

“ZACH’S LAW ” REQUIRES THE ADOPTION OF A MOVABLE SOCCER GOAL AND EDUCATION POLICY

Movable soccer goals pose a threat to the safety of children and adults from the dangers of unanchored or improperly anchored goals tipping over. For example, Zachary Tran of Vernon Hills died in 2003 when a goalpost fell on him during a soccer practice. Eight (8) years later, on August 2, 2011, Governor Quinn signed into law the Movable Soccer Goal Safety Act, now commonly known as “Zach’s Law,” which is aimed to prevent these tragedies. Care needs to be taken when installing, setting up, maintaining, moving, and properly securing a movable soccer goal.

Zach’s Law, which became effective immediately upon its passage, requires any organization, including local governments, that own and control a movable soccer goal, to create a soccer goal safety and education policy that outlines how the organization will specifically address the safety issues associated with movable soccer goals. The policy, which needs to be adopted now, should at the very least, educate the community on the dangers of movable soccer goals, prohibit anyone from playing, climbing, or hanging on any part of the soccer goal (this especially applies to children climbing on or hanging from nets or goal frames), address how the goals are to be installed to prevent tipping and how they are to be stored when not in use.

The law also prohibits manufacturers, retailers, wholesalers and distributors from selling movable soccer goals that are not “tip resistant.” Beginning one (1) year after the effective date of the law, no commercial dealer, manufacturer, importer, distributor, wholesaler, or retailer may manufacture, re-manufacture, retrofit, distribute, sell at wholesale or retail, contract to sell or resell, lease, or sublet, or otherwise place in the stream of commerce, a movable soccer goal that is not tip –resistant.

By June 30, 2012, the Department of Public Health is required to provide technical assistance materials based on guidelines such as the Guidelines for Movable Soccer Goal Safety in order to improve soccer goal safety. The Department may make these materials available on its website. If your community owns or controls movable soccer goals and would like assistance in drafting a safety and education policy, please contact us.

For more information about matters discussed in this issue, please feel free to contact Klein, Thorpe and Jenkins.

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