wellness & safety

Schools Insurance Authority

SIA for Kids — Schools in Partnership

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The SIA staff wishes you and your family a joyful holiday season filled with laughter, warmth and well-deserved relaxation.

SIA celebrates 50 years

Schools Insurance Authority is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Formed on July 1, 1974, SIA is the oldest joint powers authority (JPA) in California.

In the early 1970s, public agencies were faced with rising insurance costs and few coverage options. Sacramento County school districts were among those affected. The Sacramento County grand jury charged the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE) with the responsibility of studying this problem and seeking ways to implement a countywide insurance program. SCOE formed a task force, which decided to establish a self-insurance pool to cover common property losses and to purchase excess insurance to cover catastrophic losses.

In the mid-1970s, the California legislature amended the government code to provide that any two or more public agencies could join together to exercise jointly any rights they may individually have, creating the first joint powers agreement and enabling Sacramento County school districts to pool resources for the purpose of self-insurance.

The original five district members were San Juan USD, Natomas USD, Del Paso Heights SD, Elk Grove USD, and the Sacramento County Office of Education. The Property Program was the first program implemented followed by the Liability Program in 1975, the Workers' Compensation Program in 1977 and the Benefits Program in 1980.

Today SIA has a total of 37 members, representing school districts, county offices of education and joint powers authorities, all located in Northern and Central California. Although not all members participate in all programs, it's through the joining together of self-insuring, group purchase, risk management and greater financial resources that continued stabilization of insurance costs for members will be maintained. SIA is committed to protecting the human and financial resources of its member school districts.

CYBERSAFETY CORNER

Shining a spotlight on protecting our digital lives

Gustavo Mastroianni, SIA Chief Information Security Officer

Cybersecurity Awareness Month, celebrated every October, shines a spotlight on the importance of cybersecurity and the critical role it plays in our increasingly digital world. Established in 2004 through a collaboration between the National Cybersecurity Alliance and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the month of October serves as a reminder for individuals and organizations to take proactive measures to protect their online presence and sensitive information. However, these important messages are not restricted to just one month.

In today's interconnected world, the threat landscape is more complex than ever. Cyberattacks can take many forms, from phishing scams and ransomware to data breaches and identity theft. With an ever-growing reliance on technology,

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SIA for Kids SCHOOLS IN PARTNERSHIP

- Online security benefits all
- Hand washing fights illness

Cybersecurity Awareness Month

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it's crucial to understand that cybersecurity is not just an IT issue—it's a shared responsibility that affects everyone. Recent statistics highlight the urgency of cybersecurity. According to Cybersecurity Ventures, cybercrime is projected to cause damages totaling $10.5 trillion annually by 2025. This staggering figure underscores the necessity for awareness and preparedness in both personal and professional realms.

Each year, Cybersecurity Awareness Month focuses on specific themes that guide its messaging and activities. Recent themes have included:

1. Making Your Home a Cybersafe Haven: With more people working from home, securing home networks and devices is essential. This theme encourages the use of strong passwords, regular software updates and secure wi-fi connections.
2. Phishing Awareness: Phishing remains one of the most common cyberthreats. This theme educates individuals on how to recognize suspicious emails and messages, emphasizing the importance of verifying sources before clicking on links or providing personal information.
3. Cybersecurity at Work: Organizations are encouraged to foster a culture of security awareness among employees. Training and resources can empower staff to recognize threats and understand their roles in safeguarding company data.
4. Protecting Personal Information: This theme focuses on the importance of safeguarding personal data, such as social security numbers, financial information and health records. It emphasizes the need for privacy settings on social media and careful sharing of information online.

To honor Cybersecurity Awareness Month, various organizations share practical tips to help individuals and businesses improve their cybersecurity postures. Here are some essential practices to consider:

1. Use strong, unique passwords and a password manager.
2. Enable Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA).
3. Keep software up to date.
4. Be wary of suspicious links.
5. Back up your data.
6. Educate yourself and others.

No matter the month, Cybersecurity Awareness Month reminds us all of the importance of staying vigilant in our digital lives. By adopting safe online practices and fostering a culture of cybersecurity awareness, we can collectively reduce the risks posed by cyberthreats. As we navigate an ever-evolving digital landscape, remember cybersecurity is everyone's responsibility. Let's work together to create a safer online environment for all.

Watch for future cybersafety tips in upcoming issues of SIA's Wellness & Safety's "Cybersafety Corner" and let's all work together to build a more secure digital world.

Hand washing is the superpower against colds and flu

Lyn Poll, M.S., SIA Prevention Services

As we head into peak cold and flu season, it's more important than ever to remember one of the easiest and most effective ways to stay healthy: hand washing. This simple, often overlooked act is a powerful tool for keeping those pesky cold and flu germs at bay.

Hand washing isn't just about personal cleanliness; it's about safeguarding health and the health of those around us. During the flu season, when sneezes and coughs are as common as falling leaves, it plays an even more vital role. So, let's rediscover this everyday superhero act and put it front and center in our daily routines. Roll up those sleeves, turn on the tap, and let's scrub those germs away!

Why hand washing is important

Everyone knows the lather, rinse, repeat drill. But have you ever stopped to think about why the simple act of hand washing is so vital? It's not just about cleanliness, it's about health and wellness.

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Hand washing

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Hand washing keeps us healthy. It's a powerful defense against the spread of disease. Think of all the surfaces we touch throughout the day, from door handles to cell phones. These are laden with germs that can make us sick. When we wash our hands properly, we're removing these disease-causing organisms.

How to wash your hands

Hand washing may seem like a no-brainer, but doing it effectively requires more than just a quick rinse under the faucet. So, to ensure that we're making the most of this health-boosting habit, let's break it down into five simple steps:

1. **Wet your hands with clean running water:** It doesn't matter if it's warm or cold, just that it's clean.
2. **Apply soap:** Any type will do, just make sure to use enough to cover the entire surface of your hands.
3. **Lather and scrub for 20 seconds:** This is where the magic happens. Make sure to get between your fingers, under your nails and up to your wrists. Need a timer? Try humming "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" or the "Happy Birthday" song twice.
4. **Rinse hands well:** Using clean running water, wash away all the soap and germs you've just loosened from your skin.
5. **Dry your hands using a clean towel, or air dry them:** This is a very important step because germs are more easily transmitted from wet hands.

Practicing good hand hygiene habits not only keeps you healthy but also helps prevent the spread of illnesses within our communities. It's a simple act, but it has the power to save lives. So, let's all pledge to tap into our inner hand-washing superhero and zap those annoying germs away!

Drive safely when the time changes

Lisa Konarski, SIA Prevention Services

SIA data has shown an increase in vehicle accidents during the fall season, particularly after the clocks have been turned back an hour. Remember to be extra cautious when driving, as the time of day and position of the sun may affect your vision. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration suggests the following to help increase your ability to see and to keep you and others safe:

- Take off your sunglasses at dusk.
- Wipe off your headlights regularly.
- Keep your windshield clean, both inside and out.
- Adjust the rearview mirror to the "night" setting to avoid headlight glare.
- Drive at a safe speed and slow down or pull over if the sunlight interferes with your view.
- Be alert for children walking and bicyclists commuting home.
- Get plenty of sleep before the time change to help your body adjust.

Ladder safety for the holidays and every day

Marshall Shimmon, B.S., SIA Prevention Services

As the holidays quickly approach, many people plan exterior building maintenance and home interior decoration projects. Ladder safety is often considered after the fact. To help ensure that accidents don't occur, let's focus on how to properly use a ladder prior to beginning a task. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) states that most ladder accidents involve "operator error failure."

Watching a mishap can be amusing--until it happens to you or someone you care about. So, let's cover some tips on how to not fail when using a ladder:

1. Select the correct ladder for the job: Select a ladder with the correct material and strength for the job. If working with electricity you must use a fiberglass or wood ladder. Stepladders and extension ladders are commonly used in school and home settings.
2. Position the ladder properly: The bottom of an extension ladder must be set a fourth of the total ladder distance away from the contact point of the eave or wall. The top of the extension ladder must extend three feet above gutters/eaves and secured at the top and bottom to prevent slipping. Consider using outriggers to stabilize the top of the ladder as it rests against a wall or rooftop.
3. Set the ladder up properly: Stepladders should be set up so that the user doesn't have to reach or twist with the task. Ensure that the ladder is fully opened so that the lockout spreaders are locked in position. The ladder needs to be level to ensure that there's no wobbling or moving. Check the stability by stepping with one foot on the bottom rung before starting your climb.
4. Always maintain three points of contact when ascending or descending.
5. Pay extra close attention to the first and second rungs at the bottom and top of the ladder while ascending or descending.

Too many individuals fail to plan alternative ways to reach for something high up. Rolling chairs on the tops of desks or tables have been responsible for painful lessons in physics, economics, health and psychology. Never lean or reach past your belt buckle when working on a ladder, as the ladder could tip over and you with it. Stay especially focused when stepping onto the bottom two rungs of a ladder, as this is where it's easy to take a faulty step and fall.

Free life-enhancing training courses online

SIA provides member district staff with virtual training on a variety of topics that apply to both personal and professional life. To learn more or to register for any of the training courses listed below, click on the course title or contact tfranco@sia-jpa.org. You also can join our email list to learn of future events at SIA – Schools Insurance Authority (sia-jpa.org).

November

11/1/2024	Creating Kindness in the Workplace	5:30-6:30 p.m.
11/5/2024	Building Awareness & Practical Strategies for Supporting Neuro-divergent Families and Friends	5:30-6:30 p.m.
11/6/2024	Creating a Respectful Workplace	5:30-7:30 p.m.
11/7/2024	How to Build Successful Teams, Employees	5:30-7:30 p.m.
11/12/2024	Mental Health Fundamentals for Managers	5:30-6:30 p.m.
11/14/2024	How to Support LGBTQIA+ in the Workplace	5:30-6:30 p.m.
11/15/2024	Maintaining Well-being Through Times of Uncertainty	5:30-6:30 p.m.
11/18/2024	Making the Most of Your Working Day	Noon-1 p.m.
11/20/2024	Managing Family and Relationships	5:30-6:30 p.m.
11/21/2024	Menopause and Mental Health	5:30-6:30 p.m.

December

12/2/2024	Dealing with Grief and Loss	Noon-1 p.m.
12/3/2024	Making the Holidays Happier	5:30-6:30 p.m.
12/4/2024	How to Build Workplace Motivation and Morale	5:30-6:30 p.m.
12/9/2024	Building Resilience in Traumatic Times	5:30-6:30 p.m.
12/11/2024	How to Manage Change for Employees	5:30-6:30 p.m.
12/12/2024	Men's Mental Health	Noon-1 p.m.
12/16/2024	How to Manage Your Finances	5:30-6:30 p.m.
12/17/2024	Eating Healthier for Less	5:30-6:30 p.m.
12/18/2024	Substance Use Disorder in the Workplace: A Manager's Responsibilities	5:30-7:30 p.m.
12/19/2024	How to Understand and Develop Emotional Intelligence	5:30-6:30 p.m.

SIA offers free workshops and trainings

Did you know that SIA offers skill development, safety, wellness and health workshops free to member districts? Workshops are an effective way to develop new skills, increase productivity and motivate employees. More than just fun and games, workshops offer a wide range of benefits to both the individual employee and the employer, such as:

- Boosted morale
- Safer work environment
- Increased employee retention
- Effective teamwork
- Enhanced communication and problem-solving

For a list of available workshops, click here: Workshops and Presentations – SIA (sia-jpa.org). Don't see what meets your needs? Reach out to the Prevention Services Department at PreventionServices@sia-jpa.org.

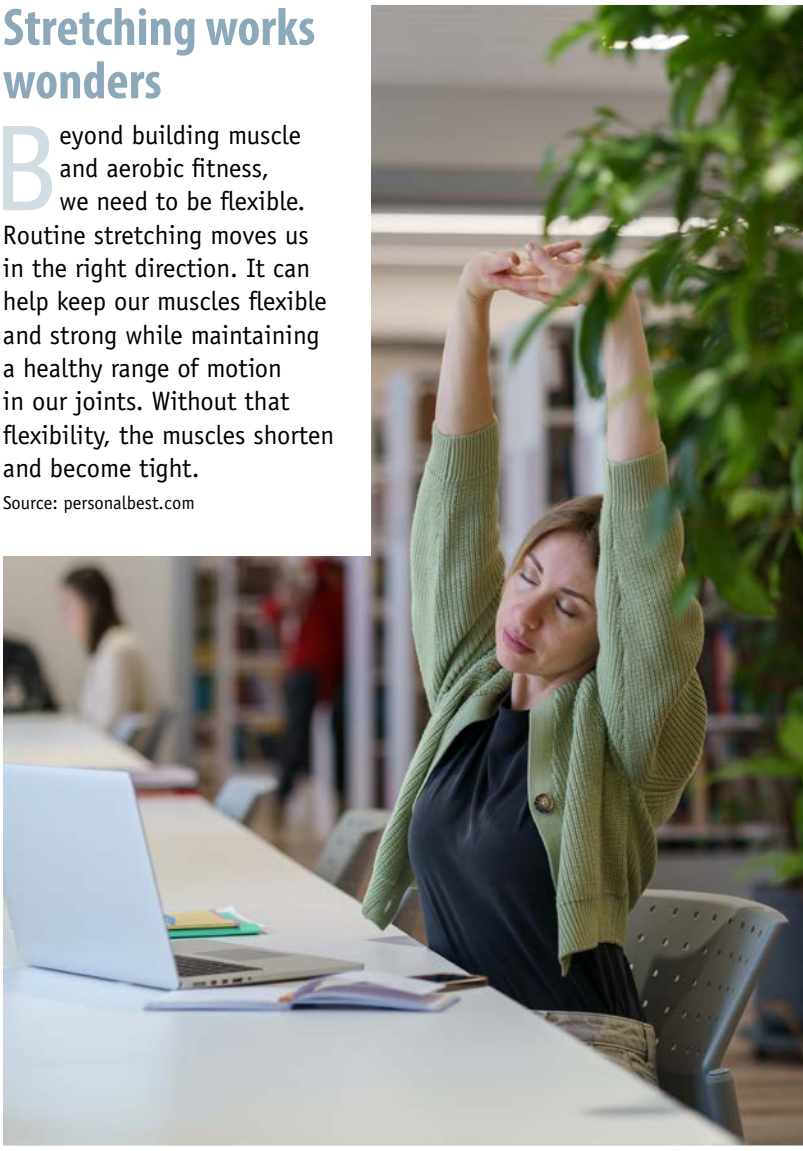
Daylight-Saving Time is November 3rd

Turn clocks back 1 hour

Stretching works wonders

Beyond building muscle and aerobic fitness, we need to be flexible. Routine stretching moves us in the right direction. It can help keep our muscles flexible and strong while maintaining a healthy range of motion in our joints. Without that flexibility, the muscles shorten and become tight.

Source: personalbest.com



QUOTE TO NOTE

"Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow."

– Melody Beattie, Author

Wellness & Safety is published by the Schools Insurance Authority, P.O. Box 276710, Sacramento, CA 95827-6710, (916) 364-1281, 1-877-SIA-KIDS. The SIA is a joint powers authority, composed of 37 members, that collectively provides workers' compensation, liability, property, and health benefit insurance coverage on behalf of its member districts. The SIA school districts are: Arcohe, Atwater, Buckeye, Camino, Center, Central Sierra ROP, El Dorado Co. Off. Ed., El Dorado High, Elk Grove, Elverta, Folsom-Cordova, Galt Elem., Galt High, Gold Oak, Gold Trail, Hayward, Indian Diggings, Latrobe, Merced City, Mother Lode, Natomas, North Bay SIA, Pioneer, Placerville, Pollock Pines, Rescue, River Delta, Robla, Sac. City, Sac. Co. Off. Ed., San Juan, Shasta-Trinity SIG, Silver Fork, Twin Rivers, Visions in Education Charter, and Woodland. SIA Officers: Executive Director — Brooks Rice; President – Chris Gilbert, Sacramento COE; Vice President — Wendy Frederickson, El Dorado COE; Secretary — Kristen Coates, Elk Grove USD; Newsletter: Lyn Poll, Prevention Services; CG Communications

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