



## **Is Your Life-Safety Plan in Place During the Summer?**

Jim Lang – Gallagher Bassett Risk Control

Just last week I walked through a school that was in full, mid-summer “maintenance and cleaning” mode - classroom furniture was in the hallways, radios were blaring, masking tape draped across hallways indicating a ‘just waxed’ floor and so on. Between the floor scrubbers, furniture and boxes of supplies – it was a challenge to make it through.

Then I rounded the corner, and found a number of classrooms in use. Summer classes were in full swing, including a day care center with more than 30 small children in attendance. It turns out that one entire wing of the building was being used for summer programs, with almost 300 students, staff, and faculty in the school.

But then, I noticed something distressing. The two sets of double doors at the end of the hallway leading to the outside were chained and padlocked shut. If there was an emergency, how would everyone get out? Through the just waxed and still slippery floors? Running around the desks and chairs jammed in the other hallway - 300 people? What if the “crisis” was coming from that end of the building? What if???

I mentioned this problem to a custodian who indicated “yeah, we forget to unlock it sometimes, but no one’s ever said anything.” When it was stated that the doors must be able to open whenever the school was in session, the worker said OK, and somewhat reluctantly unlocked the padlocks and removed the chains.

Hey everyone! Let’s not forget basic Life-Safety! **EVERYONE** needs to have at least two routes of egress out of our school buildings at all times – whenever they are occupied. Don’t forget night classes! Do your levels of building “security” change in the evening? Are hallways closed off - doors inaccessible?

Here’s the legal verbiage out of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) handbook:

### **NFPA 101 - Chapter 4 – General**

#### **4.5.3 Means of Egress.**

Unobstructed Egress. In every occupied building or structure, means of egress from all parts of the building shall be maintained free and unobstructed. No lock or fastening shall be permitted that prevents free escape from the inside of any building other than in health care occupancies and detention and correctional occupancies where staff are continually on duty and effective provisions are made to remove occupants in case of fire or other emergency. Means of egress shall be accessible to the extent necessary to ensure reasonable safety for occupants having impaired mobility.

Please make sure all of your Technical College employees are aware of and comply with this safety rule. Be safe! Be careful!