

Health & Safety Schools Newsletter

From: Doug Brady - Health & Safety Advisor

To: All schools

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HEALTH & SAFETY LAW POSTER

FINGER PROTECTION



The revised poster must be displayed from April 2014.

The new version is available from various sources but one of the cheapest options is probably from HSE Books. The price is £13.20 which includes VAT and no charge for postage. As the VAT (£2.20) is refundable the total cost will be £11.

Details are: Product code

ISBN: 9780717663392

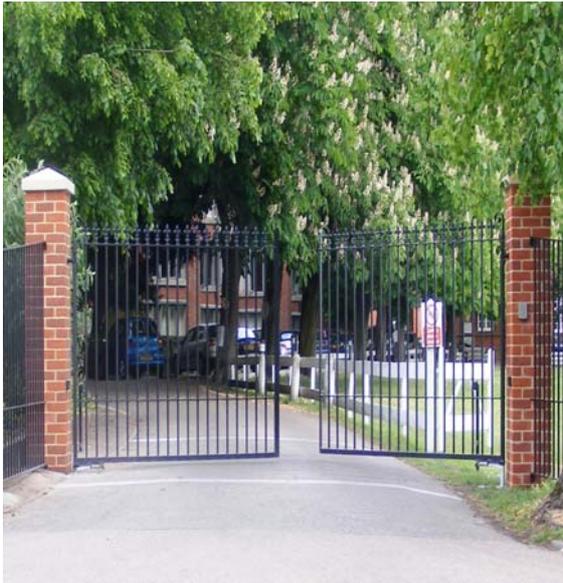
If you want to go ahead and order the A2 poster version then use this link.

[Law poster](#)

A gust of wind, a thoughtless moment, a playtime prank – whatever the cause **government** figures show that: over **30,000** children are injured every year by trapping fingers in doors and that more than **1,500** subsequently needed some form of surgical treatment. Obviously, nobody would want a child in your care or visiting your premises to suffer such an accident. Under current Health and Safety legislation it is possible for your premises to be fined if practical measures were not taken to prevent such accidents. Victims may also pursue a legal claim for damages. The dangers associated with finger entrapment affect not just young children in schools and nurseries, the elderly and disabled are also particularly vulnerable. Furthermore, any person in a public or commercial place could potentially be a victim of door related accidents.

Details of a recent "HSE" prosecution can be found via the following link: [Finger trap](#)

POWERED PERIMETER GATES



Several other “Local Authorities” have been prosecuted recently due to accidents involving children who became trapped in powered gates.

One of the most recent incidents related to gaps at the side of the gates when they were shut but the gaps are reduced to zero when the gate is in the open position creating a guillotine effect. This unfortunately resulted in the child losing the tips of three fingers when their hand was trapped in the school gate.

Previous incidents have included:

The closing force of the gate when pedestrians obstructed them was too high.

Individuals were not detected when they were in close vicinity of the “gate” closing edges.

All gates should have sensors that can stop them if someone has been detected. This could be light beams (photoelectric devices), which stop the gates before they reach an obstacle.

If there are parts of the gates where someone could become trapped or get crushed while it is moving, these need be protected. People could get injured, for example, as the bars of the gates pass the gate post. The gates must have an emergency release mechanism in case someone gets trapped.

Under the current Health and Safety Regulations **you have a legal responsibility** to have all powered gates/barriers maintained on a regular basis by a suitably qualified engineer and that documented servicing records are kept.

WOODEN DECKING



Slips and trips are the most common cause of injuries at work. In wet weather, wooden decking can become extremely slippery, even more so if covered in damp leaves. Reducing the risk of accidents on your wet decking will minimise the risk of an insurance claim being made against your school.

First of all, keeping your decking clean will help to reduce the amount of Algae and grime that develops on the surface – this is actually what makes the timber slippery when it’s wet, not so much the water itself.

With simple, inexpensive yet effective health and safety solutions, these incidents can be easily avoided. Solutions such as:

- Ensuring a risk assessment has been carried out to help identify any associated hazards
- Advising members of staff and students to wear sensible footwear
- Displaying warning signs about the risk of slipping (where appropriate)
- Clearing leaves, litter, mud, debris and excess water from the decking surfaces
- Pressure wash and scrub the surface regularly to remove algae and other debris that can add to and increase the slippery conditions. If no “pressure washer” use a bucket and a 'deck brush' (essentially a wire brush on a long handle).
- Coat and regularly maintain with a suitable “Decking Stain” which provides a tough durable finish and has invisible anti-slip micro beads and an algaecide to help protect the film surface from algae and mould growth.
- Installing good quality entrance matting
- Applying yellow hazard tape or paint to identify the decked area boundary
- Applying anti-slip or high visibility tread directly onto the decking surface
- Providing suitable lighting
- Providing and maintaining hand rails

Please remember that all slip and trip incidents should be reported to the **Health & Safety Advisers**.

PLAYGROUND AND OUTSIDE SPORT EQUIPMENT



Now that the warmer weather has arrived pupils will want to play on your outside playground equipment and some physical education lessons may take place outside.

Risk Assessments will be required to ensure that **adequate** levels of supervision are in place.

When planning to purchase any new equipment consideration must be made to the age range of pupils who will have access to the equipment. The installer should provide the technical specification for the equipment which will include the intended age range that the equipment is designed to be used by. Signs may/will be required to inform staff, pupils, visitors and any intruders of relevant safety information including age limits.

It is essential that staff who are given responsibility for moving and assembling physical education equipment are given suitable training for safe lifting techniques.

Setting up of equipment like netball posts must not be carried out by pupils and they should be kept clear of equipment until it is securely in place

As well as an annual certified detailed inspection carried out by a **competent** person, in-house checking will be required so as to prevent injury from damaged or unsafe equipment. Regular operational inspections by site maintenance team/ site controller/caretaker should take place to check the operation, stability, wear etc of the equipment. The results of the inspection should be recorded which should be available for examination if required.

Play areas require routine documented visual inspections to be carried out by the site staff or playground supervisor to identify any hazards for example: vandalism, weather damage, broken glass etc. The frequency of these visual inspections will be determined by such factors as the security of the site and the location of the play areas.

Please get in contact me if you require any further assistance with this matter.

Further information can be found using these links:

[Schools premises management.](#)

[Physical education and organized games](#)