

Safety Net



Welcome

HERE TO SUPPORT YOU

Dear Colleagues

Welcome to the fifth and final edition of SafetyNet for 2007. The timing of this newsletter allows some reflection on Work Safe Week which ran from 21 to 27 October and to translate the fundamental principles behind this event to end of year activities for 2007 and our planning for 2008. I would also like to thank all those who were involved in Work Safe Week activities.

Work Safe Week focused on the prevention of slips, trips and falls as well as the impact that workplace injuries can have on our quality of life. It is less than six weeks until the end of term so now is a good time to begin preparations for end of year activities. No one wants to contemplate spending the festive season recovering from an injury that was sustained at work during the last week of school. Our data clearly shows the end of term four to be a peak period for sprain and strain injuries, especially for schools officers (facilities/grounds) and school cleaners. Now is the time to start planning for end of year clean-up and 2008 classroom organisation in consultation with all relevant staff including; teaching staff, schools officers (facilities/grounds) and school cleaners to ensure that there are enough people available and enough time allocated to undertake these tasks safely. Schools should not be leaving these activities to the last two days of school but rather encouraging all staff to begin clearing out their rooms over the next few weeks and planning their requirements for next year.

In 2008, many schools will be taking new staff into their establishment. The first two student free days provide an ideal opportunity to schedule a safety induction for these staff and reinforce the safety expectations of your school with the broader staff membership. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for engaging in the promotion of safe and healthy working and learning environments and I look forward to further successes in 2008.

Gary Barnes

Assistant Director-General, Strategic Human Resources

Construction Blue Card Training in Toowoomba

Congratulations to all the Schools Officers who participated in the department's in-house *Construction Blue Card Training* in Toowoomba during August. As you can see from the photo there was a huge roll up to this session with over 60 attendees. Some Schools Officers travelled for up to 4 hours from locations such as Injune, Chinchilla and Dalby to attend the day.

Recent amendments to the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995* have broadened the definition of 'construction work' which means that some work activities undertaken by school staff (e.g. Schools Officers) may be regarded as construction work, including:

- repairs to structures such as walls
- excavation or landscaping associated with the construction of a wall, building or other construction
- refurbishment/top dressing of ovals.

A consequence of these changes is that school staff undertaking 'construction work' are required to undertake an approved General Induction training course. A 'Construction Blue Card' is issued on completion of general induction training.

Special thanks go to Ian Robinson from Centenary Heights State High School for allowing our trainers to utilise the area's biannual professional development session for the construction Blue Card Training. Thanks also to David Hoppner (Regional Senior Health and



Safety Consultant - Moreton) who is an approved trainer and delivered the course along with various helpers such as Deidre Rutherford (Regional Senior Health and Safety Consultant - Darling Downs and South West Queensland Region) and others from the Organisational Health Unit.

This professional development opportunity for Schools Officers would not have been such a success without the assistance of principals who released their staff to attend the course. The popularity of the course and the enthusiasm during the day demonstrates the increased commitment of all members of the department to the creation of safe and healthy working and learning environments.

Work Safe - Learn Safe - Be Safe

START PLANNING FOR YOUR 2008 INFLUENZA VACCINATION CLINIC - NOW!

We all know that the 'flu' season usually runs from May to September each year however, if you want to be vaccinated you need to receive your "flu shot" much earlier (i.e. during the months from February to May).



Workplace vaccination clinics are a way to demonstrate commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of the staff at your school/office. Immunization can reduce absenteeism, replacement & overtime costs, interruption of service delivery, re-scheduling of important events, extended health costs and many other unwanted disruptions at your school/office.

In 2008, the Department will once again support a preferred supplier arrangement for the provision of influenza vaccine. The 2007 program was very successful with over 9000 people vaccinated across the state. This high demand did however lead to scheduling issues for those schools/workplaces that had not planned and booked their vaccination clinic early enough.

Discussions can commence now about whether staff from your school/workplace wish to be involved in the program and who is likely to want a flu vaccination. Stay tuned for more information. As soon as the booking details are finalised, a notice will be placed on the EdInfo Bulletin Board.

NOTE: PUT "FLU VACCINATIONS" ON YOUR STAFF MEETING AGENDA FOR THE 24TH AND 25TH of JANUARY 2008.

Annual Assessments for Workplace Health and Safety - Start Planning for 2008

Principals and Workplace Health and Safety Officers (WHSOs) are reminded that it is compulsory for the WHSO to perform an Annual Assessment at the workplace. Section 96A of the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 2005* (WH&S Act) explains the WHSO's function in relation to the Assessment and Section 97 sets out the obligations of the Principal.

The Assessment is a valuable planning tool that allows WH&S to be dealt with in a proactive manner. The Action Plan finalised as part of the Assessment is a positive step towards reducing the risk of illness and injury in your school and to inform your annual planning processes.

The following links will assist WHSOs perform this important function:

[Health and Safety Checklist for Principals and WHSOs](http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/checklist-school-based-whso.pdf): <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/checklist-school-based-whso.pdf>

[Annual Assessment fact sheet](http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/annual-assess-facts.pdf): <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/annual-assess-facts.pdf>

[Annual Assessment 2007 Template](http://education.qld.gov.au/health/safety/managing/annual.html): <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/safety/managing/annual.html>

[Action Plan Template](http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/annual-assess-act-pln.pdf): <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/annual-assess-act-pln.pdf>

Principals and WHSOs requiring further information or assistance in completing the Annual Assessment should contact their [Regional Senior Health & Safety Consultant](http://education.qld.gov.au/health/contacts/hscontacts.html): <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/contacts/hscontacts.html>

Level 5 Water Restrictions - Active Play Surface Guidelines

The Queensland Water Commission (QWC) introduced new Active Play Surface Guidelines on 23 September 2007. The new guidelines are effective from 30 November 2007 and expire on 30 April 2008. Specific requirements for schools are included in the document including mandatory requirements for schools that intend to water playing surfaces such as ovals from the reticulated (town) supply. Key issues for schools include:

1. The active playing surface has been registered with the relevant water service provider;
2. There is access to a water meter that can measure and monitor the amount of water used for the irrigation of playing surfaces (please note it does not have to be a dedicated sub-meter);
3. Watering is conducted Tuesday and Thursday between 6:00am and 8:00am using a handheld hose, sprinkler, pop-up delivery systems, or timed irrigation system;
4. A water service provider approved sign is displayed on the premises; and
5. The details of all irrigation events must be recorded in a log book and are available for inspection upon request.

In addition to recording the details of all irrigation events, schools are required to maintain a weekly log of total town water consumption at the school.

Full details of the [new requirements](#) and specific information related to [schools](#) are available on the [QWC website](#).

Useful links:

New Requirements: <http://www.qwc.qld.gov.au/Active+Playing+Surface+Guidelines>

Information relating to schools: <http://www.qwc.qld.gov.au/Schools>

Queensland Water Commission: <http://www.qwc.qld.gov.au/Active+Playing+Surface+Guidelines>

The [Water Management and Conservation](#) information located on the Department's Facilities intranet site has been updated to reflect the new requirements. If you require further assistance, please contact:

Mrs Val Sampson - Principal Facilities Services Officer Strategic Asset Management
QNET: 73975 Phone: (07) 3247 3975 Fax: (07) 3235 4367 Email: Val.Sampson@deta.qld.gov.au



Don't let these slip through the Net

See out the year safely and ensure a great start to your break!

Clearing classroom clutter, moving heavy furniture, impromptu soccer games — these activities could cause you to sprain or strain your back, ankle or other part of your body. Please make sure your holiday gets off on the right (uninjured) foot by considering some of the following tips:

Clean up:

- ☞ Start early - stage your clean up activities over the next few weeks - don't leave it to the last days!
- ☞ Encourage staff to progressively clean out their rooms of unwanted resources.
- ☞ Don't overload bins as this will create a hazard for your cleaning staff.
- ☞ Do not tackle heavy loads on your own - ask for help or use the correct equipment (e.g. a trolley)
- ☞ Be conscious of your posture when lifting items
- ☞ Wear suitable footwear for the clean up
- ☞ Look out for trip hazards on the floor
- ☞ Don't climb up on chairs and desks - use a suitable ladder

Play safe during 'free' activities such as:

- ☞ Swimming and pool games
- ☞ Outdoor sports games - watch the heat and drink plenty of water too!
- ☞ Warm up/stretch before you engage in physical activity
- ☞ Limit your involvement in high exertion sports
- ☞ School excursions
- ☞ Art and craft exercises

Voice Care for Teachers - DVDs for loan through Library Services

The Organisational Health Unit has purchased a number of DVDs entitled "Voice Care for Teachers". To maximise access to these resources, the DVDs have been added to the professional catalogue of the Library.

To borrow the DVDs, you must be registered with Library Services. Information about registering and borrowing resources can be found at:

<http://education.qld.gov.au/library/services/register-borrow.html>

Borrowing conditions are also found on this page.

The DVDs can be requested by contacting the library (phone 3421 6511) or online at:

<http://education.qld.gov.au/library/forms/ls-loanrequest.html>

Tagai State College (Torres Strait and Cape District) to Train Local WHSOs



The Tagai State College which has 17 campuses in the Torres Strait and Cape District has initiated a training program for school based Workplace Health and Safety Officers (WHSOs) across the Torres Strait.

Alan Singleton (Principal Health and Safety Consultant - Organisational Health Unit) and Brett Moore (Regional Senior Health and Safety Consultant - Far North Queensland) will deliver the training program for approximately 10 school based staff. These trained WHSOs will assist the Head of Campus to manage risks in some of the most remote schools in Queensland. It is expected that this course will be conducted in Term 1, 2008.

Don Anderson, Executive Principal of Tagai State College has made a commitment to provide trained staff to assist the Head of Campus develop more comprehensive safety systems in these schools.

Reducing Mosquito Breeding in Rain Water Tanks

Queensland Health has produced some resources to assist the community reduce mosquito breeding grounds and keep rain water supplies clean. The following resources are available on the Queensland Health website as detailed below:

Managing your rainwater tanks

<http://www.health.qld.gov.au/phs/Documents/ehu/32922.pdf>

Guide to the prevention of Dengue Mosquito Breeding (north Queensland)

<http://www.health.qld.gov.au/dengue/documents/22380.pdf>





What's on the Safety Net?

Stress Less this Christmas!

The department stores are already stocking up on Christmas decorations so - believe it or not, the "silly season" is just around the corner! Below is a list of survival tips that have been prepared by Molly Robbins and Murray Davis - Assure Programs Psychologists.

Christmas is a busy time of year and, despite the fun and festivities, brings many challenges. Looking after ourselves is vital to our survival during this season. Here are some tips for maintaining good energy, managing stress, communicating and cooperating well, and making the most of this time.

1. Positive People Management (family, friends, customers)

- ☞ Have realistic expectations - Stress can lead people to act more insensitively, rush or to be on edge
- ☞ Anticipate misunderstandings – Aim to be tolerant and patient - you can't make everyone happy
- ☞ Take a Positive focus - Tune out bad or inappropriate behaviour and tune in good behaviour.
- ☞ Forget any family problems that have arisen during the year. Play the peacemaker for just one day!
- ☞ Change of plans - Tell family in advance so they can organise something else
- ☞ Saying 'No' - Be direct and concise, considerate not overly apologetic, remember you're saying 'No' to the request not the person!

In case of conflict –

- Manage your feelings - Relax & talk sense to yourself – "I'm cool & calm, I can manage this ok"
- Deal with the emotion first – Slow down the conversation, listen to clarify what is being said/heard
- Take one step at a time, focus on here and now and avoid taking negative comments to heart
- If still unresolved - agree to differ and try to change the topic or exit the situation gently.

2. Bring in Budgeting

- ☞ Budget early in collaboration with family stakeholders
- ☞ Include extras - presents, food, fuel, alcohol, taxis, decorations, postage, pet boarding etc
- ☞ Set limits on what you can afford. Do not feel pressure to overspend - It's the thought that counts!
- ☞ Make a gift list and decide a \$ limit for each person before hitting the shops
- ☞ Open a Christmas savings account early & pay cash when purchasing - leave the credit card at home!
- ☞ Be open - others may be relieved to hear you can't afford elaborate gifts and feel less pressured.
- ☞ Purchase gifts throughout the year or during sales. January is a time to stock up on cards, gift wrapping and stocking fillers for the next Christmas
- ☞ Homemade gifts for an inexpensive, personal touch (cards, jams, puddings, picked flowers).

3. Time Management

Before Christmas day:

- ☞ Make lists (presents, cards to write, food to purchase, what to cook and when to start cooking)
- ☞ Wrap presents as soon as you buy them or get them wrapped at department stores
- ☞ Start writing cards in November
- ☞ If affordable, hire home help to clean the house and tidy the garden the week before Christmas (that could be your present!)
- ☞ If you plan to bake, start earlier in the month and freeze what you can or purchase prepared food, sauces, puddings - you don't need to be a hero!
- ☞ Set the table the night before and plan how you would like Christmas day to unfold - but stay flexible!
- ☞ On Christmas day:
- ☞ Expect things to take longer than you plan, allow extra time and don't over load your day
- ☞ Assign tasks to each family member - half the fun of Christmas is having everyone involved.

4. Self Preservation

- ☞ Try to get some time out for you - even if it's just 10 minutes
- ☞ Relaxation - Deep breathing, body scanning, tension release, gentle stretching
- ☞ Try to remember your health – sleep and rest, drive safely, eat and drink sensibly
- ☞ At the Christmas Party - Brush up on your conversation skills - practice starters/endings, avoid topics too provocative or over-familiar, eat & drink well - set limits, slow your pace and keep hydrated
- ☞ If work pressures seem to be unmanageable, talk to your Human Resources advisor or Manager regarding options for additional workload or relief support.

A link to this fact sheet is available at: <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/eas/resources.html#fs>