Common Courtesies
Victor Means, MBA, CSP - Director of Safety & Emergency Management Coordinator

Please. Thank you. You’re welcome. Yes sir. No sir. Yes ma’am. No ma’am. Excuse me. After you. Allow me. Have a nice day. The little things we say or do can not only have an impact on how others see us, but can also have an impact on others. I think of these words and actions as “common courtesies.”

How does it make you feel when someone meets you in the hallway, smiles, and says “good morning?” Maybe your day isn’t going so well and that gives you a little pick-me-up. Or maybe you’re having a conversation with a student and they respond with “yes sir” or “yes ma’am?” Now some of you may think that makes you feel old…I think it should make you feel respected…and you can also return with that same level of respect to the student.

When waiting for the elevator, when the doors open do you immediately rush in or do you stand aside and wait for those exiting the elevator to get out before you enter? When entering the building, you open the door and notice someone else approaching a 10 or 20 feet behind…do you continue through the door, or do you pause and hold the door for the person approaching? How many times have you seen a door quickly slam in their face?

You may wonder what “common courtesies” have to do with SAFETY. Common courtesies are a part of what defines the culture that we work or study in every day. They help to create a culture of respect; a culture of kindness; a culture of caring; a culture of inclusion; a cooperative spirit. All of these promote a positive workplace or learning environment. In this type of environment, folks are more empowered to let someone know that their actions could hurt them – because they care about them. Respect for rules and best practices is much more evident. People who enjoy coming to work are more productive and focused, and less likely to be distracted (a common cause of mishaps).

So, the next time you’re waiting for an elevator, entering the building, or walking down the hallway and you meet someone, pause, look them in the eye, and smile. You will be doing your part to promote a positive culture and a “culture of safety.” And by the way, it’s contagious!
Campuses Complete Their Chemical Waste Disposal

Renee Witherspoon, MS - Environmental/Occupational Manager

John Statham, Lab Pack Chemist with EQ of Tulsa, Oklahoma was onsite at the Amarillo, Lubbock and Abilene campuses the week of November 18 to remove the chemical wastes for disposal.

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) is a comprehensive set of regulations that require all hazardous waste to be managed safely from the moment it is generated until the moment it is finally disposed. This process is called “cradle to grave”.

Once the waste is picked up from the location of generation, such as a lab, there is a very detailed process prior to its ultimate disposal including: waste profiling, waste segregation, Department of Transportation (DOT) approved packaging and labeling, EPA hazardous waste coding, weighing, manifesting and transportation to an approved disposal location.

According to Statham, “a lot of investigation goes on once a customer submits the waste profile so that the waste can be properly segregated and safely transported.”

“The chemical fairy just doesn’t show up.”

He recommended that, “as soon as you have waste – label it.” Proper labeling of waste chemicals is key in identifying hazards present and assists in the processing of the waste once it leaves the location where it was generated.

Ergonomics: What does it mean, what does it matter?

Bruce MacNair, MS - Senior Safety Officer

Is your job a “real pain in the neck?” Have you stopped to think that it might not be the “job” but how you’re doing it? Ergonomics is sometimes defined as the science of fitting the work to the user instead of forcing the user to fit the work. However, this is more a primary ergonomic principle rather than a definition. Application ergonomics is a discipline focused on making products and tasks comfortable and efficient for the user.

In October, Safety Services sponsored a booth at the Wellness Fair where we emphasized ergonomics and featured several ergonomic chairs and the new Sit-Stand Workstations from Ergotron. These units allow the user to easily adjust the working height of their keyboard, mouse and computer screens from a seated position to a standing position.

Some employees will be receiving demo models of this workstation to try and see if this improves their overall wellness. As many of you know, there is considerable research linking too much sitting to a variety of serious health concerns.

The picture on the right is an example of an Ergotron Sit-Stand workstation that can be added to an existing seated workstation.

The following are some additional quick references on ergonomics:


This link, http://www.ttuhsc.edu/admin/safety/forms/Ergo.aspx, is a fast way to get Safety Services to conduct an Ergonomic Consultation for you. Let us help make your job more comfortable for you.
‘Drug Turn-in’ in Odessa
Art May, MS, CHMM, COHC, CSS
-Permian Basin Campus Safety Manager

For the people in Odessa and surrounding areas, the Pharmacy Department at the Medical Center Hospital in Odessa has a ‘Drug Turn-in’, including controlled medications, on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 4:00-5:00 PM. The location for the ‘Drug Turn-In’ is on the north side of the hospital under the sky bridge over 5th Street. Anyone wanting to get rid of their medications can drive under the sky bridge next to the hospital and a hospital employee will come to your vehicle so you can stay in your vehicle.

Safety Services Needs Your Assistance
Renee Witherspoon, MS, CSP, CIH, CHMM - Environmental/Occupational Manager

Safety Services needs your assistance in identifying areas for waste reduction. Waste disposal especially hazardous waste can be very expensive. Within the past two years, the Lubbock campus has averaged over $26K per year in hazardous waste disposal.

Although waste generation is a part of doing business as an institution, improvements can be made that can save money, reduce risk and eliminate or minimize a waste being generated.

This December Safety Services will be working on a Waste Minimization Plan for the institution and we need your assistance. If you have ideas on waste reduction or minimization, please send me an email at renee.witherspoon@ttuhsc.edu. I will add your recommendations to our plan.

COOP Training
Jose Melchor - El Paso Campus Safety Manager

On Tuesday, November 19th the El Paso Safety Services Department hosted a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) Development Training to:
- Provide a better understanding of this process
- Give instruction and guidance in developing and completing a “COOP” plan as a need for continuous Operations of the Institution in case of an emergency or large-scale disaster.

The training was provided by:
Mr. Mike Gonzales, CSRM, CSP
Risk Management, Safety and Security Coordinator
Canutillo Independent School District

We had a great turn-out, 53 people participated, Department Chairs, Administrators, Directors, and Unit Safety Officers. All left with a better understanding and ready to work on their department COOP Plan.

Cost of Hazardous Waste Disposal
Campus Comparison
FY12 & FY13

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<th>Campus</th>
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<td>Lubbock</td>
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<td>Amarillo</td>
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Before crawling up on the roof to string the Christmas lights, you need to know that every year, hospital emergency rooms treat about 12,500 people for injuries, such as falls, cuts and shocks, related to holiday lights, decorations and Christmas trees, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). Candles start about 11,600 fires each year, resulting in 150 deaths, 1,200 injuries and $173 million in property loss. Christmas trees are involved in about 300 fires annually, resulting in 10 deaths, 30 injuries and an average of more than $10 million in property loss and damage.

Since CPSC started monitoring holiday lights and decorations sold at stores nationwide, inspectors have prevented the import of 116,500 units of holiday lights that did not meet safety standards.

**CPSC tips to make your holiday a safe one:**

**Trees:**
- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label “Fire Resistant.” Although this label does not mean the tree won’t catch fire, it does indicate the tree will resist burning and should extinguish quickly.
  - When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and do not break when bent between your fingers. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.
  - When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces and heating sources. Because heated rooms dry live trees out rapidly, be sure to keep the stand filled with water. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.

**Lights:**
- Indoors or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory, which indicates conformance with safety standards. Use only lights that have fused plugs.
  - Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections, and throw out damaged sets. Always replace burned-out bulbs promptly with the same wattage bulbs.
• Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord. Make sure the extension cord is rated for the intended use.
• Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.
• Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use.
• Stay away from power or feeder lines leading from utility poles into older homes.
• Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, house walls, or other firm supports to protect the lights from wind damage. Use only insulated staples to hold strings in place, not nails or tacks. Or, run strings of lights through hooks (available at hardware stores).
• Turn off all holiday lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.
• Use caution when removing outdoor holiday lights. Never pull or tug on lights - they could unravel and inadvertently wrap around power lines.
• Outdoor electric lights and decorations should be plugged into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Portable outdoor GFCIs can be purchased where electrical supplies are sold. GFCIs can be installed permanently to household circuits by a qualified electrician.

Decorations:
• Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if ingested by children.
• Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles where they will not be knocked down.
• In homes with small children, take special care to avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children to avoid the child swallowing or inhaling small pieces, and avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a child to eat them.
• Wear gloves to avoid eye and skin irritation while decorating with spun glass “angel hair.”
• Follow container directions carefully to avoid lung irritation while decorating with artificial snow sprays.
Unit Safety Officers Celebrate Successful Fiscal Year 2013!

USO Conferences were held in El Paso, Odessa, Amarillo, and Lubbock to celebrate the outstanding work by USOs during last fiscal year. Take some time to thank your USO today for all they do to help your department stay on top of state-mandated safety training requirements.
Safety Services Participates in QEP Fall Symposium

Renee Witherspoon, MS, CSP, CIH, CHMM - Environmental/Occupational Manager

In October, Safety Services personnel in Lubbock participated in the poster session at the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Fall Symposium for Interprofessional Teamwork. The title of the poster was, “Safety Services Supports Interprofessional Teamwork” and showcased the key activities within the Department of Safety Services that supported the Interprofessional Team.

Toni Denison, Robblyn Gentry, John Jonnalagadda, Matthew Looney, Victor Means, and Renee Witherspoon worked on and contributed to the poster presentation. Below is a part of the poster highlighting each Safety Services division.

Results

- Drills and Exercises
- Emergency Preparedness
- Mitigation

Emergency Management

- NFPA Compliance
- Fire Detection, Notification and Suppression System Testing and Maintenance
- Incident Response

Fire & Life Safety

- Institutional Compliance
- Continuing Safety Education
- Federal, State and Local Regulations

Training & Education

- Respiratory Fit Testing
- Safety Inspections of Public Areas
- Accident Investigation & Response

Occupational Safety

- Manage Institutional RAM License
- RAM Ordering, Use & Disposal
- Radiation Monitoring & Consultation

Radiation Safety

- Chemical Hygiene
- Research Protocol Review
- Safety Equipment Testing (fume hoods)

Laboratory Safety

- Hazardous & Biological Waste Disposal
- Pest Control
- Federal & State Reporting

Environmental Safety
Spill Reporting

Matt Halbert - Senior Safety Officer and Renee Witherspoon - Safety Manager

EPA regulations require facilities like ours to immediately notify specific agencies when a reportable quantity (RQ) of an extremely hazardous substance or a hazardous substance is spilled. These rules also require a follow-up written notice as soon as practical after the release.

Immediate notification of a release is required under the two regulations: 40 CFR 302.6 and 40 CFR 355.30-355.43

Because of these notification requirements, it is important that in the event of a chemical spill that your Safety Services office is contacted as soon as possible so that the appropriate actions can be taken.

According to OP75.03 in the event of any unexpected release of a hazardous chemical, the individual(s) discovering the incident should make an initial assessment of the potential danger to personnel in the immediate area. If the spill can be safely contained and/or clean up, then they should do so and make the proper notifications afterwards. If a release occurs that is believed to represent a danger to personnel, the following immediate actions should be taken:

Immediate Actions

1. Evacuate personnel. ~ Everyone should be evacuated from the vicinity of the spill or release.

2. Notify/Contact Safety Services, Plant Operations and the Texas Tech Police Department.

3. Keep personnel away. ~ Everyone that is not involved in the spill clean-up should be kept out of the immediate area until the “all-clear” is given.

When personnel respond to the scene of the spill, they will evaluate the potential hazard and initiate additional action as necessary. Make sure to brief response personnel on the potential hazards that may be encountered when entering the spill area. Knowledge of the potential hazards and being prepared will decrease risk. Immediately notifying your Safety Services office following a spill or release will assure that the required correction action is taken, required notifications are made and potential fines are avoided.

For additional information on Spill Response, see OP75.03.