR BODY

This involves gradually increasing your heart rate, body temperature and breathing rate. The main purposes of warming up are to raise both the general body and deep muscle temperatures and to stretch connective tissues to permit greater flexibility. This reduces the possibility of muscle tears and ligament sprains.

STRETCHING YOUR MUSCLES

Stretching permits a greater range of movement within the joint, the ligaments and other connective tissue are not so easily strained or torn. It also permits greater freedom of movement in all directions.



DEVELOPING YOUR CORE

The "core" is the torso, extending from the shoulders to the pelvis. It is the body's center of power. Training the muscles of the core will help correct postural imbalances, prevent injuries and develop efficient, functional movement patterns.