



QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

OWNER CONSIDERATIONS FOR CONSTRUCTION AND REMODEL PROJECTS



Construction and remodel projects pose unique challenges and the potential for serious disruptions to the educational environment. Typically, the general contractor and their sub-contractors are the parties responsible for site control and security. However, the potential impacts to the educational community also need to be addressed by the owner. In developing a strong relationship with the contractor and communicating to the affected population, the owner can minimize any adverse consequences to the educational environment. Below are several prime considerations.

General Involvement: Communicating to the community regarding upcoming disruptions is important. Attend routine construction meetings to stay informed concerning planned construction activities and be available to discuss the potential impacts on the organization's operations. Identify the responsible parties from the owner, general contractor, project manager and the chain of command in both organizations to address emergent needs/issues. It is also important to include the local fire authority and other first responders so they are aware of the project and any response modification(s) that may need to be addressed.

Err on the side of overcommunication. Advise affected parties in advance of any activities which may be disruptive. Advance notice allows for time to effect other operational modifications, as necessary.

The owner may also wish to observe site activities on a routine basis and observe the activities and their impacts. Observe with a keen eye safety issues and current and upcoming disruptions, such as vehicle traffic, pedestrian traffic, power/utility interruptions, etc. Consider training other facilities staff to assist in anticipating potential adverse impact(s) due to the project activity.

Project Perimeter Access and Control: Access is customarily the responsibility of the general contractor. Most often, the job site will have fencing, copious signage (authorized personnel only, etc.) and controlled access points/gates. Construction sites can be considered attractive nuisances and should be adequately secured in off hours. In some cases, the contractor or owner may deem it necessary to have on-site security present or conduct intermittent (off hours/weekend) visits.

Equipment and Storage Areas Controls: If equipment and materials will be stored on-site and outside of the construction perimeter, additional consideration for containment, similar to that found surrounding the construction site, should be discussed and determined. This may be important to the educational institution depending on how the course of construction/builder's risk insurance is structured for the project. Construction materials may be subject to theft, vandalism and fire. Store these materials securely to minimize access but also to limit potential collateral damage should loss, damage or vandalism occur.

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Construction Trash and Debris Storage/Removal:

These materials must be managed in a similar fashion as described with equipment. Debris may be an attractive nuisance and has been a frequent target of arson. Store these materials securely to minimize access but also to limit potential collateral damage should a loss occur.

Vehicular Traffic: As the construction project begins and proceeds, impact to vehicular traffic, including mass transit and parking should be considered. Additional traffic control devices may be needed, such as signs, flaggers or barricades. Accessible parking must be addressed if existing spaces are removed or rendered inaccessible during the project. Temporary accessible parking and other modifications including alternative paths of travel may be needed.

Pedestrian Traffic: Maintaining safe pathways while ensuring appropriate and accessible routes (including signage) needs to be considered during the construction project. Communication and notification are key to effectively anticipating and addressing such issues before they arise.

Environmental Concerns: For new construction, it is common for adjacent occupants and/or others nearby to experience adverse impacts such as noise, dust and even ground vibrations due to heavy equipment, etc. These types of exposures may need to be monitored depending on the type of construction activity. Typically, these are foreseeable and anticipated impacts can be both communicated and addressed.

Lighting: Determine if construction activities will reduce or eliminate any existing lighting which could impact evening activities. As appropriate, make modifications to the existing plan or provide for temporary lighting for safe ingress, egress and security concerns. In some cases, the construction site may also need to consider additional lighting for off-hours operations and security purposes.

Utility Failure: It is not uncommon for construction projects to inadvertently impact utilities, such as electrical, gas, water, sewer, etc. Therefore, it is a prudent practice to develop and/or update a utility failure/interruption response plan to address this potential.

The considerations outlined above are just a few of the more frequent factors to be contemplated while planning and managing a construction or remodel project in the educational environment. However, each project has its own unique characteristics and impacts. The owner should consult and review the contractual requirements of all parties with its insurance agent, legal counsel and/or other consultants to further determine the owner's obligations and wisest course(s) of action.

If you have any additional questions or need further assistance, please reach out to the Risk Management Department at 800-285-5461 or at riskmanagement@sdao.com.

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