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Schools Insurance Authority
SIA for Kids
SCHOOLS IN PARTNERSHIP
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October is National Bullying Prevention Month

It's cool to be kind

Priscila Gonzales, SIA Prevention Services

As National Bullying Prevention Month approaches, it's crucial to educate students and young children about bullying, and raise awareness about its harmful effects. By defining the meaning of bullying and recognizing the harmful impact it can have on peers, students may become better equipped to handle situations and support those affected. Education on this matter may allow students to gain a greater sense of empathy, helping children to understand the emotional and psychological consequences of bullying. Encouraging open communication within schools and homes ensures that students feel safe discussing these issues with trusted adults, making it possible for early intervention and support.

Enforcing anti-bullying policies in schools and workplaces reinforces the importance of addressing and reporting bullying issues. The following tips may aid in early bullying prevention and promote positive behavior toward others:

1. **Promote a culture of empathy and respect:** This contributes to positive behavioral interactions among peers, reducing the likelihood of bullying.
2. **Monitor social and interactive behaviors:** This allows for early detection of potential bullying scenarios, encouraging intervention before situations escalate.
3. **Encourage kids to pursue hobbies they enjoy:** This may allow students to find community and make friends with similar interests.
4. **Lead by example:** Demonstrating respect and kindness may influence young students to do the same.

Following these tips can promote healthy, positive interactions at school and at home. Educating students on the unfortunate consequences of bullying may inspire them to be more considerate of others' feelings and to support peers who are experiencing bullying. As October approaches, it's a great time to remember that it's cool to be kind!

For additional information on how you can help prevent bullying: How to Prevent Bullying | StopBullying.gov.

Charge into fire safety

Fire Prevention Week is October 5-11, 2025

Most of the electronics we use in our homes every day — smartphones, tablets, power and lawn tools, laptops, e-cigarettes, headphones and toys, to name just a few — are powered by lithium-ion batteries. In fact, most everything that's rechargeable uses this type of battery.

If not used correctly, or if damaged, lithium-ion batteries can overheat, start a fire and even explode. To reduce these risks, look around your home; it's important to know which devices are powered by them. Learn the importance of using these batteries correctly to prevent fires in the home and follow the buy, charge and recycle safely approach.

Buy only listed products

- When buying a product that uses a lithium-ion battery, take time to research it. Look for a stamp from a nationally recognized testing lab on the packaging and product, which means that it meets important safety standards.
- Many products sold online and in stores may not meet safety standards and could increase the risk of fire.

Charge devices safely

- Always use the cables that come with the product to charge it. Follow the instructions from the manufacturer.

(continued on page 5)

SIA for Kids SCHOOLS IN PARTNERSHIP

• Ditch the 'sad desk lunch' with a helping of creativity

Skip the 'sad desk lunch' and make midday meals enjoyable

Lyn Poll, M.S., SIA Prevention Services

Let's be honest: The "sad desk lunch" is way too common. Cold leftovers in cracked Tupperware, eaten with one hand while hammering out emails. Or maybe a vending machine snack grabbed in a rush. Or worse....nothing at all, because who has the time, right? The truth is, we all deserve better.

Why Desk Lunches Drain You

Two-thirds of us eat lunch at our desks. Over half say they're "too busy" to take a break. The result? Energy crashes, stress rises, and burnout creeps in.

Like batteries, we only have so much charge. Without a reset, we run ourselves down. But when you step away for a real lunch, you recharge — boosting mood, focus and overall health.

So, let's ditch "desktop dining" and make midday meals easy, energizing and enjoyable. All it takes is a little creativity, a pinch of planning, and the reminder that your break matters.

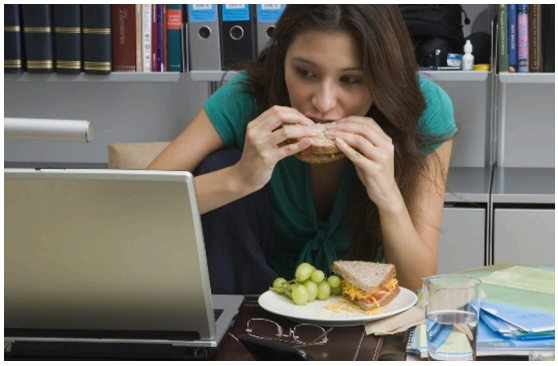
Make Lunch a Moment, Not a Multitask

Eating while working doesn't just feel sad, it's bad for your brain and body.

Research shows daily breaks improve performance, happiness and long-term health. Protect your lunch like you would any important event.

Quick ideas to reclaim your lunch break:

- Step away from your desk, even if only to a different chair.
- Eat outside or by a window for a mood lift.
- Block time on your calendar and stick to it.
- Play music or a podcast and let your brain rest.
- Pair lunch with a mini ritual, such as stretching, reading, doodling or just breathing.



Add Joy to the Routine

Lunch doesn't need to be fancy, just intentional. Small touches tell your brain *This matters. I matter.*

- Use a real plate or colorful bento box.
- Slip in a piece of dark chocolate.
- Pack infused water or a fun mocktail.
- Try a theme, such as Mediterranean Monday, Wrap Wednesday, Fancy Friday.

Small upgrades equal an effective mindset shift.

Lunch Equals Connection

Food isn't just fuel, it's a chance to connect. Shared meals lower stress, build relationships and spark happiness.

Easy Ideas:

- Invite a coworker (in person or virtually).
- Start a #LunchPics thread in Slack.
- Host a quick "lunch 'n' learn."
- Schedule a "no work talk" lunch.

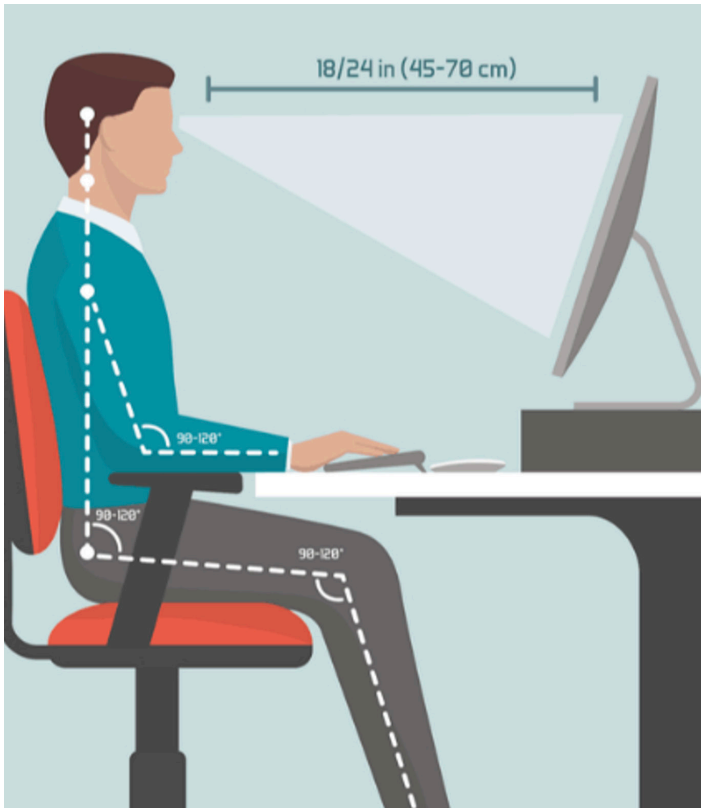
Your 3-Step Lunch Challenge

Want to break the "sad desk lunch" habit? Start here:

1. Eat away from your desk twice this week.
2. Try one new lunch idea.
3. Share your win with a friend, coworker or online (bonus points for a pic).

Lunch doesn't have to be gourmet, it just has to feel like a break and a time to recharge, reset and remind yourself that you matter.

Here's to joy on a plate, reclaiming your breaks and ditching the "sad desk lunch" for good.



Ergonomic toolbox tips

Lita Chang, B.S., SIA Ergonomist Specialist

In our digital world, people spend hours each day working on computers, sitting at desks and using mobile devices. As a result, poor posture and repetitive movements can lead to discomfort, fatigue and even long-term injuries. Thankfully, basic ergonomic adjustments can make a significant difference in how you feel during and after work.

Here are some simple ergonomic tips to get you started on improving your comfort, focus and overall well-being.

Set Up Your Desk and Chair Properly

- **Adjust your chair height** so your feet rest flat on the floor and your knees are about level with your hips.
- **Use a chair with good lumbar support** or add a cushion to support the natural curve of your lower back.
- **Keep your arms at a 90-degree angle,** with your forearms parallel to the ground when typing or using a mouse.
- **Position your monitor at eye level,** about an arm's length away, to avoid straining your neck.

Check out this short 30-second video https://www.pbergo.com/free-resources.

Watch for more Ergonomic Toolbox tips in future issues of Wellness & Safety.

Spotlight on…

El Dorado County's 'colorful' lunch crew

SIA recently participated in El Dorado County's Nutrition Services staff development day, organized by Mother Lode's Food Service Supervisor Bobbi Lujan. The team explored Carol Ritberger's *What Color Is Your Personality?*, a framework that uses four colors (red, orange, yellow, green) to highlight how personality influences communication, decision-making and teamwork.

This engaging training encouraged staff to better understand and appreciate different workplace styles. Thank you to Bobbi and the "colorful" lunch crew for inviting SIA to be part of the day!

Does your district have an in-service, health or safety event that you would like SIA to attend? This is a free benefit to our member districts. Contact us at PreventionServices@sia-jpa.org.

SIA for Kids SCHOOLS IN PARTNERSHIP

• Neat and clean is the first rule of safety and efficiency

Fire Safety

(continued from page 1)

- If you need a new charger, buy one from the manufacturer or one that the manufacturer has approved.
- Charge your device on a hard surface. Don't charge it under a pillow, on a bed or on a couch. This can cause a fire.
- Don't overcharge your device. Unplug it or remove the battery when it's fully charged.
- Stop using your device right away if the battery smells weird, gets too hot, makes popping noises or changes in shape or color. If safe, move the device away from anything that can catch fire. Call 9-1-1.

Recycle batteries responsibly

- Don't throw lithium-ion batteries into the trash or regular recycling bins because they can catch fire.
- Recycling your device or battery at a safe battery recycling location is the best way to dispose of them. Visit *call2recycle.org* to find a recycling spot near you.

Additional information and classroom materials are available at Celebrate NFPA Fire Prevention Week (FPW), October 5-11.

Risk Review

Attention: **School Site Principals and Staff, M&O, Custodial, Risk Management**

Safety Bulletin: Good housekeeping is a safety issue

Good housekeeping is a safety issue. When your work area is clean and neat, you can find what you need and do your job efficiently. It makes it easier for custodial and maintenance staff to do their jobs too. It also allows for quick escape in case of emergency.

Identifying Hazards:

- Trip and fall hazards include anything on the floor that doesn't belong there. Pathways must be kept clear.
- Objects that can hit you or that you can bump into are common problems. Open cabinets and doors, and materials precariously stacked atop other materials are accidents waiting to happen.
- Stacks of papers and other combustibles are fire hazards. Excessive paper also contributes to indoor air quality problems.
- Cleaning supplies and other chemicals need to be stored in cabinets that are out of the way or locked.

Good Housekeeping Checklist:

- Keep food and drinks out of work areas.
- Throw away trash promptly and properly.
- Clean up spills immediately.
- Set a schedule to purge excess materials and clean work areas a couple of times during the year and stick to it. Encourage others to join you – the mutual support can help.
- Keep cords and wires untangled; knotted wiring can create electrical hazards.

- Label all containers and materials to ease cleanup and storage.
- Don't store heavy boxes or items on high shelves. They're hazards and can cause injury if they fall when moved.
- Don't hang onto little scraps of this and that because they might come in handy someday. If you really think you can use them, choose and label a shelf, drawer or storage box for that purpose.
- Keep entryways clear and open. Shelves and boxes near doorways can block emergency exits in the event they fall into the pathways.

Everybody loves a parade, especially when they're safe

School parades are celebratory traditions, especially at homecomings and during the holiday seasons. To ensure the safety of both participants and spectators, it's important to understand the risks associated with parade events. Therefore, SIA recommends the following for school-sponsored parades:

Administration Approval

- District business and risk management departments should communicate the policies and procedures for parades to their schools.
- School site staff must get approval for holding or participating in parades through appropriate channels.
- School site principals need to obtain the appropriate participation forms from their district offices.
  - An Agreement for Activity Participation waiver form is available from SIA.
  - A completed participation form should be obtained for all participating students.
- The use of animals, large and small, should be carefully reviewed and approved by administration.

- Administrators have the right to remove any float/vehicle/participant, at any time, based on their assessment relating to safety and security concerns, interference with the progress of the parade, or for any other reason deemed appropriate.
- Any incidents or accidents should be treated and reported promptly to school and district administration.

(continued on page 6)

SIA's Leadership Academy: Successful leaders making successful schools

Many managers are promoted because of their excellent technical skills on the job, but may never have learned how to be leaders of people. This is where SIA's Leadership Academy comes in. The academy offers a collection of courses throughout the year that are specially designed to help managers become more competent and confident in their daily interactions with staff and colleagues. SIA believes that successful leaders make successful schools.

The next Leadership Academy will kick off the new year with *Fueling Performance: Practical Tools to Motivate, Coach, and Grow Your Team*. Participants will learn that managing performance is about bringing out the best in their team members every day.

Sessions are offered either in-person or virtually. To learn more about the Leadership Academy and to be added to the contact list, contact Lisa Konarski at lkonarski@sia-jpa.org.

Upcoming Leadership Academy Sessions:

Fueling Performance
October 21, 2025 – 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
In-person

Flexible Leadership: An Introduction
November 20, 2025 – 2 to 3 p.m.
Virtual

Improving Your One-to-Ones
December 13, 2025 – 11 a.m. to noon
Virtual

Check the SIA website calendar for other upcoming sessions.

Free leadership training resource

Kevin Eikenberry, bestselling author, international speaker and a regular SIA Leadership Academy trainer is hosting a **free** leadership event September 22-25, 2025. ***Virtual Leader Con*** supports the growth and development of leaders across the globe. Learn from today's top practitioners and industry leaders about the most pressing and emerging leadership and learning topics. Visit his website to review the agenda and register. You can attend one or all the sessions.

Parades

(continued from page 5)

Vehicle Use

- Vehicle drivers must provide the following documentation in advance:
  - Valid driver's license (and be over 25 years old).
  - Proof of current insurance covering the participating vehicle.
- Four wheelers (ATVs) and motorcycles are not allowed.
- School staff should perform walk around safety checks of all vehicles and any riders.
- The number of people riding in a vehicle must not exceed the number of people the vehicle is designed to carry (i.e., the number of seat belts in the car).
- All floats carrying people must be equipped with adequate restraining devices (body harnesses and protective railings) capable of stopping anyone from falling from the unit.
- Vehicle passengers may not:
  - Jump off/onto a moving vehicle or float at any time.
  - Sit, stand or ride on vehicle hoods or trunks.
  - Sit, stand or ride on vehicles or equipment not intended for passengers.
  - Extend their arms/legs outside of a moving float/vehicle.
- Participants may not ride in the bed of a pick-up truck.
- Participants riding on a flat-bed truck need to be secured with adequate restraining devices and are not allowed to ride on the side/back of a flat-bed.
- Participants may not sit on the back edge or top of the back seat of a convertible automobile. Riders must be seated and belted at all times.

Procession Recommendations

- Maintain an appropriate distance (two car lengths) between vehicles.
- In the event of an emergency, parade participants must move to the right of the parade route to allow clear, unhindered access for emergency vehicles.
- Participants must not throw items (i.e., candy, beads) to the crowd or use items such as water guns and silly string. Walking alongside the procession to hand out items is acceptable. Supervisors should closely monitor parade watchers, especially small children, to prevent them from moving onto the parade route.

Parade Participant Walking/Marching Safety Rules

- A safe walking/marching distance from all motorized vehicles should be maintained.
- Adult supervisors should walk with each marching group at strategic intervals.
- Supervisors should monitor for signs of physical/heat exhaustion. Adequate water should be kept available.
- Helmets and protective safety gear should be worn by anyone riding animals, bikes, skateboards, scooters, etc.

Free virtual trainings to enhance your life

SIA provides the staff of our member districts with virtual trainings on a variety of topics that apply to both personal and professional life. To learn more, or register for any of the training courses listed below, click the course title or contact tfranco@sia-jpa.org. You also can join our email list to learn of future events at SIA – Schools Insurance Authority (sia-jpa.org).

9/3	Understanding Anxiety	5:30-6:30 p.m.
9/5	Aging Healthfully	5:30-6:30 p.m.
9/8	Teaching Your Kids Accountability	5:30-6:30 p.m.
9/15	Doomscrolling	noon-1 p.m.
9/15	Doomscrolling	5:30-6:30 p.m.
9/18	Understanding Depression	5:30-6:30 p.m.
9/22	Autism and ADHD in the Workplace	5:30-6:30 p.m.
9/24	Communication: Beyond the Basics	5:30-6:30 p.m.
9/25	How to Build Successful Teams, Employee	5:30-6:30 p.m.
10/1	Making Time for Fitness	5:30-6:30 p.m.
10/6	Bias and What We Can Do About It	5:30-6:30 p.m.
10/8	How to Build Customer Satisfaction	5:30-6:30 p.m.
10/9	Understand and Embrace Diversity	5:30-6:30 p.m.
10/15	How to Better Manage Stress	5:30-6:30 p.m.
10/16	Eating Healthier On-the-Go	noon-1 p.m.
10/16	Eating Healthier On-the-Go	5:30-6:30 p.m.
10/20	Build Your Resilience	5:30-6:30 p.m.
10/22	How to Manage Change for Employees	5:30-6:30 p.m.
10/28	Making the Most of Your Working Day	5:30-6:30 p.m.

QUOTE TO NOTE

"Just be yourself, there is no one better."

- Taylor Swift

Wellness & Safety is published by the Schools Insurance Authority, P.O. Box 276710, Sacramento, CA 95827-6710, (916) 364-1281, 1-877-SIA-KIDS. The SIA is a joint powers authority, composed of 37 members, that collectively provides workers' compensation, liability, property, and health benefit insurance coverage on behalf of its member districts. The SIA school districts are: Arcohe, Atwater, Buckeye, Camino, Center, Central Sierra ROP, El Dorado Co. Off. Ed., El Dorado High, Elk Grove, Elverta, Folsom-Cordova, Galt Elem., Galt High, Gold Oak, Gold Trail, Hayward, Indian Diggings, Latrobe, Merced City, Mother Lode, Natomas, North Bay SIA, Pioneer, Placerville, Pollock Pines, Rescue, River Delta, Robla, Sac. City, Sac. Co. Off. Ed., San Juan, Shasta-Trinity SIG, Silver Fork, Twin Rivers, Visions in Education Charter, and Woodland. SIA Officers: Executive Director — Brooks Rice; President — Wendy Frederickson, El Dorado COE; Vice President — Kristen Coates, Elk Grove USD; Secretary — Ryan DiGiulio, Twin Rivers USD; Newsletter: Lyn Poll, Prevention Services; CG Communications

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