



QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

ARSON & VANDALISM

Schools are increasingly targeted by vandalism and arson, especially during times when facilities are vacant. Holidays, summer break and areas with limited visibility tend to create extra vulnerabilities. Potential losses from these incidents can vary dramatically, from minor nuisances to significant, multimillion-dollar damages that may lead to prolonged closures of essential school buildings.

To help protect your school facilities from these threats, consider the following proactive measures:

Enhance Awareness of Your Buildings

- **Regular Inspections:** For any vacant buildings, it's crucial to have staff conduct regular walkthroughs—ideally daily—to deter potential criminal activity.
- **Community Engagement:** Utilize press releases and collaborate with community groups to encourage local residents to keep an eye on your facilities. Provide them with clear instructions on how to report any suspicious behavior.

Improve Visibility

- **Landscape Management:** Trim trees and shrubs to eliminate hiding spots. This will enhance sightlines and reduce opportunities for vandalism.
- **Adequate Lighting:** Ensure all areas, particularly those that are typically dark, are well-lit at night. Additional lighting can greatly improve visibility and deter criminal activity.
- **Surveillance Systems:** Install video cameras in less visible areas, such as the rear of buildings, to act as an effective deterrent.

Secure Your Facilities

- **Lock Everything Up:** Unlocked buildings and rooms create opportunities for crime even during the school day. Ensure that all doors are secured when staff are not present to supervise.
- **Establish Locking Protocols:** Develop a system to verify that all access points are locked after school hours.



- **Assess Roof Access:** Review your facilities for any vulnerabilities related to roof access, such as easily climbable fences. Consider modifications to discourage unauthorized entry.

Manage Combustible Materials

- **Safe Storage:** Keep items like dumpsters, recycling carts and outhouses at least 20 feet away from buildings to reduce fire risks.
- **Clear Surroundings:** Regularly check that no combustible materials, such as boxes, tires and pallets, are stored near buildings, particularly behind kitchens and vocational shops. Additionally, remove any dried vegetation near buildings.

Maintain Security and Fire Systems

- **Regular Inspections:** Ensure that your building security and fire detection/suppression systems are consistently maintained in accordance with local codes and manufacturer specifications.

For further assistance, PACE Risk Management Consultants are available to conduct thorough assessments of your facilities, helping you identify and mitigate potential risks. If you're interested in scheduling a risk assessment or have any questions, please contact us at riskmanagement@sdao.com.