

***ELECTRIC FOLDING PARTITIONS  
TRAINING***



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**BOCES**  
EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

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March 16, 2001

Mr. Robert Lavery  
SED Facilities  
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Albany, NY 12234

Mr. Lavery,

The enclosed is Caroline Dimmick's presentation relative to Electrical Partition Training Manual Release. Please be aware that the document expresses her opinion and understanding of the subject matter and is not meant to be an official, all inclusive training manual prepared for distribution from Caroline or the OCM BOCES. In other words, feel free to use this manual as you see fit, but neither Caroline or the OCM BOCES can accept any liability for its use by any person(s), school district or other such entity which uses this manual.

Sincerely,

*Garry A. Luke*  
Garry A. Luke  
Director

cc: Caroline Dimmick, Safety Officer  
David Daignault, Safety Supervisor  
Dr. Peters, District Superintendent, OCM BOCES

# **ELECTRIC FOLDING PARTITIONS TRAINING COURSE OUTLINE**

## **I. HISTORY**

- A. March 1991 - 9 yr old LI girl - caught in pocket (spring-loaded safety feature)
- B. January 2001 - 12 yr old Ithaca boy - crushed between door and wall
- C. Education Law '409-d - 1992 - changed to '409-f

## **II. PROCEDURES**

- A. Established - written and posted
- B. Constant Supervision
- C. Warn/Control Room Occupants
- D. Cover Operation

## **III. SIGNAGE**

- A. Location (at all electric operating stations)
- B. Reflective of Current Procedures
- C. In Training Program

## **IV. HANDS-ON OPERATION**

- A. Starting the Movement
- B. Stopping the Movement
- C. Reversing the Movement
- D. Opening and Closing of Pocket Doors to Secure Hidden Spaces (if applicable)
- E. Electric Bleachers (if applicable)

## **V. REVIEW - QUESTIONS / COMMENTS**



# ELECTRIC FOLDING PARTITIONS

## I. HISTORY

In January 2001, a 12 year-old Ithaca boy was trapped between a folding gymnasium partition and a wall. The sliding doors were motor driven and were activated by a teacher to divide the gym into two rooms. His death prompted a review of electrically-operated folding partitions and bleachers. This was not the first time there was an accident involving such equipment. In March 1991, a 9 year old girl was fatally injured by an electrically operated moving gym partition when she was caught in the pocket of the returning door.

In April 1991, the SED issued guidelines which listed the kinds and types of equipment and features which would make the operation of folding partitions safer. Guidelines for new operable partition installations were also distributed. The SED advised boards of education to evaluate their existing operable partition installations and take whatever action they deemed necessary. They did not, however, mandate specific hardware or installations.

In June 1992, New York State Education Law was amended by adding a new section '409-d (later changed to '409-f) requiring educational institutions with electrically operated partitions, doors, or room dividers, to post safety procedures established for the operation of such equipment. The amendment read as follows:

*'409-f. Electrically operated partition and door safety.*

*The board of education, trustees, principal or other person in charge of every public or private school or educational institution within the state, wherein classrooms or other facilities used by students are found to have electrically operated partitions, doors or room dividers, shall arrange and require, that:*

- 1. Appropriate and conspicuous notice regarding the safe and proper operation and supervision of the electrical device operation such partition, door or room divider is posted in the immediate vicinity of the operating mechanism; and*
- 2. Establish a procedure for the notification of all school employees and all other persons who regularly make use of the area where such device is located in the safe and proper procedure for the operation of the mechanism.*
- 3. Starting in the Spring of 2001, the electrically-operated*

*folding partitions signs and training requirements will be included as items in the fire inspection reports.*

## II. PROCEDURES FOR USE

In 1992, it was strongly recommended that at least one key-operated, constant pressure control station be provided for all existing electrically-powered partition installations. In the 1996 revision of the *SED Manual of Planning Standards*, SED Facilities include a requirement that new installations of movable partitions shall be controlled by a two key constant pressure, series wired system with control stations located on opposite sides and ends of the partition run. Additional control stations may be necessary for intersecting partition arrangements.

Common sense rules of operation should be implemented and vigorously enforced and safety features must never be tampered with or overridden. Procedures for use must be written to cover the particular equipment operation and must be posted.

All operators of folding doors must be trained in its safe operation and familiar with these procedures. Only authorized personnel should operate this equipment. At no time may students operate or be given keys to electric folding partitions. Do not operate equipment if pathway is not clear. Before operation, check the door pocket to be certain that it is clear of persons and obstacles visually. Inspect behind the partition including areas inside the partition enclosure box or cubby. Closure doors, if any, must be in proper position before operation.

Ensure that all students within the area are under supervision. Direct students to stand back at least 10 feet and do not allow crossing between adjacent rooms while the partition is in motion. When extending or retracting the partition a staff member must be stationed on both sides of the partition. All students must be in sight of the operator(s).

The switch operator(s) must be at the control switch at all times while the partition is in motion. Never leave equipment unattended while it is in motion! At no time wedge the control switch with keys or other weights to counter a constant pressure spring. When the door is full extended or retracted, the switch operator must remove the key from the switch cylinder. At no time shall keys be left in the switch when the unit is unattended or not in operation. Closure doors, if any, must be in proper position before the operator leaves the room.

Report any problems with this equipment **immediately** to your building custodian or the maintenance office. Post a notice that the equipment is inoperable to inform others until the repair can be conducted.

### III. SIGNAGE

Signs explaining the safe and proper operation and supervision of the partition door must be conspicuously posted. The notice must be posted at all electric operating stations next to the operating mechanism. All staff should be advised of the location of the notice and requirements for it to be maintained. The sign should be reflective of current procedures and part of the training program.

Since all equipment must be maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions, staff should periodically inspect the operating area to be sure that the notice is still in place and the system is working properly. Staff should report any irregularities or problems with the equipment **immediately**.

SED recommended the following signage be posted by electrically-powered partitions:

**Caution**  
**Electrically-Powered Partition**  
**Only appropriately trained staff may operate this partition.**  
**Control stations must be attended by staff members while the partition is in motion.**  
**Staff members must stand on opposite sides of the opening or closing partition.**  
**Students must stay away from the partition when in motion.**

A copy of the district's posted procedures are included in this manual. Attachment A are the posted operating instructions for gym dividing doors and Attachment B are the operating instructions for motor-driven bleachers.

### IV. TRAINING

Only trained and authorized school personnel may operate any electrically-powered partitions. Whenever any new school employees are hired who may operate this equipment, they must receive this training prior to operation of the equipment.

Staff should be apprised of safety features and trained in the safe operation of movable partitions, doors, and other such equipment. Training must include hands-on experience in starting, stopping, and reversing direction of partition travel. Emphasis should be placed on speed of stopping and on problems encountered if the partition jams.

Operators should follow the established and posted procedures. Students must be under direct staff supervision while the partitions are being operated. Students/room occupants should be warned to stand away from and not be allowed to cross between adjacent rooms while the partition is in motion. Remember, safety features must never be tampered with or overridden. (An example of a blueprint of a partition installation is enclosed as Attachment C of this manual. Appendix D contains manufacturer information regarding the district's specific equipment.)

## V. SUMMARY

The safety of students is all our concern, and their safety near such equipment must be foremost whenever the equipment is operated. Students should also be instructed in safe behavior around such equipment including staying away from the partition when it is in motion. Students must never be allowed to operate or be given keys to electric folding partitions.

All problems with this equipment should always be reported **immediately** to the building custodian or the maintenance office. Post a sign over the key switch stating that the equipment is inoperable to inform others until the repair can be conducted.

Although there is a section of the Education Law to guide us, it is up to all of us to ensure the safety of our students by following the established procedures.

# ATTACHMENT A

## SAMPLE OPERATING PROCEDURES ELECTRIC FOLDING PARTITIONS

All operators of this folding door must be trained in its safe operation and familiar with these procedures. Only authorized personnel are to operate this equipment. At no time may students operate or be given keys to electric folding partitions. Do not operate equipment if pathway is not clear.

1. Before operation, check the door pocket to be certain that it is clear of persons and obstacles visually. Inspect behind the partition including areas inside the partition enclosure box or cubby. Closure doors, if any, must be in proper position before operation.
2. Ensure that all students within the area are under supervision. Direct students to stand back at least 10 feet and do not allow crossing between adjacent rooms while the partition is in motion.
3. When extending or retracting the partition a staff member must be stationed on both sides of the partition. All students must be in sight of the operator(s).
4. The switch operator(s) must be at the control switch at all times while the partition is in motion. **NEVER** leave this equipment unattended while it is in motion! At no time shall the operator wedge the control switch with keys or other weights to counter a constant pressure spring.
5. When the door is full extended or retracted, the switch operator must remove the key from the switch cylinder. At no time shall keys be left in the switch when the unit is unattended or not in operation.
6. Closure doors, if any, must be in proper position before the operator leaves the room.
7. Report any problems with this equipment **immediately** to your building custodian or the maintenance office. Post a notice that the equipment is inoperable to inform others until the repair can be conducted.

**THESE SAFETY PROCEDURES MUST BE POSTED AT EACH CONTROL SWITCH FOR ALL ELECTRICALLY OPERATED FOLDING DOORS.**

## APPENDIX B

### SAMPLE ELECTRICALLY-OPERATED BLEACHERS PROCEDURES

All operators of electrically-operated bleachers must be trained in its safe operation and familiar with these procedures. Only authorized school personnel are to operate this equipment. At no time may students operate or be given keys or wands to such bleachers.. Do not operate equipment if pathway is not clear.

1. Before operation, check in front of the bleachers to be certain that it is clear of persons and obstacles. Inspect behind the bleachers for any equipment, balls, students, personnel, etc., prior to operation.
2. Ensure that all students within the area are under supervision. Direct students to stand back from the area while the bleachers are in motion.
3. Never walk away from the switch while the bleachers are in motion. Sometimes the limit switches that stop the bleachers malfunction or someone could go behind them.
4. **NEVER** leave this equipment unattended while it is in motion!
5. When the bleachers are fully extended or retracted, remove the key or wand. At no time shall keys or wands be left in when the unit is unattended or not in operation.
6. Inspect bleachers for indications of damage, wear, and misalignment. Report any problems with this equipment **immediately** to your building custodian or the maintenance office. Post a notice that the equipment is inoperable to inform others until the repair can be conducted.

# **SAMPLE C**

## **EXAMPLE OF FOLDING DOOR LAYOUT (Blueprint)**

# **APPENDIX D**

## **MANUFACTURER INFORMATION (Specific to District Equipment)**