Volume 52, Issue 1
February/March 2006
Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center

Safety Reporter

This & That

HSC Lubbock:

New Employee Safety Orientation
Available Online
www.ttuhsc.edu/admin/safety

▪

Laboratory Safety
Available Online
www.ttuhsc.edu/admin/safety

▪

Radiation Safety for New RAD Workers
Thursday, February 16
Thursday, March 16
Thursday, April 20
1:00 pm to 5:00 pm
New Safety Training Room
BA125

HSC Amarillo
www.ttuhsc.edu/admin/safety/AMA

HSC El Paso
www.ttuhsc.edu/admin/safety/ELP

HSC Odessa
www.ttuhsc.edu/admin/safety/ODS

Email
safety.services@ttuhsc.edu

In this Issue

Think Before You Nuke!

In most cases, it only takes a couple of minutes to cook a bag of microwave popcorn. So why can't we take a few minutes to see the task through?

A search of our fire records from March 2004 – March 2005 revealed that there were 34 fire alarms in TTUHSC facilities. The second leading cause of fire alarms (twenty one percent) were a result of cooking in a microwave and 70 percent of those alarms involved cooking popcorn. All of these fire alarms could have been easily avoided if the persons doing the cooking would have attended to the task at hand. Unattended cooking is the single most common cause of kitchen fires in the U.S.

Microwave ovens involve more emergency room injuries than any other cooking device. Nearly half of the 2001 injuries involving microwave use were scald burns, and most of the rest involved elevated microwave ovens that were dislodged and fell on someone.

MICROWAVE SAFETY TIPS

- NO Unattended Cooking. Don't put your food in a microwave and just walk away. Take a few extra minutes to watch your food. You don't want to burn your food and we don't want you too either.
- Beware of the articles you put in a microwave. Never place anything but food or a microwave-safe dish or device in the unit.
- Microwave ovens can quickly heat food or liquid to a very high temperature, and the heat may be unevenly distributed. Be careful with temperature and time settings, and be especially careful putting any micro-waved food or drink in your mouth.
- Take particular care with any micro-waved food or drink prepared for an infant or anyone else who is particularly sensitive to burns or lacks the ability to test food or drink before eating or drinking.
- When removing the cover from a container just after microwaving food in it, keep exposed skin clear of the path of any escaping steam.
- Many emergency room injuries associated with microwave ovens suggest a scenario where the unit has fallen onto someone. Microwave ovens are typically the heaviest cooking devices that are installed or placed in an elevated location in a home. Make sure it is securely installed or if portable, kept well back from the counter's edge.
- Select a microwave oven with the seal of a nationally recognized testing laboratory and have the unit installed or placed in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. Be particularly careful not to damage wiring during installation or use. *(NFPA Fire Analysis and Research)*

Michael Martin
Fire Marshall

What's Wrong with these Pictures?

See if you can spot what is wrong with these pictures...Are there things that can cause injury? Are there environmental hazards that could be harmful?

Right: This is the Sign that is on the wall ? What kind of hazard could this present?

Below: Note the paper towel dispenser. What is the potential health risk? What could be done to change the risk?

Chemical Fume Hoods: Safety or Storage Device?

Chemical fume hoods are ubiquitous in research facilities. Perhaps the fact that these devices are so common in research laboratories leads to their misuse. Chemical fume hoods, as the name implies, are meant to protect the user from exposure to hazardous chemicals, particularly the vapors of such chemicals. Too often, however, fume hoods are used as storage devices for instruments, equipment, glassware, and excess chemicals. Cluttering up a fume hood reduces its effectiveness by decreasing and/or significantly altering the pattern of airflow in the hood.

In order for chemical fume hoods to function properly, they must be used as they were intended. This implies: minimized obstruction of airflow, experiments at least 4-6 inches inside the hood, and the (glass) sash pulled down far enough to protect the user. If large equipment is necessary for the experiment, it should be set up on blocks (at least 1-2 inches) to allow airflow along the bottom of the hood. Disturbances in the room such as opening and closing doors, people walking past the hood, and HVAC patterns can also impact airflow inside the hood. Keep in mind that not only is the linear face velocity important (80-120 LFPM), the path the air takes before being exhausted is also important. Anything that can create turbulence inside the hood has the potential to allow escape of hazardous vapors, thus negating the usefulness of the chemical fume hood.

One other item of importance at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center is that cabinets under the chemical fume hoods are not designed for storage of corrosives. This type of storage should be avoided in order to prevent corrosion of the gas lines and water pipes that run under the hoods.

All of the above items are important to remember when working in a laboratory. Using the hood as a safety device (as intended) provides the best protection from exposure to potentially hazardous chemicals for yourself and others in the area.

Michael W. Jones, PhD

Safety Smarts
Tips to Keep You Safe!

Eye Safety Tips

Focus on the 'Big 6.'
March is Workplace Eye Safety Month. It is always a good time to think about eye safety in the workplace. Here are six key areas to help you keep your eyes in check in regards to safety, especially in a medical institution like the Health Sciences Center.

- **Flying objects** are the leading cause of eye injuries in American workplaces. Business and Legal Safety Reports says that well over half of eye accidents are caused by flying or falling objects, or sparks striking the eye. A significant number of those objects are smaller than a pinhead.
- **Contact with chemicals** causes some 20 percent of eye injuries.
- **Improper equipment operation** is responsible for over 30 percent of injuries.
- **Poor choice of eyewear** results in a significant number of injuries. Although injured workers are often wearing eye protection, they're not wearing the right kind.
- **Improper fit.** BLS says that 94 percent of the injuries to workers wearing eye protection result from objects or chemicals going around or under the protector.
- **Lack of awareness.** Simple ignorance of the risks and the required protection is responsible for many workplace eye injuries. BLS says many injured workers, when asked after an accident, report that they didn't realize eye protection was necessary in the situation.

Business and Legal Reports
January 2006

February is…..
American Heart Month

March is…..
National Nutrition Month

April is…..
Alcohol Awareness Month

CAUGHT IN THE SAFETY ACT

Shannon Martin with Information Technology Division - Office of the CIO was recently caught in the safety act. As Unit Safety Officer (USO) for HealthNet and Office of the CIO, Shannon has gone far and beyond our expectations in meeting safety training compliance. She is responsible for a combined **71** employees across all campuses. Let's look at her numbers as of February 2006; **100%** New Employee Safety Orientation compliance and **100%** Annual Refresher Training compliance. The extraordinary thing about this is that the February goal for departmental refresher training is 50%!

Shannon has worked for TTUHSC for 1 1/2 years. She is currently seeking her bachelor's degree in History attending night school full time. She plans to become a history teacher. Her husband Stephen also works for TTUHSC in the Information Technology Division. They are expecting their first child in August. Great job Shannon!

Have you "Caught someone in the Safety Act"? We would like to recognize those people! Please email us a description of what, when, where, and how to:
safety.services@ttuhsc.edu

Scott Luker
Safety Education and Training

Amarillo HSC Emergency Codes

It is extremely important for all ***Amarillo*** employees to be familiar with the emergency code system. Codes will be announced over the public address system. You need to know what the codes for ***Amarillo*** are:

Code RED— *Fire Emergency*

▪Denotes a fire in the area of the sounding alarm. Follow R-A-C-E procedures.

Rescue anyone in danger

Activate the fire alarm

Contain the fire by closing doors

Evacuate to designated reassembly area.

Code BROWN— *Severe Weather Emergency*— Tornado, heavy rain, high winds, hail or other weather situation is on collision course for TTUHSC.

Go to your designated shelter/refuge area.

Code GREEN—*Internal Disaster*—Major/minor internal damage to TTUHSC facility that requires relocation or evacuation.

If in your area, evacuate to designated reassembly area. If not in your area, return to your work area and wait for additional instructions.

Code BLACK— *Bomb Threat*—an explosive device has been located in the building. Evacuate to designated reassembly area.

Code WHITE—*Building evacuation*—An internal disaster or other situation has occurred requiring evacuation of the entire facility. Evacuate immediately to designated reassemble area.

Code BLUE—*Cardio-Respiratory Arrest*—Denotes a medical crisis, please call 9-911 for immediate response by EMS. Involved medical personnel respond immediately.

Code PINK—*Infant/Child Abduction*—A child is missing/has been abducted. **TTUHSC Police:** Business hours: 354-5568 After hours: 349-2775.

Clear the corridors and report suspicious persons/activity to TTU Police.

If you need further information regarding codes, evacuation, reassembly, or procedures, please contact your Unit Safety Officer (USO) or Chris Everitt at the Amarillo Safety Office (354-5441 ext.230) ▪

Karen J. Humphreys
Education & Training

Dusting: The New Teen Danger

One on five students in America has used an inhalant to get high by the time he or she reaches the eighth grade. Parents don't know that inhalants, cheap, legal and accessible products, are as popular among middle school students as marijuana. Even fewer know the deadly effects the poisons in these products have on the brain and body when they are inhaled or "huffed."

It's like playing Russian Roulette. The user can die the 1st, 10th or 100th time a product is misused as an inhalant. One of the upcoming popular inhalants with teens is known as "Dusting" **"Dusting" involves inhaling compressed air from aerosol cans, specifically computer dusting products.**

In Britain and the U.S., organizations are tracking aerosol abuse. It's estimated up to 150 American teens and young adults die each year from the practice.

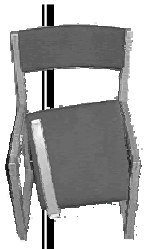
It is imperative that consumers of aerosol products, parents and children all understand the seriousness of this practice. One of the best preventative measures is for parents to keep their computer dusting products in a secure place, away from children and for merchants to only sell to adults.

For more information on how this product communicates such warnings to consumers take a look at actual can labeling from such products as *Dust-Off™*.

(Source: National Inhalant Coalition)

Has This Ever Happened to You?

Have you ever gone to a restaurant and started to add something to your food like salt or pepper, only to find that someone had not screwed the lid on properly? Thus resulting in having far more of that ingredient than you had ever expected! Or, have you ever started to sit down and noticed that your chair was very wobbly. I ask you this question, did you report it so that someone else would not sit in it and risk it breaking, or did you simply exchange it for a nearby chair and not inform anyone? Often times individuals either by not thinking of others or by "being too busy", set up someone else for an incident/injury. If you find something that is broken, damaged, or not working properly, don't leave it for some other unsuspecting individual. Sometimes that unsuspecting individual may be you! Rather, tag it "Out of Service" and report it to your supervisor. If you discover that someone has not completed a task safely and left it as a risk for others (didn't put the lid on properly, left a spill of liquid or powder, did not reassemble the equipment prior to someone else having to handle it, or left a sharp item uncovered and unattended) ....please inform them, but if not possible will "**you**" not leave it as a risk to others?



Nick Millis
Occupational Safety

Safe Kids Tips for Parents

Severe Weather Anxiety Tips

▪**You need to stay calm yourself! Children will definitely pick up on your level of anxiety and react accordingly.**

▪**Let them know that you are prepared. Show them that you have the necessary supplies in case of a severe weather emergency.**

▪**Make sure they know the family's plan of action in case of severe weather. In fact, it is wise to plan and rehearse a plan of action as a family.**

▪**Make sure they know what to do in case they are away from home. Whether they are at school or at a friend's house, they should have the basics on what to do or at least know what the plan is for the location.**

▪**Involve them in the monitoring. Buy them their own radio and encourage them to follow along with the meteorologists on television. This can help it turn into a learning experience, rather than a scary one.**

▪**Don't deviate from normal routines, unless shelter must be taken. It is better to go about business as usual. If you stop everything when severe weather comes, this will alter their reaction each time and possibly cause unnecessary anxiety.**

▪**Let them share their anxiety with you. If they are feeling scared, encourage them to talk about it and you can ease their fears through calm explanations.**

▪**Don't allow them to get into your bed during storms. This could start a bad habit and increase their anxiety when away from you. Instead, help them by teaching them how to cope with their anxiety in their own bed. Of course, the age of the child should be a factor when deciding.**

▪**Seek counseling or professional help if severe anxiety over storms persist. If your child has increased anxiety even after positive steps have been taken, then it might be necessary to seek professional counseling to help the child come up with positive strategies to cope with anxiety during severe weather.**

Karen J. Humphreys
Education and Training

SAFETY SERVICES
Life is fragile - Work Safely

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HSC Odessa
Arthur May

Visit us on the Web!

www.ttuhsc.edu/Admin/safety/

Recall Registry

Dell notebook computer batteries—Could overheat and catch fire.
Products: 22,000 batteries sold 10/5/04 to 10/13/05 with various notebook computers, separately for $100 to $180, or provided as replacement part by service technicians during repair calls. The recalled batteries came with Latitude models D410, D505, D510, D600, D610, D800, and D810; Inspiron models 510M, 600M, 6000, 8600, 9200, and 9300; XPS Gen 2; and Dell Precision M20 and M70 mobile workstations.
What to do: Contact Dell at 866-342-0011 to determine if battery is subject to recall.

Balancing Things in Life

Many times, in fact most of the time, setting priorities in life is a game of constant attention and adjustment. All adults play this serious game when making judgments about raising children, changing careers and other areas. A balancing act often takes place with such issues concerning life safety and security. Many parents have made the choice to secure their homes with security bars over doors and windows to protect against criminals. In some instances, these same bars prevent escape from fire causing a number of fire fatalities in this country. When making major choices such as these, always educate yourself about different aspects of how it might impact you and your loved ones. Such considerations should be considered in businesses also. Businesses must balance occupant security against fire egress and life safety.

Securing a business in order to protect employees at work must include an assurance of readily available emergency egress. Requiring elevators to recall and cease operation during fire alarms ensures that no one is trapped on elevators during fire emergencies. This may be an inconvenience, yet most importantly, it is a critical life safety need. When reacting to the next fire drill with its noise and inconvenience, realize the more important aspect of failing to react properly to a real fire emergency and possibly becoming a fatality for the 2006 fire death list. For the most recently tallied year (2004), 3,900 people made this list and of those, 3,225 died in fires at their home.

The Department of Safety Services wishes you a safe and well balanced new year.

James Kirkland
TTUHSC Fire Marshal

Meet Team Safety!

Meet Scott Luker!

Scott serves as Lead Specialist for the Department of Safety Services.

Born and raised in Lamesa, Texas, Scott graduated from Texas Tech with a Bachelor of Arts and Sciences in Music Performance. Over the years, he strutted his stuff in the drum line for the Goin' Band and has been a drummer for Rock and Tejano bands.

Scott has an incredible talent in application development, media, and programming. He began programming at the age of 13, teaching and mastering skills along the way.

He not only maintains the Safety Services website, but does graphic, media, and database design....not to mention conducts safety training for employees across all four campuses.

Safety Services is extremely proud of Scott for his most recent accomplishment, a publication in the *Journal of Clinical Nursing Research*. He collaborated on a study and grant project funded by the CDC and TTUHSC, focusing on Diabetes Prevention.

Scott is married, has two children, and enjoys mountain biking in his spare time.

Look for our next issue where we will be spotlighting another member of our Safety Services team. Remember, we are here to assist you with your safety needs or just if you want to say hello!

Karen J. Humphreys
Education and Training