



Back-To-School Safety Tips

By Derek Neubauer, risk control consultant

School has begun, and teachers, parents and administrators should use the following information to help protect students from harm at school, at home and at play.

Playgrounds

Each year, according to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study, there are more than 200,000 kids treated in United States hospital emergency rooms for playground injuries. Most of these injuries occur from falling off playground equipment. Review the surfacing material of your playgrounds. Depending on the type of surface material that is present on the playground, the depth may differ.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission's Public Playground Safety Handbook, the surface material should be at least the following depths:

Shredded Recycled Rubber	6 inches
Wood Mulch	9 inches
Wood Chips	9 inches
Pea Gravel	9 inches

Bike Helmets

Kids will occasionally ride their bikes to school or even at school as part of the curriculum. Be sure they always wear a helmet and are educated on

how to wear it properly. Helmet use can reduce the risk of head injury by 85 percent. While helmets are good to have on while riding a bike, they can be detrimental when children are playing on or around playground equipment. Playground staff should inform children to remove their helmets before entering the playground area.

Backpacks

Textbooks, notebooks, lunch, toys ... how much weight are students carrying back and forth each day? Children, as well as adults, can incur back injuries from carrying heavy loads over short and long periods of time. Backpacks should not be used on or around playground equipment.

Jackets, Sweatshirts, Drawstrings and ID Badges

Drawstrings on jackets and sweatshirts, along with ID badges that go around students' necks, can get caught on playground objects. Staff members should recognize when a student is wearing these pieces and ensure that they are removed before the student is permitted on the playground.

A drawstring at the waist or bottom of an article of clothing should be no longer than three inches.