

Safety Newsletter

A quarterly publication for injury and illness prevention

Winter 2025

Athletic Emergency Action Plans

Assembly bills 245 and 1653 made changes to Education Code section 35179 regarding emergency action plans and signage.

For school districts or charter schools that have interscholastic athletic programs, an emergency action plan must be in place that describes the location of emergency medical equipment and procedures to follow in the event of sudden cardiac arrest and other medical emergencies, including concussion and heat illness during an athletic activity or event.

Effective July 1, 2024, the Emergency Action Plan must be posted in compliance with the most recent pertinent guidelines of the National Federation of State High School Associations.

The California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) has a template of the posting requirements available on their website at [Emergency Action Plan Information – California Inter-scholastic Federation \(cifstate.org\)](https://www.cifstate.org/emergency-action-plan-information)

Additional information regarding these requirements can be found at:

- California Education Code Section 35179
- National Federation of State High School Associations [nfhs.org/articles/emergency-action-plans-should-be-reviewed-rehearsed-annually/](https://www.nfhs.org/articles/emergency-action-plans-should-be-reviewed-rehearsed-annually/)

HOLIDAY HAZARDS



Several types of hazards are created, often unintentionally, by decorations and festivities during the holiday season. These include, but are not limited to, the risk from fire, slips/trips/falls, lacerations, and poisoning. Mitigate holiday-related hazards with these best practices to keep your district sites safe and injury-free throughout the season.

FIRE HAZARDS

Each year, the U.S. Fire Administration reports, holiday fires kill more than 400 Americans and injure more than 1,600, causing a total of \$990 million in damages. Several simple precautions can be taken to help avoid the risk of holiday fires:

- You can use only flame-retardant decorations. No more than 20% of the surface area of walls can be covered with untreated paper or combustible decorations.
- Use only approved circuit breaker protected outlet Strips. Never connect more than one extension cord together (also known as “daisy chaining”).
- Keep areas around doorways free of combustible decorations to ensure safe egress in the event of a fire.
- If using decorative lighting always check cords for frays or damaged wiring. Replace any string of lights with broken cords or loose bulb connections. Read the manufacturer’s instructions for number of light strands to connect.
- Do not leave decorative lighting on when not in the classroom, especially at night.
- Never use candles or any other decorations with exposed heat elements.

(continued on next page)

Risk Mitigation in Winter Weather

California is receiving some much-needed rain and snowfall. As a reminder, there are actions districts can take to minimize property damage due to weather events.

- Check your building roofs for damage, loose shingles or cracks. Repair as needed.
- Check the trees on your property or enlist the services of an arborist. Diseased trees or broken branches can fall and cause property damage and/or injury.
- Work with your utility provider to determine if additional measures are needed to reduce hazards of trees coming in contact with power lines.
- As storms approach, survey your property for loose furniture, sports equipment, ag equipment or other items that could get lost or become projectiles in windy conditions.
- Prevent pipes from freezing by insulating pipes and/or keeping HVAC thermostats set at 55 degrees to prevent interior pipes from freezing.
- Adjust or turn off sprinklers to prevent water from freezing and creating a slippery walking surface.
- During the holiday break, arrange for periodic checks of facilities that may be vacant. These visits can be effective in preventing break-ins and extensive damage from rain, snow and freezing.

SLIPS, TRIPS & FALLS HAZARDS

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that each year, holiday decorations are responsible for more than 12,000 emergency room visits due to falls, cuts, and shocks. Prevent injury by:

- Keeping floors clear of debris and trip hazards.
- Keeping desks spaced evenly with enough walking room in aisles.
- Ensuring adequate illumination of the room is maintained.
- Never use a chair or desk to stand on. Instead, use an ANSI- approved and OSHA-compliant stepstool or ladder.
- Wear appropriate slip-resistant footwear.

Laceration Hazards

- Use caution with foil and paper decorations as they are a common cause for minor, albeit painful cuts.
- Avoid glass decorations. Use only shatterproof, unbreakable decorative items.
- Use only blunt tip scissors and do not let students use industrial classroom paper cutters unless adequately supervised. Keeping floors clear of debris and trip hazards.

Poisoning Hazards

- Do not use decorations made with toxic substances.
- Avoid candy-like decorations that may appear to be a tempting treat for younger students.
- Avoid fake snow for winter holiday decorations because it may irritate the lungs when sprayed and could pose a toxic hazard to students and staff.

General Hazards

- Do not allow decorative lighting to become a strangulation hazard. Keep lighting high on the walls.
- Do not hang items from ceilings, lights, or fire sprinklers.
- Do not use space heaters unless district approved and used properly per safety standards.
- Keep liquids away from electrical outlets and cords.
- Decorations should not cover or hide windows or doors.



