

Follow these steps to keep school employees safe while closing down for the summer:

Prepare for a safe move

- Plan the move and discuss details with everyone involved.
- Provide a written advisory to all staff about safe material handling practices and safe ladder use. Do so at staff meetings prior to the closing date.
- Encourage employees who need to use ladders to have shoulder bags or “pouches.” The bags can be slung across the body to ensure they don’t slide off. Staff can put items into the bags as they take them down, keeping their hands free to hold on when climbing down the ladders.
- Ensure all employees know that standing on chairs, tables, etc., is strictly forbidden. Prominently post SFM’s “Don’t you dare stand on a chair” posters.
- Post safety signs: proper lifting, Skip, etc.
- Ensure ladders, dollies, push carts, etc. are available and easily accessible for each hallway.
- Limit the size of moving boxes in order to limit the weight. If possible, get boxes with handles. Provide normal size boxes for light objects and smaller boxes for books, etc. Limit the weight of any box to 35 pounds or less.
- If boxes are to be loaded and then staged in the classroom, consider providing pallets to raise the working level and reduce bending.
- Limit the size of garbage and recycling bins used to keep the weight manageable for subsequent handling. If only large containers are available, consider installing a “false bottom” in the cans to effectively reduce the available volume.
- Make sure employees understand they are not to move file cabinets, desks or other furniture without assistance and to plan ahead to get help.

- Consider sending an email survey asking employees if they anticipate any challenges during the move. React accordingly.
- Organize the space so high-traffic areas are clear of any obstacles.
- Schedule periodic rest breaks and secure an area for resting that is away from the moving area.
- Keep a first-aid kit on hand in case of an emergency.

Communicate safe moving practices

- Wear proper clothing and footwear. Avoid wearing loose sleeves or shirttails that might get snagged. Wear durable, supportive footwear with good grip, particularly if surfaces should become wet.
- For items that require more than two people to move, make sure you have an extra person who can direct the group and be there in case someone slips or cannot carry the load. The extra person can also act as the communicator.
- Make sure if you’re passing boxes to another person that you know he or she has a firm grip before letting go.
Avoid slips, trips and falls when taking items out to your vehicle:
- Park as close to the exit as possible.
- Avoid walking or pushing carts over uneven or damaged sidewalks and parking lot surfaces.
- Don’t allow what you’re carrying to obstruct your view of the walking surface ahead of you.
- If it’s wet outside, avoid stepping on painted lines as they can be slippery when wet.
- Use a foot forward, knees slightly bent, head up posture when loading items into your vehicle.