

## Arson prevention starts with eliminating opportunity

A school fire is always devastating, and when arson is involved, the sense of violation is even more profound. Taking steps to reduce the opportunity for an arsonist to target your school can be as basic as doing the following:

- **Remove garbage cans daily during non-school hours.** Garbage is frequently used as an ignition source for arson fires or to keep unwelcome visitors warm.



- **Cut back vegetation and clear away any debris around campus buildings** both to reduce fire risk and hiding places. Keep vegetation watered and green.
- **Keep dumpsters at least 10 feet away from buildings and roof overhangs.** Make sure all discarded materials are placed inside the containers, then padlock them after school hours.
- **Check lighting with a night walk through the campus.** Replace all burned-out bulbs. Install lighting, including motion sensor lights, in any dark and secluded areas.
- **In outside hallways and quads, post all notices and paper signs in protective display cases.**

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## Chaos or coherence?

**Resilience is a learned skill that can help calm emotions**

*Michele Mariscal, SIA Prevention Specialist*

A resilient state of being allows us to move through stressful situations like a boat moving through rough waters with a skilled navigator on board. In times of stress, our resilience “boat” can either be buffeted by the “whitewater” or capsize. Learning the skill of resilience can prove valuable when the going gets tough, and it’s something that can be learned and enhanced by the regular practice of some key habits.

The science of stress and its effects is well-known and accepted. What’s still to be widely accepted is our ability to affect that stress by managing our emotional state. There are well-documented benefits of positive emotions in scientific literature, but how does one apply the work in daily life? The next time your “boat” is moving through life’s “rapids,” try these techniques:

**Step 1: Pause.** Take a time-out and breathe slowly and deeply. Focus on the center of your chest or heart area. This begins to take your focus off the thoughts that may be driving you into more rapids.

**Step 2: Breathe as if you’re taking air into and out of the center of your chest, your heart space.** This focused breathing will help keep you momentarily out of your head, but will more importantly provide your body with more oxygen. Many of the adverse health effects of stress are attributed to inefficient breathing and poor nutrient circulation.

The simple technique of heart-focused breathing can be done:

- Before, during and after meetings
- While driving
- As a transition between activities

This tool is one of the several energy-management tools from the Institute of HeartMath. SIA offers a training based on these principles to help you develop habits to neutralize stress and build a more resilient personality. You also will learn how emotions drive brain activity into chaos or coherence.

To bring this training to your school or department, contact Michele at [mmariscal@sia-jpa.org](mailto:mmariscal@sia-jpa.org) or call (916) 364-1281 ext. 1261. The training can be delivered in a format that works for your schedule and is most effective when carried out over a several-week period, allowing time to practice the techniques between sessions. A webinar format will be available soon, so watch the *Wellness & Safety* newsletter.



- Planning pointers for safe events
- Winter driving tips

## Special event checklists should include safety and security steps

Theater productions, musical performances, carnivals, spaghetti feeds, and other fundraisers and special events are integral parts of the school experience. But because these activities are separate from daily responsibilities, and because injuries will sometimes happen, it's important to take the time to discuss potential problems and plan appropriate responses. Here are some planning pointers:

### Students and volunteers:

- Require all participating students to have a parent or guardian sign a permission form for the event. Keep these forms for one year following the end of the current school year.
- Give volunteers clear instructions about their tasks and responsibilities.
- Review all plans with site administrators to ensure that all district requirements are met. Contact district risk managers for additional assistance.

### When inviting the public to the campus:

- Check light sources to ensure activity areas are well-lighted for nighttime events.
- Provide signage or volunteers to direct people to activity locations.



Some potentially high-risk activities, such as carnivals with bounce houses, involve additional risk that's not part of standard SIA coverage. In these instances, the district must notify SIA in advance so the risk can be

- Prior to each event, check the routes to the location for safety hazards and redirect with signage or volunteers if there's any concern.
- Provide adult supervision.
- Hire additional security if needed to protect equipment or to provide extra safety.

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evaluated for outsourcing to a special events insurer. If the activity coverage is not obtained, the district may not be covered in the event of a loss. The cost of this additional coverage is \$175 per event and this special activity coverage helps protect the district.

It's also essential to allow enough time for insurance processing to avoid event cancellation. To determine the need for event coverage, and for additional information on the coverage process, contact the district office to complete the SIA Special Events Liability Insurance Questionnaire.

Organizing a special event takes a lot of time and care. Be sure to include safety and liability considerations on your planning checklist.

## Some pointers on winter driving safety



- **Give yourself enough time to arrive at your destination.** Winter trips can take longer than those at other times of the year, especially in storm conditions or where there are icy roads.
- **Make sure your cell phone is charged in the event you're stuck along the road,** but avoid the temptation to use the phone while driving.
- **Adjust your speed to the road conditions.**
- **Leave more distance than usual between your vehicle and the one just ahead of you,** giving yourself at least 10 seconds to come to a complete stop.
- **Be careful when driving over bridges, as well as on roadways rarely exposed to sunlight** – they're often icy when other areas are not.
- **Don't activate your cruise control when driving on a slippery surface.**
- **Monitor weather conditions at your destination before beginning your trip.** If conditions look as though they're going to be too hazardous, just stay home.
- **Look out for yourself.** Assume other drivers aren't concerned with your safety – you're responsible for protecting yourself and your passengers.

30-minute daily walks can work wonders for health and heart



wellness  
& safety



## Walk your way to heart health in just 30 minutes a day

### February is American Heart Month

Walking is one of the most versatile forms of exercise because you can do it just about anytime, anywhere. The following tips will help you maximize your walk time:

#### **Like to move as soon as your feet hit the floor?**

- Before you go to bed, get your walking clothes and shoes ready so it's easy to put them on quickly and head out the door in the morning.
- Eat a piece of fruit or a few spoonfuls of yogurt for a quick fuel-up.
- Walking to your favorite music may help get you moving – just make sure you can still hear traffic.
- If it's dark, wear reflective clothing or carry a light.
- Be sure to stretch a bit at the end of your walk. Watch a morning news show or check your email while stretching.

#### **Is lunch time the only break in your busy day?**

- Schedule your lunch-time walk in your work calendar. Think of it as an important appointment.
- Keep everything you need for walking at work. This way you won't find yourself saying "I forgot my shoes. I can't go."
- Recruit some coworkers to join you. You can keep each other on track.



- Depending on your walking pace, the weather and how much you sweat, you may be able to wear your work clothes and just put on athletic shoes. Or you may prefer to change into a t-shirt.
- In cooler weather, you might need a jacket, hat or gloves. If you're walking briskly, you'll heat up in a few minutes, so don't overdress.

- Bring your lunch or pick a route where you can grab a quick healthy meal at the end of your walk.

#### **Is working out after work your idea of happy hour?**

- Have a light snack about an hour or two before you leave work so you don't experience an energy dip and talk yourself out of walking. Try yogurt, a handful of almonds or a piece of fruit.

- Pick a route without heavy traffic because rush hour can increase air pollutants.
- Do some shoulder rolls and other warm-ups to release the stress of the day before heading out.
- If it's already dark, wear reflective clothing or carry a light.



#### **Every step counts**

Most adults should try for at least 150 minutes (2.5 hours) a week of moderate-intensity activity. Thirty minutes of brisk walking at least five days a week is one way to meet this goal. But what if you're so tight on time that you can't spare a half hour every day? Then get creative and break up your activity into shorter sessions. For example:

- In the morning, park or get off the bus/train about 10 minutes away from your job and walk briskly to work.
- At lunch, walk for 10 minutes around where you work, indoors or outside.
- At the end of the day, walk briskly for 10 minutes back to your car or station.

And there you have an easy 30-minute daily workout! Remember, exercise is any kind of physical activity that gets your heart rate up.

Source: American Heart Association

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moderate-intensity activity.



## Use WeTip

For more information

contact Teresa Franco  
at [tfranco@sia-jpa.org](mailto:tfranco@sia-jpa.org) or  
916-364-1281, ext. 1256.



### 1-800-78-CRIME

## StopIT!

For additional information

on starting this program in  
your schools

contact Rick Jenkins  
at [rjenkins@sia-jpa.org](mailto:rjenkins@sia-jpa.org).

### Arson prevention - from page 1

- **Block access to narrow spaces** or gaps between portable structures with fencing or other barriers.
- **Keep fire hydrants free of debris and vegetation for easy accessibility** by the fire department.
- **Turn on outside sprinklers during night hours.** Intruders don't like to get wet.
- **Keep window coverings closed after school hours** to hide room contents. Fires are sometimes set to cover up breaking/entering and theft.
- **Secure all vents and screens to crawl spaces under campus buildings and portables.** Heavy-gauge screens with flanges that bolt to the outside of the building help prevent access.
- **Remove ladders and equipment when not in use** and store appropriately to prevent unauthorized building access.
- **Inspect fire, heat, smoke and intrusion alarm systems monthly** to be sure they're working properly and that alarm signals are audible where needed. Repair all malfunctioning elements.
- **Discourage loiterers and intruders at your school.** Be aware of possible warning signs, such as cigarette butts, matches, graffiti, and discarded bottles and garbage, indicating that someone who shouldn't be there has been on school grounds. Vandalism and arson go hand in hand.
- **Report all suspicious fires, no matter how small,** to the local fire department. Request investigation for possible arson. Early intervention with a fire-setter may avert future arson fires.
- **Promote arson prevention at school staff meetings.** Show the SIA video *30 Ways to Prevent School Arson* to increase awareness about the potential for campus fire and the significance of a loss to your school community. The video is available through our website at <http://www.sia-jpa.org/resources/online-training/30-ways-to-prevent-school-arson/>.
- **Invite your school's neighbors to be partners in your fire-prevention plan.** Ask them to keep an eye on your school after hours and report any suspicious activity.

For additional resources to reduce the potential for fire at your site, visit the **Fire Safety and Arson Prevention** page on our website at <http://www.sia-jpa.org/loss-prevention/fire-safety-and-arson-prevention/>.

*The material in this newsletter should be part of your Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP).*

*Keep a copy of this newsletter in your IIPP binder and be sure all employees receive a copy.*



*"A good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination."*

– Nelson Mandela