



Risk Management Advisories

School Safety Patrol Programs

There are two major issues related to School Safety Patrol programs:

1. Insurance Coverage

Section 5.6 of the OSBIE Comprehensive Liability Policy states that the word "insured" shall include the Named Insured (the School Board) and the following additional interests stated under Subsection 5.6.8:

"Students participating in School Safety Patrols and Bus Safety Patrols and other safety programs without limiting the generality of Section 5.6.1."

There is no question that member school boards who choose to operate Safety Patrols (also known as Crosswalk Patrols) and Bus Safety Patrols are covered under the OSBIE insurance policy for the negligence of the volunteer patrollers while they are acting within their designated duties. Should a volunteer patroller be named personally in any law suit, the OSBIE policy would protect that individual, provided, of course, that they were acting within the scope of their assigned duties.

2. Risk Management Issues

As previously stated, insurance coverage for patrol programs is not in dispute. However, it is important for school boards and/or school board transportation consortiums to be aware of the elements of risk associated with any program or activity, and to make informed decisions based on that knowledge. The mere fact that an activity or program is covered by insurance should not be the only factor used in deciding to proceed with, or continue, operating any program.

The following issues should be taken into consideration with respect to the operation of School Safety Patrol programs:

Can the risk be avoided?

From a legal stand-point, cross-walk safety is the responsibility of the local municipality. The municipality - not the school board - has the authority to hire adult crossing guards, enforce the Highway Traffic Act and, in general, govern crosswalk safety. However, with budget constraints, fewer municipalities are providing these services. School boards need to be aware that, in spite of public pressure, there is no legal requirement to operate school patrol programs.

Can the risk be managed?

In spite of the fact that they are under no legal obligation to do so, school boards may choose to begin or continue to operate crosswalk patrol programs. It is recognized that, although the board is assuming additional risks of law suits by operating a crosswalk patrol program, the OSBIE loss statistics to date have not shown any claims experience resulting from these programs.

If a decision has been made to relieve the municipality of its responsibility for crosswalk safety, then the school board must implement a program that not only provides for the safety of students, but also protects the board from a law suit should an injury occur.

A good risk management program will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Join the Canadian Automobile Association's (CAA) [School Safety Patrol Program](#) (or equivalent).

This program establishes a partnership between the CAA, local police, the school board and/or school board transportation consortium to operate a safe, systematic, proven program;

2. Volunteer selection:

- Student volunteers must be between ages 11-14 (however if a school only goes to Grade 5, then a Grade 5 student - age 10 - would be eligible to volunteer if they are capable of fulfilling the program responsibilities).
- Selection characteristics for volunteers to include students demonstrating responsibility, punctuality, dedication, enthusiasm and self-confidence;
- Parents must be informed of the duties and risks associated with their child's involvement as a crossing patroller.

3. Volunteer training:

- Request the police services to conduct volunteer training in accordance with the CAA School Safety Patrol program (or equivalent).
- Periodic documented review of lessons and safety instructions for patrollers.
- OSBIE recommends that in addition to the initial training, a review of lessons and safety instructions be reviewed at least at one other time during the school year.

4. Daily administration:

- Assign a teacher advisor as the Patrol Supervisor
- Work with the police to select appropriate patroller crossings - intersections with high traffic density are NOT recommended;
- Determine patroller staffing and shift schedules - allow for last minute substitutions, absent patrollers, etc.
- Monitor patrol activities and equipment requirements;
- Hold regular patroller meetings;
- Ensure student body complies with patrol procedures;
- Discipline/dismissal of unsatisfactory patrollers;