



ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINE

Title: Health and Safety: Use of Microwaves in Classrooms

Effective Date: September 14, 2004

Responsibility: Director of Education

The use of microwave ovens may be appealing in that they can ensure that students enjoy heated food. However, these devices do introduce an unnecessary additional risk in the classroom environment.

Ontario School Boards' Insurance Exchange (OSBIE) reports several cases of injuries to children who were burned while using microwaves. Some of these injuries relate to liquids being spilled on children and others arise from the handling of hot dishes. The following risk management tips are helpful in addressing this risk:

1. Avoid installing microwaves in classrooms if possible. Thermos bottles are still the safest option.
2. Microwaves should not be permitted in rooms or areas where they would be accessible to unsupervised use by students. (Supervision is required by a teacher or other adult, not a student.)
3. Microwaves should not be installed on moveable carts.
4. Supervision should extend to students carrying hot liquids to eating areas.
5. Beware of the "exploding liquid" phenomenon – liquids can become super-heated in a microwave oven without boiling and when moved can literally explode unexpectedly.
6. Microwave ovens should be CSA approved, tested periodically for "leaking" microwave energy, and kept in proper working condition.

If the supervision of microwaves is not possible at all times, the removal of microwaves from classrooms is recommended by OSBIE for the safety and security of children.