

From the Claims Desk: Back to School and Autumn Updates

If your organization has a school, this is a busy time of year. Children are returning for the new year, and there's a feeling of excitement in the air. While you join in on the back-to-school celebrations, however, be sure to remain vigilant about safety hazards.

Construction Zones

Many schools spend the summer months making updates and repairs to their property so it will be ready for returning young people. Sometimes everything goes according to plan and construction is completed by the time students return. Other times, unavoidable delays push construction back—which means that construction and education happen simultaneously.

Sam Carucci, Vice President—Claims, Church Insurance, says that's okay as long as construction is completely cordoned off and inaccessible to young people. Closer supervision of students, locked doors, and fencing are all necessary components to keeping kids safe during construction.

Bussing and Traffic Flow

Students enter and exit vehicles at a breakneck pace at the beginning and end of the school day. Make sure that you have clearly marked drop-off and pick-up points. Help drivers understand the rules by communicating them in the school newsletter or flyers that students bring home.

"A lot of traffic flow design is common sense," Sam says. For example, "Organize bus drop-off so students will not have to cross through areas where parents drop other students." As much as possible, keep students from having to cross roads by designating drop-off/pick-up points near the school entrance.

The beginning and end of the school day can seem like additional recess. Supervision is especially important during these busy—sometimes even chaotic—times of day. Assign properly trained teachers, administrators, or other staff to keep watchful eyes on students during these times.

Maintenance Committees

Perhaps your organization is located in a popular vacation getaway area, so summer is your busy time of year. For those organizations, autumn represents a population drop for your membership. If that's the case, now is the perfect time to form a maintenance committee and take stock of projects that need to be done.

"A lot of schools require service hours for graduation," Sam says. He recommends using properly supervised local young people as a clean-up crew to help maintain the property. "It's a win-win situation. The young people get the service hours they need, and the facility gets help with projects."

Time Flies

The beginning of the school year feels like a new start—but time can pass quickly, especially if your organization is busy during this time of year. “Think ahead and make a schedule,” Sam says. “Before you know it, Thanksgiving will be on the horizon, and then Christmas.”

A schedule will allow you to address issues that require interruptions to routine during times when your facility experiences less traffic. “Make a plan, so there are fewer chances for injury.”