California Schools JPA℠

SAFETY MATTERS
RISK MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

WATER INTRUSION

OBJECTIVE   To understand the risks and cost of water intrusion and know how to prepare to eliminate or mitigate the losses from water intrusion.

FLOODING CAN OCCUR DUE TO HEAVY RAIN and severe storms, including those in coastal areas that result in storm surges, rapid melting of heavy snow, tsunamis, hurricanes, tropical cyclones, and even dam failure. Flash floods are a specific type of flooding that are dangerous, sudden, and violent—developing in as little as a few minutes—and can even occur in areas where there is no rainfall.

The National Weather Service (NWS) issues a variety of information statements related to flood events, including the following: Flash Flood Warnings, Flood Warnings, and Flood Advisories, which the public is encouraged to "take action" upon receipt; and Flash Flood Watches and Flood Watches, which the public is encouraged to "be prepared" upon receipt. Flash Flood Warnings are issued by NWS via the Wireless Emergency Alert system.

If not addressed within the first 48 hours, water and moisture that finds its way through roofs, windows, doors, joints, and foundations can lead to fungal growth and adverse health effects by compromised indoor air quality. Whether the source is internal (plumbing, HVAC) or external (rain, flash flooding), identifying the source and mitigating the effects is critical.

csjpa.org/safetymatters

PREVENTION

At a minimum, a water intrusion program should include the following:

- Assignment of responsibilities to manage water intrusion program
- Training of staff
  - identifying water damage
  - inspection and communication requirements
  - remediation procedures
  - personal protective equipment
- Documentation
  - Monthly building inspection checklists
  - Maintenance inspection
  - Incident report log
  - Complaint response documentation
- Investigating suspected moisture problems
- Response to water intrusion
- Remediation of water intrusion
- Mold remediation process
- Remedial methods and disposal

EXTERIOR INSPECTION

Include these in your monthly exterior inspection:

- Clean out roof drains and gutters
- Maintain proper sealants on roof flashings and penetrations
- Check for evidence of ponding on the roof (after a storm)
- Ensure proper drainage exists around your building— water sheds away from the structure
- Keep weep holes free of debris and working properly
- Install/repair gaskets or sweeps on doors
- Ensure weather stripping is in good repair (no cracks or separation)
- Check that doors and windows close properly

California Schools JPA℠

INTERIOR INSPECTION

Include these in your interior inspection:

- Look for signs of water staining (ceiling/walls)
- Watch for condensation and wet spots
- Ensure proper drainage of HVAC equipment
- Maintain low indoor humidity (below 60% relative humidity)
- Check if there are musty odors present
- Do not delay in repairing plumbing leaks or having the HVAC system inspected

Unless the water damage occurs from a catastrophic event, the source may not be obvious or easy to locate. By taking preventative measures and developing a plan for responding to moisture intrusion, you can avoid the potential for expensive mold remediation, impact to school operations, and workers' compensation claims.

For a Water Intrusion Sample Plan, please go to csjpa.org under Forms and Resources.

RESOURCES

Resources on Preparing for Floods at Education Agencies

Preparing for Floods at Institutions of Higher Education Fact Sheet

Mold and Water Damage

Water Intrusion and Flood Control Plan (download)

This California Schools JPA fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.

California Schools JPA℠

SIGN-IN SHEET

WATER INTRUSION

Trainer: _____ Trainer's Signature: _____

Date: _____ Organization: _____ Department: _____

Class Participants:

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Name: _____ Signature: _____

csjpa.org/safetymatters