



**WISCONSIN SCHOOL SAFETY COORDINATORS ASSOCIATION
WSSCA**

WSSCA NEWSLETTER FOR NOVEMBER 2011

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Wisconsin's New Concealed Carry Weapons Law and Our Schools.

As you may have heard, as of November 1, 2011, Wisconsin has a new law that allows its citizens to carry concealed weapons (not just guns) IF properly licensed to do so. I have received a dozen or so requests from school people at all levels asking for information on how this new law affects schools. I will provide information I received from several sources, to include the law itself. This newsletter is not intended to answer all questions our membership might have, but I think I address all the issues that you need to know. AS ALWAYS, I am not a lawyer so you should discuss any decisions you make regarding this topic with the appropriate legal advisors. Also, there are exceptions to the laws as I explain them so be careful not to interpret everything herein as final. It may not be. It is important to note that it is likely to take an applicant 45 days to receive final approval for a license, so it may be December 15 before we actually see anyone walking around with a license to legally carry a weapon.

To begin, possession of any weapon in a school is still against the law. Nothing has changed that fact. **Possession of a firearm on school grounds (in a school, parking lot, etc.) is a felony (Wis. State Statute 948.605(2)(a)). Even a person with a license under the new law cannot carry a firearm in a school.** I hope that is clear. However, there is a change in the law regarding possession of a firearm within 1,000 feet of a school. As of November 1, 2011, a person **with** a license may now carry a concealed weapon **within** that 1,000 foot limit - but **not** on school grounds. For example, a licensed carrier may stand on the **public** side walk in front of the school entrance and still be legal. If he takes one more step **onto** school grounds, this is illegal (s. 948.605(2)(b)1r. Anyone **without** a license is still forbidden from possessing a firearm within 1,000 feet of a school. That violation is a simple forfeiture of money and is not a felony.

I was also asked if schools are **required to post signs** that show that it is illegal to carry weapons on school grounds. For K-12 schools, **they are not.** Those applying for a license are provided a notice of statutorily prohibited locations (like schools) and no other notice or signage is required. Colleges and universities should consult with their legal advisors. I believe some administrators will want to post signs anyway, so if they do, the requirements suggested by the law for other organizations/agencies who wish to ban weapons include the size (5" by 7") and the warning that the sign "must provide appropriate notice and the name of person giving notice," per s. 943.13(2)(bm)1. If you are posting signs, protect yourself and read the law first.

I have talked with my colleagues in states that have had this type of law in effect for many years and frankly, they don't understand all the fuss we are making over it. It doesn't seem to be much of a problem for them. Let's hope we are as fortunate. -Editor

Wintertime slips and trips.

Winter's coming and many of us will begin what is the busiest season of the year as all sports come inside and need set ups from November to March. As the weather drives us indoors, it drops lots of snow outdoors, which can create its own unique problems as we try to maintain safe walking surfaces. When you review your actuarial data from your insurance carrier, many of you may find that slips and trips are your number one ranked incident.

We know that we need to use a de-ice product of one type or another, but have you reviewed your product to see what temperature it is effective to? Did you know that there are products that have multiple blends of de-ice material and can be effective to temperatures as low as -30 degrees? De-ice products that are made from sodium chloride (rock salt) begin to lose effectiveness when temperatures dip below 25 degrees Fahrenheit (F). How many times do we get snow below 25 degrees? How effective is your product below that temperature? Products with Magnesium Chloride can be effective in temperatures as low as minus 25 degrees F and are also safer for plants and causes less damage to floor surfaces.

There are other de-ice products with effective working temperature in between the ranges above and your product supplier can help you choose the product that is right for you and the temperature ranges we have each winter. Working with your insurance carrier, you should be able to develop a log for snow events to document when and what product you put down because of a snow event. This could prove to be valuable information should you have an incident.

But merely dealing with the event on the outside of the building does not completely eliminate the possibility of a slip or trip on the inside. Shoes or boots that have been exposed to snow covered or wet parking lots and sidewalks are bringing water and slip causing material into your building. There are tools that you can use to help minimize the water on the floor and lower the risk of a slip and fall. Eliminating the snow on the parking lots or sidewalks as soon as you can is a great place to start.

Proper use of walk-off mats can remove both water and debris depending on the mat you choose, where you use them, and how many steps are taken on the mat. Mats in entrances or foyers are a great place to start and can be expensive, however, a good quality mat can help you prevent other problems. Also, entryway matting is now available in carpet squares which can lower the life cycle costs by allowing you to remove and replace only the tile that wears out and not having to replace the whole mat.

Once inside the building additional matting from the foyer doors going into the building will help remove more water and help prevent a slip and fall. In the winter, we know that foot traffic can overwhelm our matting, so using products such as a Hurricane (a "Caution Wet Floor" four sided sign with a battery operated fan) or a floor dryer will provide additional drying capabilities. Use of automated scrubbers to help vacuum up the water can also help remove potential accidents.

During winter, we cannot remove all the risk of having a slip or fall incident in our facilities. We can, however, help to minimize those risks and provide a safer environment to those who use our buildings.

Robert Ellis, East Troy School District

NOTE: Plan now for WSSCA's Annual School Safety Conference February 27 and 28 at the Kalahari. Have a good idea to save money in your school? Send it to me and win valuable prizes. See the website for details. Contest ends November 30, 2011. Times are tough and we all need each other more than ever.

Happy Thanksgiving to everyone from President Bill Freeman and the WSSCA Board of Directors!
Peter Pochowski, Secretary and Editor

Education First - Safety Always