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Safety Talk and Tips

Eastern Region's Environmental Safety and Health Newsletter

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Slips, Trips, and Falls

We've all been there. In a rush to get out of winter's chill, launch a radiosonde, take an observation, or simply through lack of attention or our thoughts being someplace else, we become more vulnerable to slips, trips, and falls. Although slips, trips, and falls can occur at any time of the year and in any location, winter seems to bring better chances for them to occur.

Through the first three quarters of FY05 across NOAA, there were 73 reported incidents of slips, trips, and falls. Of these, 25 incidents occurred in the NWS, representing 33% of all reported safety incidents in the NWS. This was the highest single cause of safety incidents in the NWS. For the fiscal year so far, 18 reported slips, trips, and falls, or nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total, happened in the colder months between November, 2004 and April, 2005.

If you're going outside at night to read a rain gauge, take an observation, or if you need to launch a radiosonde in the dark, take a flashlight to make sure the area is as well-lit as possible. Do not climb on chairs or tables! Use ladders or step stools that are in good working order.

As the days get shorter and colder, let's do the best we can to stay on our feet! In most cases it's the little things, like practicing good housekeeping, taking our time, and using caution signs where appropriate that keep the chances of a slip or fall as low as possible.

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REMEMBER, SAFETY FIRST!

Preventing slips, trips, and falls

Use caution on wet floors and in icy conditions

- Use cones or signs to add visibility to wet areas after mopping or a spill, or in high-traffic areas after a snowfall
- Clear walkways to the best extent possible (watch for exposure to the cold!) and have a supply of environmentally-friendly ice melter handy.
- If you must walk on a wet surface, take short steps with your feet pointed slightly outward to help you keep your balance.

Promote good housekeeping

- Make sure walkways and stairs are free of clutter, drawers are closed, and temporary extension cords are taped down or placed out of harm's way.
- Clean up spills! Even a small spill can be hazardous!

Place signs or barriers around openings in an office's raised floor when maintenance is being performed.

Use handrails on stairs

Don't run up or down stairs, or store items on stairs.

Only carry loads you can see over the top of.

Use the right footwear for the job or weather condition

- A shoe with a circle-grip outsole offers the most slip resistance.

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The Employee's Right To Know



Source: Effective Answers

OSHA, in an attempt to reduce chemical related illnesses and injuries to workers, developed a Hazard Communication Standard (29 CFR 1910.1200) to ensure that employees are aware of the hazards that chemicals present in the workplace. Each employer is to have in place a hazard communication program which includes container labeling, Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) and employee training.

The MSDS was chosen by OSHA to be the primary vehicle for providing specific detailed information of the identities and hazards of the hazardous chemicals in a work place.

It is essential that supervisors make sure that all employees are trained in hazard communications. It is essential that employees take time to understand all chemicals that are in the work place, especially those chemicals that they work with in performance of their jobs.

Required Hazard Communication Training

If you have employees who may be exposed to hazardous chemicals, you must inform them about the chemicals and train them when they are hired and whenever they are exposed to a new chemical hazard or process change. Required employee training includes:

- 1) Where to find and how to read the hazard-communication plan, the list of hazardous chemicals, and MSDSs.
- 2) The operation in which hazardous chemicals are used.
- 3) The physical and health hazards of hazardous chemicals used by employees.
- 4) The meaning of warning labels on hazardous-chemical containers.
- 5) How to recognize emergencies involving hazardous chemicals.
- 6) How to use personal protective equipment.

Source: Oregon OSHA

Is Gasoline A Hazardous Substance?

Gasoline is a substance that is a part of our everyday life. Although there is normally little or no direct contact with gasoline during the fueling of vehicles, it's important to know some of its hazards. The following is a hazard summary for gasoline:

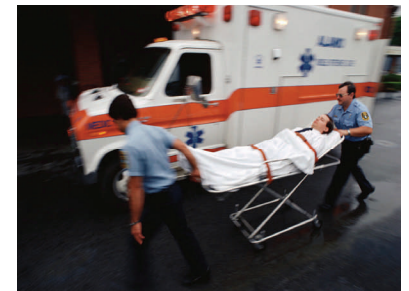
- 1) Gasoline can affect you when breathed in and by passing through your skin.
- 2) High exposures during pregnancy may damage the developing fetus.
- 3) Contact can irritate and burn the skin and eyes with possible eye damage.
- 4) Prolonged contact can cause a rash with drying and cracked skin.
- 5) Breathing gasoline can irritate the nose and throat causing coughing and wheezing.
- 6) High levels of exposure can cause headache, nausea, dizziness, blurred vision, irregular heartbeat, poor coordination, seizures, coma, and even death.
- 7) Repeated high exposure may cause lung and brain damage.
- 8) Gasoline may damage the kidneys.
- 9) Gasoline is a flammable liquid and a dangerous fire hazard.
- 10) Gasoline often contains lead and benzene.

Source: New Jersey Dept. of Health and Senior Services

What's wrong with the pictures below?



Top Left—Don't store chemicals near food or eating supplies
Top Right—Improper labeling
Lower Left—Rusted can may become a danger due to leaking
Lower right—Nothing. Chemicals correctly separated in bins.



In Case Of Emergency

Many of us now own a cell phone. In some cases, people have two, one for personal use and one that is given for work purposes.

In an emergency where a person may be unconscious, the cell phone can be a source of information concerning the victim.

There have been stories from many sources that talk about programming ICE into your cell phone. ICE stands for In Case Of Emergency. Emergency workers will check to see if there are emergency numbers in a phone and ICE provides them quick information on a point of contact.

If a person has more than one point of contact or there are multiple numbers to reach a person, you can identify them as ICE1, ICE 2, and ICE3.

Work cell phones should be programmed with ICE and should be programmed to call the office operations phone.

CPR/First Aid Training Pays Off

You never know when the training you get will pay off, and we all hope that we will never have to use the CPR/First Aid training that the NWS provides to their employees. However, on July 16th Steve Nogueira (NERFC) was at a local retailer when the training he had taken was needed to assist another person.

A woman near him fell into a seizure. Steve directed another customer to dial 911, while trying to provide comfort and prevent her from further hurting herself. The training he received provided him the tools to assess the situation and take control of the situation to provide assistance to the woman.

Great job Steve, you are a safety hero!



About this Newsletter

This newsletter is brought to you on a quarterly basis by the Eastern Region Environmental Safety and Health Advisory Board to help increase awareness of the importance of the safety and health programs within the Department of Commerce, NOAA, and the National Weather Service. Your comments are welcome. Please send all comments to Kevin Murray.