



Welcome

Term 2 of 2004 began with great enthusiasm for the Organisational Health Unit's Health and Safety Team.

A state-wide meeting of Senior Occupational Health and Safety Consultants in early May was a prime opportunity for these health and safety staff from across the state to consolidate ideas, share concerns and develop strategies for the next twelve months.

As evidenced in this edition of *SafetyNet* there has been a great deal of activity around the state in field of health and safety.

The Creating Healthier Workplaces Discussion List has been particularly lively with many schools posing questions and contributing answers to organisational health related issues.

Of particular note for this issue is the Annual Workplace Assessment which is a legislative requirement under the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*. You can find more details on page 4 of this edition.

John Ryan - Director: Human Resource Services

Catch of the day!

SCHOOL-YARD BLITZ

Caloundra Primary School Leading the Way in a Noise Make-Over

Caloundra Primary in conjunction with the school's P&C Association is implementing numerous control measures to reduce the level of noise that both staff and students are exposed to throughout their day.

Just some of the noise hazards in the school were related to:

- Location of buildings and play areas throughout the school
- Materials used in classroom construction that did not absorb/dampen noise
- Environmental noise from local traffic.

Through successful consultation, Principal John Liscombe and WHSO Bruce Duffy have coordinated the implementation of noise control measures. Through their effective fundraising endeavours, the P&C Association made possible the air-conditioning of 4 of the school's classrooms - where noise was having an effect on student learning.



WHSO - Bruce Duffy and Principal - John Liscombe

This method for controlling the noise has reduced the unseen, often forgotten hazard to a manageable level.

Not only has it enhanced the children's ability to hear in the classroom but made the hot summer months significantly more comfortable. The school is currently continuing to address other noisy areas within the grounds. Congratulations Caloundra Primary, keep up the good work!

For information on managing noise levels refer to the Noise Advisory Standard 2004 from the Division of Workplace Health and Safety at <http://www.whs.qld.gov.au/advisory/adv010v3.pdf>.

Bronwyn Goopy - Metropolitan North CSU



School Safety Scribbles

COLDS & FLU: PREPARATION FOR WINTER

INFORMATION PREPARED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE FORD HEALTH GROUP

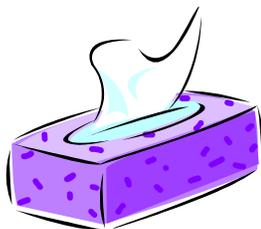
DID YOU KNOW??

- ◆ Regular exercise helps prevent colds and influenza
- ◆ A good diet with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables helps to boost your immune system
- ◆ Increased stress levels will lower your immune defences
- ◆ 1.5 million working days are lost each year due to the flu

TIPS FOR AVOIDING GETTING A COLD OR THE FLU THIS WINTER

Approximately 80% of colds and flu are spread by direct and indirect contact, so here are a few precautions that can be taken to lower your risk of getting a cold or flu:

- Wash your hands properly, especially prior to touching your face/mouth.
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Reduce stress
- Keep your house cool and well ventilated during the winter months
- Eat a diet rich in fresh fruit and vegetables
- Exercise regularly



Preparing your first line of defence

Your body's first line of defence is the immune system, which protects against disease and illness. Diet plays a very important role in immune function. Eating a diet rich in fruit and vegetables will give you essential vitamins and minerals needed to maintain good immunity.

Vitamin C is often used in the fight against colds and flu. All citrus fruits are good sources of Vitamin C. Zinc has also been shown to reduce the duration of colds and can be found naturally in oysters, fish, red meat, eggs and green vegetables or taken as a supplement.

It is important to start your day with breakfast. This helps maintain energy levels, in turn boosting your immune system. Anti-oxidants, found in fruits and vegetables, help to enhance our ability to fight infection. Research has shown that eating the recommended intake daily of fruit and vegetables is sufficient enough to maintain a strong immune system.

Exercise is also important in maintaining a strong immune system. Current research has shown that exercising most days of the week at a moderate intensity helps to increase the immune system by reducing stress hormones that impair immune function.

There are however some factors that can reduce our immune defences, these are:

- ◆ Environmental pollutants
- ◆ Nutrient-poor (empty-calorie) foods
- ◆ Stress
- ◆ Food allergies

IS IT A COLD OR THE FLU??

The flu is often misdiagnosed. The flu has many similar symptoms to a cold, basically they are both respiratory infections caused by viruses. If a cold is misdiagnosed as flu, there's no problem. At worst, a cold may lead to secondary bacterial infections of the middle ear or sinuses, which can be treated by your GP. However, if the flu is misdiagnosed as a bad cold, potential life-threatening complications may be overlooked. The following table highlights the symptoms of both the flu and colds to help you work out which you have.

Symptoms	Cold	Flu
Fever	No	Yes, high (39-40°C), lasts 3-4 days
Headache	No	Yes
General aches & pains	Yes, slight	Yes, often severe
Fatigue, weakness	No	Yes, can last up to 2-3 weeks
Extreme exhaustion	No	Yes, early and prominent
Stuffy nose	Yes	Sometimes
Sneezing	Yes	Sometimes
Sore throat	Yes	Sometimes
Chest discomfort, cough	Yes, moderate hacking cough	Yes, can become severe



What's on the Safety Net?

SCHOOL SAFETY ALERTS

The Health and Safety component of the Creating Healthier Workplaces web site now has two new sections.

On the front page of the Health and Safety section you will find the following icon:



Clicking on the School Safety Alerts button will take you to a listing of the school safety alerts that have been developed by the Health and Safety Team for use in schools and other relevant locations.

School Safety Alerts are developed in response to a known hazard and provides the Organisational Health Unit with a means to rapidly disseminate consistent information to

schools. Examples of school safety alerts are: "Hand Held Angle Grinders", "Chainsaw Use - Grounds Care", "Volleyball Post Ratchet Winch" - to name a few. The full list can be found on the site at: <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/healthsafety/safety.html>

WHAT'S NEW?

Another addition to the Health and Safety site is a "What's New" section. Because we are continuously adding items and amending components of the site, users can simply click on "What's New" to keep up to date with recent changes: some items on the What's New page items include: "Portable Soccer Goalposts" and Science - Incident".

What's New?

Casting the Net

100 PUT SAFETY FIRST

One hundred teachers, registrars, heads of departments, scientific assistants and principals gathered to improve safety in their schools. The second Workplace Health and Safety in Schools Conference Day was held at the Gold Coast on 23 March at Helensvale State High School. The delegates worked through many of issues associated with risk management in schools. Ninety three full time delegates and eight part-time delegates and presenters heard Ray Billiet from Workplace Health and Safety Queensland outline the legal requirements of risk management.

The program was billed as "Risk Management – the key to WHS in Schools". After the key note address by Ray, a series of 5 minute talks followed on risk management for non-teaching staff, a student perspective on risk management, Safe Operating Procedures and risk management, and lastly EQ policy and risk management.

Jim Rebetz, Principal Numinbah Valley Environmental Education Centre, spoke on excursions and risk management. This was a practical and well-received talk with examples of how to do it well.

The day ended with Neil Rogers from Metro South CSU of EQ looking into his crystal ball – Where will risk management be in the future?

Students from Helensvale catered for the very successful day and they also chaired the sessions. With a 50% increase on attendance this year, another venue may be needed for next year.



Delegates evaluating risk management forms

The conference day was organised with encouragement from the Centre of Excellence Maths Science Technology based on the Gold Coast and Support from the Queensland Science Teachers' Association.

- Bruce Clarke: Helensvale State High School

INJURY, ILLNESS AND DANGEROUS EVENT REPORTING AND RECORDING: DOEM HS-08 UPDATED

The updated version of the Department's policy DOEM HS-08 has been authorised by the Director-General. The policy details the requirements for the reporting and recording of injuries, illnesses and dangerous events at school and non-school locations. Make sure you review HS-08 to ensure your workplace is complying with this legislatively based policy.

Don't let these slip through the Net

COMING SOON: MANUAL HANDLING OF STUDENTS RESOURCE PACKAGE

The DOEM Policy HS-12 Manual Handling of Students has been revised to reflect current legislation. The Department is promoting a "minimum lift" approach which precludes lifting a student's weight in all but specific circumstances. An information package is being developed that will be sent to each school in Term 3. The purpose of the package is to provide schools with reference material and practical information to assist in improving the manual handling of students.

WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICER ANNUAL ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

The *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995* now requires that Workplace Health and Safety Officers (WHSOs) conduct an annual assessment of their workplace. This assessment should identify hazards and unsafe or unsatisfactory workplace health and safety conditions and practices.

How should the assessment be conducted?

Step 1. Using the Annual Health & Safety Assessment for Schools the WHSO should coordinate the completion of the assessment.

Step 2. Submit the completed report to the Principal and school H&S committee within 30 days of completion of the assessment. The recommendations to rectify any unsafe workplace health and safety conditions and practices should be summarised on page 1 of the Report.

Step 3. Principals should take appropriate action to rectify any identified unsafe health and safety conditions and practices within the report.

Step 4. The school must keep the assessment report and documentation associated with rectification of identified issues for 5 years.

The Health and Safety Team has developed a fact sheet and an Annual Assessment Proforma for school use. These resources can be found at on the Creating Healthier Workplaces Website:

Fact Sheet: <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/assessmentfactsheet.pdf>

Annual Assessment Proforma: Look under the "resources section" at <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/healthsafety/hs-mod-account.html>.

WHSO ANNUAL ASSESSMENT WORKSHOPS A BIG HIT IN CENTRAL QLD.

Liz Lindsay, Senior OH&S Consultant in Central CSU has been running a series of focus groups to introduce the WHSO Annual Assessment. Liz reports that annual assessment tool has been well received by those attending the focus groups and is already receiving positive feedback about the system.



METRO NORTH OH&S NETWORK MEETINGS

Network meetings are ALIVE!

Occupational Health and Safety Network Meetings are held every term to cover the eight districts in Metropolitan North Corporate Service Unit and once again Term 2 attracted many hard-working WHSOs – over 200 participants in all!

Network Meetings are an opportunity not only to learn about OH&S but to share ideas and success stories with our colleagues - to help us with our endeavour of putting this knowledge into practice.

Topics addressed in these meetings have included:

- Manual Handling
- Management of Hazardous Substances
- Chemwatch Database
- Electrical Safety
- Lockdown procedures
- Infection Control
- Safe disposal of syringes at school, and
- Changes to Workplace Health and Safety legislation.

These meetings are not *just* for WHSOs - all staff who reside in Metropolitan North districts are welcome. Registrars, principals, facilities/grounds staff etc often attend when they play a role in relation to the topic being discussed – numerous scientific assistants participated and contributed a wealth of information to the hazardous substances session.

Please contact your Metro North CSU Occupational Health and Safety Consultants for details of the next Network Meeting in your district.

Leanne Sked
ph: 3350 7827 leanne.sked@qed.qld.gov.au

Bronwyn Goopy
ph: 3350 7828 bronwyn.goopy@qed.qld.gov.au



For other geographical locations, contact the Senior Occupational Health and Safety Consultant in your local CSU. A full list of Senior Occupational Health and Safety Consultants was published in the last *SafetyNet* - at <http://education.qld.gov.au/health/pdfs/healthsafety/hs-safetynet-issue6.pdf>.