

News & Notes

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

September is National Preparedness Month, and the Department of Homeland Security urges all Americans to take three key steps to prepare for emergencies:

1. Assemble an emergency kit with:

- + Food and water including a gallon of water per person per day and canned and dried foods.
- + A change of clothes and sleeping bags.
- + Basic emergency supplies including a flashlight, a battery-powered radio, extra batteries, a first-aid kit, prescription medicines, and toilet articles.

2. Make a family communication plan:

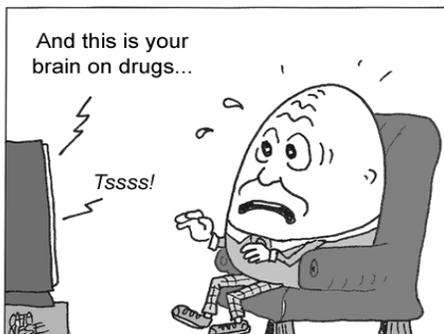
- + Your family may not be together at home when a disaster strikes. Make sure everyone knows contact numbers and how to get in touch.
- + It may be wise to have everyone call an out-of-state friend or relative.
- + Keep a list of emergency numbers near the phone.
- + Select a "safe-room" where everyone can gather. The best choice is an interior room above ground with few windows and doors.

3. Learn more about readiness now:

- + Take a first-aid and CPR class.
- + Review insurance policies to reduce the economic impact of a potential disaster.
- + Remember to make accommodations for elderly family members and neighbors with special needs.
- + Make arrangements for pets not allowed in public shelters.

ANGER = (D)ANGER

Ever notice that the word "anger" is only one letter away from the word "danger"? Anger and safety don't mix. If you get riled up on the job, take a minute to cool down before you get back to work.



Humpty Dumpty's least favorite public service announcement.

Safety Matters



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Safety and Drug Abuse

Alcohol and drugs are hazardous at work

September is National Alcohol and Drug Recovery Month. Remember these facts:

Substance abuse negatively affects job performance, because it impairs a user's:

- ◆ Concentration
- ◆ Thinking ability
- ◆ Judgment
- ◆ Coordination
- ◆ Reflexes and reaction times
- ◆ Decision-making ability

Working under the influence, therefore, increases the chances of:

- ◆ Accidents
- ◆ Mistakes
- ◆ Unreliable or erratic performance
- ◆ Reckless or violent behavior

A co-worker under the influence of drugs could, for example:

- ◆ Fail to recognize or report a safety hazard
- ◆ Skip an important step in a safety procedure
- ◆ Injure you and other employees through carelessness or inattention

And people working under the influence of drugs or alcohol may not realize that they are impaired, which makes them even more dangerous. Remember, too, that substance abuse has a devastating effect on the user's personal life. It:

- ◆ Damages physical health
- ◆ Causes emotional problems
- ◆ Creates financial and legal problems
- ◆ May lead to addiction, overdose, and death

Don't be an enabler. Help co-workers who abuse drugs or alcohol face their problem and get help. Their safety—and yours—depends on it.

WHERE TO TURN FOR HELP

If you or a co-worker do not know where to turn for help, please seek assistance through the State of Delaware's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP may be contacted by calling 1-800-343-2186 or online at www.hmsincorp.com. Your contact is strictly confidential and is covered under the Privacy Act.

Substance Abuse Facts

- 32.3 million drive under the influence of alcohol.
- 3.1 million Americans use marijuana on a daily or almost-daily basis.
- Mixing cocaine and alcohol is the most common two substance combination that results in drug-related death.
- More than 10 million people aged 12 or older have tried ecstasy at least once, and more than 2 million have used the drug in the past year.
- About 3.7 million Americans aged 12 or older have used heroin.

Riddle of the Month

It's been around for millions of years, but it's no more than a month old. What is it?

(See *Safety Bits & Pieces* next page for the answer)

Safety Bits & Pieces

PARKING LOTS = LOTS OF HAZARDS

Parking lots can be dangerous places, because drivers often:

- ⊖ Back up without looking
- ⊖ Cut across lanes and spaces
- ⊖ Stop suddenly
- ⊖ Turn without signaling
- ⊖ Go the wrong way in one-way lanes
- ⊖ Fail to obey stop signs
- ⊖ Drive too fast
- ⊖ Pull out suddenly from behind a larger vehicle that blocks their view

These hazards put drivers and pedestrians at risk. Be careful in parking lots by driving as defensively as you do on the road.

WORKPLACE SAFETY BASICS

Workplace safety depends on three basic elements: brain power, action, and teamwork. Here's how:

1. **Use your brain** to keep your body safe. Think about what you're doing while you work. Also think about ways to make the work safer.
2. **Act immediately** when you see a safety problem. Remove or correct the hazard if you can. Report it if you can't. Don't just walk away.
3. **Be a team player** to ensure everyone's safety. You can have a perfect safety record, but if the person working next to you takes risks, you could be involved in the accident they cause. Look out for co-workers and they'll look out for you.

SAFE HOUSEKEEPING IS NO ACCIDENT

Good housekeeping prevents workplace accidents. The problem is that too many people fall into the trap of thinking that housekeeping is somebody else's responsibility - for example, their co-workers or the maintenance department.

They think that they don't have to concern themselves with helping to keep their work area clean and neat, or with removing fire hazards, or with making sure that tools and materials aren't left lying around after the job is done.

But nothing could be further from the truth. Safe housekeeping is a group effort. Everyone has to pitch in. How about you? Are you doing your part?

RIDDLE OF THE MONTH ANSWER:

The moon...

Drive Defensively

Aggressive driving kills

Motor vehicle accidents are the most common cause of accidental death in the United States. They are also the most common cause of workplace deaths, representing about one in four fatal work injuries. Every 12 minutes someone dies in a crash, every 10 seconds an injury occurs, and every 5 seconds a crash occurs. Many of these accidents occur during the workday or during the commute to and from work.

One of the reasons for all these accidents is the fact that many drivers are becoming increasingly aggressive on the road. Follow these tips from the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS):

- ⊖ **Pay attention** to your own driving. Don't provoke other drivers.
- ⊖ **Take deep breaths** in traffic, listen to some soothing music, and don't get irritated or take other drivers' actions personally.
- ⊖ **Allow enough time** to get where you're going safely. Check traffic reports and avoid congested areas.
- ⊖ **Don't challenge aggressive drivers.** Move out of their way, avoid eye contact, and don't respond to rude gestures.
- ⊖ **Report aggressive driving** to the police. Provide a vehicle description, license number, location, and the direction of travel.

NOTABLE QUOTATION:

Francis Bacon: "Imagination was given to man to compensate him for what he is not; a sense of humor to console him for what he is."

SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Since it's hard to avoid stress altogether, you need to manage it well. Here's a few tips:

1. **Set priorities.** Nobody can do it all - and certainly not all at once. Take a hard look at all the you have to do at work and at home. Put tasks in order of importance and tackle one at a time.

2. **Participate.** Get more involved in your job. Learn something new or find a better way. Active, focused participation in your work boosts confidence and helps eliminate stress.

3. **Cooperate.** Work with others to lighten everybody's load. Choose cooperation over confrontation, which just increases stress and creates additional problems.

4. **Know your limits.** If a problem is beyond your control, don't fight it. Learn to accept what is until such time as you can change it.

5. **Create a quiet scene.** Take a moment to block out problems and stress by sitting in a quiet place and focusing on a pleasant thought or scene - a lazy beach, a mountain stream, an enjoyable experience. It may sound silly, but it really works!!

CARRYING TOOLS

Many hand tool injuries occur when tools are being carried or when they're left somewhere. Remember these rules:

- ◆ Carry pointed tools such as screwdrivers with pointed edges away from your body.
- ◆ Use a toolbox or belt if you are carrying several tools.
- ◆ Haul tools up a ladder in a bucket or bag and bring them down the same way.
- ◆ Keep track of your tools and don't leave any lying around, especially if you're working above ground level.
- ◆ Always hand, don't throw, tools to co-workers. Pass them handle first. Be extra careful when passing sharp or pointed tools to a co-worker.

KEEP A GOOD HEAD ON YOUR SHOULDERS

If you ride a motorcycle, or know someone who does, you need to know that a rider without a helmet is three times more likely to be killed in an accident. Helmets reduce the risk of head and neck injuries - especially serious ones.

SAFETY TIDBITS

⇒ Dirty money: 18% of U.S. coins are contaminated with the E.coli bacteria. To prevent the spread of this bacteria it is recommended that you wash your hands with hot water and soap as soon as possible after handling money.

⇒ Loud noise, aspirin, caffeine and quinine can all cause tinnitus (ringing of the ears).