

PROCEDURE AND GUIDELINES FOR TELESCOPIC BLEACHER OPERATION

Presented by BR Bleachers © 6/07

PREFACE

Many schools experience repeated costly bleacher repairs due, in part, to the lack of written procedures for proper bleacher operation and maintenance. More important than the expense and inconvenience of bleacher breakdowns, is the *hazard to life safety* that can go undetected. When operators fail to discover or fail to report poor or unusual operation or conditions, repair costs increase, accidents and injury can occur. All bleachers must be **free of any defect** before and after operation. Most problems, damage and accidents are traced to bleachers that are operated and used incorrectly by untrained and unauthorized personnel.

The purpose of this document is to provide important bleacher operation information and awareness.

AUTHORIZATION

Only authorized personnel, who have been properly trained, should be allowed to operate bleacher equipment. Power operated bleacher controllers (Pendants) or keys to wall switches should be secured by the authorized, trained personnel only. At no time should students or non-school employees operate the bleachers.

OPERATING BLEACHERS - OPENING

A) Make certain that all people and objects are clear of the space needed to open the bleachers. Before opening, dust mop the floor area to minimize dirt and debris from being ground into the bleacher wheels, power system drive rollers and flooring surfaces. The floor traction power system rollers depend on clean floors. Most traction problems are traced to dust accumulation on the rollers.

B) When opening **manually** operated bleachers (with or without using a portable tractor), pull at the center* of the bleachers even and steady. Slow your pace as the last row or two are opened so the bleacher rests against the stops without too much force. With some bleachers, you can use the momentum of the bleacher to finish opening. This aggressive operation will damage stops, row locks and anchor systems. Open the first section and check for straightness and full extension. Correct any problems.

* If the bleachers are in good working order and cannot be easily opened by a single person with control and no straining, it is recommended that a portable or integral power system be used. Using multiple persons requires precise coordination to operate each section; this can cause uneven operation and serious bleacher damage.

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OPERATING BLEACHERS – OPENING (continued)

B) Manual operated bleachers – continued.

Before opening the next section, make sure the floor pads are locked down and holding the bleachers from rolling back. Follow the same procedure to open the next bleacher section. Be careful not to cause contact with other sections when opening. Verify each section aligns with the other at each row and that the gaps between sections are as small as possible. (1 1/2" or less)

When operating **integral** powered bleacher banks, pay attention to the performance as it opens. The bleacher should travel steady and straight, staying parallel with the wall(s) or floor stripe(s). If the bleacher does not open evenly, check to see if the drive system is operating correctly. The drive rollers may be slipping (floor friction systems) or there may be a problem with the chain drive (mechanical chain systems). If the floor friction unit(s) is/are not operating, check the fuse, the wiring to the unit and possible debris caught in the drive mechanisms. If the bank runs against a wall, stop immediately, retract the bleacher away from the wall and determine what is making the bleacher drift to the wall. Correct any problem before proceeding. If there is a problem with a mechanical chain drive, (kinked chain, binding chute or reel) correct the problem before proceeding.

C) Verify that the bleachers are fully extended. (Check under the bleacher). The understructure must be pulled out to the stops and the row locks must be engaged (if equipped). (The row locks are the automatic gravity levers that lock each row in place). Check each side of each section for full extension. Make sure no rows are over extended from damaged or missing stops or that NO row upright wheels are out of alignment. Correct any problem before the bleachers are occupied.

D) Immediately install all drop-in end, rear and aisle rails. Check all rails for proper operation, missing or loose fasteners and bent components. Correct any problem before the bleachers are occupied.

E) Inspect the surface structure [wood seats, plastic seat modules, VOS (vinyl-on-steel) seat panels] for defects, (cracks, splinters, etc.) missing screws and bolts. Correct any problem before the bleachers are occupied.

F) It is NOT recommended to partially open any bleacher section. Partially open bleachers are unstable and unopened rows can be damaged easily. Risk is greater, due to personnel injuries from row movement and individuals climbing on closed rows. Damage can occur from the sections moving and becoming misaligned. **Note: If bleachers are partially opened, they must be fully extended before closing.** This will help align the section and reduce the possibility of damage when closing.

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OPERATING BLEACHERS - CLOSING

A) Before closing the bleacher, walk the rows and remove any debris or objects left behind. Clean the floor underneath bleachers. Check for debris or objects hanging from the under structure framing and on power system components and remove debris.

Make sure all individuals are clear from underneath and around the bleacher area before closing the bleacher.

B) Remove any drop-in rails and aisle rails before closing. If the bleachers are manually operated, lift skirt board or release first row low (if equipped) and push the section closed, steady and evenly from the center of the section. Observe the operation of the sections for binding, uneven closing, or other problems. Do not force the section closed if a problem occurs. Find the source of the problem and correct before proceeding. Call for service if the problem cannot be corrected. If the problem is misaligned section(s) or rows, extend the bleacher and close the section again. If the bleachers are powered, remove any drop-in rails and aisle rails.

C) After the bleachers are closed, **DO NOT ALLOW ANYONE** to climb or sit on the closed bleachers. Do not set or store objects on the bleachers. Any additional weight added to closed bleacher rows will damage the understructure, cause decks to bind, increase surface structure damage and lead to premature wear. Strict supervision and awareness of bleacher problems are crucial for all individuals involved with gymnasium activities.

TRAINING

All personnel deemed by the school as authorized to operate the bleachers must be familiar with and fully understand bleacher operation procedures. They must be able to identify components and functions as previously described. Recognizing potential safety hazards, mechanical failures and improper bleacher operation is essential! Any problem that cannot be corrected by the operator should be reported to the maintenance department or bleacher service company. Bleachers must be maintained (a requirement in most state codes) and operated correctly at all times. Any repair to the bleachers must be performed by a qualified bleacher repair service with skilled and experienced personnel only. **AT NO TIME** should any unauthorized personnel operate or assist operation of any bleacher.

Never compromise safety!