



Safety Alert

Star Pickets

A student was seriously injured on school grounds when their leg was lacerated due to contact with a star picket located in a garden area.

What are Star Pickets?

Star pickets are multipurpose metal stakes often used as upright posts to support barricading material for cordoned off areas. They can also be used as stakes to support growing trees and vines.

Dangers of Star Pickets

“Driving in” star pickets into the ground often burs and deforms the top edges of the stake making them sharp and increasing the risk of injury if a person comes in contact with an exposed picket.

In recognition of known injuries such as impaling, the safety industry has developed devices to cap the ends of star pickets.

Control Procedures for Schools

- Audit the whole school site and remove any unnecessary star pickets
- Avoid the use of star pickets in the school environment
- Where star pickets are used as a temporary measure, ensure they are appropriately capped at all times.

Hidden Dangers

The school indicated above had previously conducted an audit and removed a number of star pickets. During unsupervised play, however, a student climbed over a ground floor port rack and jumped down into an adjoining garden bed. The student’s leg was seriously lacerated due to being impaled on a star picket, which was not fitted with a safety cap. Its location was not detected in their audit.

School audits for star pickets should therefore include normally “out of bounds” areas such as gardens and other areas that students would not usually occupy.

More Information

Caps for star pickets are inexpensive and can be purchased from major hardware stores and safety equipment suppliers.

High Visibility Safety Cap

