

## news & notes

### **FLAMMABLE AND COMBUSTIBLE LIQUIDS CAN BE DEADLY**

Many substances we use every day, such as gasoline, kerosene, alcohol, and solvents, are flammable or combustible. Even though these substances are common, they can be very dangerous, causing fires or explosions that can result in property damage, injuries, and death.

Make sure you know the liquid's *flash point*:

- The flash point is the lowest temperature at which the vapors from a liquid are concentrated enough to ignite.
- Flammable liquids have a flash point below 100 degrees F.
- Combustible liquids have a flash point at 100 degrees F or higher.
- The lower the flash point, the more hazardous the liquid.
- It's the *vapors* from the liquid that can catch fire, even at low temperatures.
- Consult the MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet) to find out what the flash point of a liquid is.

Follow these safety rules for working with flammable and combustible liquids:

1. Keep all ignition sources away (open flames, cigarettes, sparks, etc.).
2. Use only approved fireproof containers for storage or transfer.
3. Take only the amount of liquid you need for the job.
4. Keep containers closed when not in use.
5. Follow all warning signs, instructions on labels and MSDSs, as well as agency rules, for working with flammable and combustible liquids.

If you have safety questions about these substances, ask your supervisor.



"Our next speaker will talk about the importance of wearing hard hats."

### **Riddle of the Month**

Many things can create one, it can be of any shape or size, it is created for various reasons, and it can shrink or grow with time. What is it?

Answer on page 2 in "*Safety Bits & Pieces*."

# Safety Matters



Produced by the Insurance Coverage Office

State of Delaware

Volume IV

November 2006

## Climb Your Way to Safety

### Use ladders safely

Falling off a ladder can injure—or even kill—you. That's why using ladders carefully is so important.

#### **Choose the Right Ladder**

Whether you choose a stepladder, straight ladder, or extension ladder depends on the job you need to do and on how high you need to go to do it. Always make sure that the ladder you choose is the right height for the job. And always give every ladder a quick safety check.

- ✓ Are the rungs or steps firm and unbroken? Are they clean and free of dirt and grease?
- ✓ Does it have nonslip safety feet in good condition?
- ✓ If it's a stepladder, does it have a spreader to lock the ladder open? Does it have braces to keep the rails from swaying?
- ✓ If it's an extension ladder, is the rope in good condition? Are the rope and pulleys working smoothly?

#### **Set It Up Right**

Follow these steps when you set up straight ladders and extension ladders. (The first two points apply to stepladders, too.)

- Place the ladder on a level surface.
- Use wide boards under the feet if you are on soft ground.
- Place the feet parallel with the top support.
- Leave at least 3 feet of extension above the top point of support.
- Anchor the ladder at the top, and have someone hold the bottom for you.
- Make sure the base of the ladder is placed 1 foot out from the wall for every 4 feet of the ladder's height. An easy way to do this is to count the number of rungs from the ground to the support point at the top and divide by 4.  
*Example:* 8 rungs = 2 feet. Keep the ladder 2 feet from the wall.

A fall from a ladder can leave you laid up for days or weeks with broken bones, back injuries, or worse. So make sure you're safe every time you climb.

### **WATCH YOUR SPEED**

According to the American Trucking Association (ATA), speeding is one of the most common contributing factors in traffic crashes. In nearly 30 percent of all fatal crashes in one recent year, drivers were either exceeding posted speed limits or driving too fast for conditions. These types of speed related crashes accounted for more than 12,000 of the nearly 42,000 lives lost that year.

What can you do about it? Don't wait to become involved in an accident or pulled over by the police for speeding. Take action today by taking personal responsibility. Whether you're driving your own vehicle or a State vehicle, observe the speed limit at all times and slow down in bad weather, heavy traffic, or poor road conditions.

**TIPS ABOUT SLIPS AND TRIPS**

**Don't fall for an accident!**

Slips, trips, and falls injure or kill over 250,000 American workers a year and account for 17 percent of all nonfatal workplace injuries. Many injuries occur when people trip. Here's how to eliminate trip hazards:

- Ø Keep your work area neat and tidy.
- Ø Pick up items from the floor, even if you didn't put them there.
- Ø Step over or around obstructions, not on them.
- Ø Walk slowly and change directions slowly, especially when carrying a load.
- Ø Watch for changes in floor level — such as a few steps or a ramp up or down.
- Ø Report inadequate lighting or burned-out bulbs right away.
- Ø Don't leave boxes, bags, tools, or other materials and equipment on the floor or blocking walkways.
- Ø Don't leave cords or power cables in walkways.
- Ø Don't place anything on stairs.
- Ø Don't leave drawers open.

Many other falls are the result of slips. Follow these tips about slips:

- Ø Clean up or report spills, drips, and leaks immediately.
- Ø Wear sensible shoes with nonskid soles, and wipe your feet when you come inside if they're wet from outside.
- Ø Walk slowly on wet or slippery surfaces, and slide your feet.

**POWER TOOL SAFETY TIPS**

Power tools are more efficient than hand tools, but they're also more dangerous. Whenever you use a power tool:

- ⇒ Inspect it first to make sure it's safe to use.
- ⇒ Plug it into a grounded outlet.
- ⇒ Wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- ⇒ Make sure guards are in place.
- ⇒ Pay attention to where your hands and feet are placed while you work.
- ⇒ Switch it off if you leave it unattended, and unplug it and put it away when you're done using it.
- ⇒ Keep it away from water or dampness.
- ⇒ Report any malfunction to your supervisor, remove the tool from service, and tag it with an OUT OF SERVICE warning.

**Riddle of the Month Answer: Hole**

# What's for Supper?

## Follow these food safety tips

Improperly cooked, served, or stored food can make you sick. Follow these tips:

- 🍷 Wash your hands before you prepare food and after handling meat, poultry, or eggs.
- 🍷 Thaw meat completely before cooking it. Frozen or partially frozen meat could be undercooked.
- 🍷 Cook foods thoroughly. The U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends using a thermometer and cooking foods until they reach these temperatures:

Whole turkey or chicken	180 degrees F (minimum)
Ground turkey or chicken	165 degrees F (minimum)
Casseroles or stuffing	165 degrees F (minimum)
Pork	160 degrees F (minimum)
Ground meat or egg dishes	160 degrees F (minimum)
All other meat products	145 degrees F (minimum)
- 🍷 Don't let perishable food sit out at room temperature for more than 2 hours. After 2 hours either refrigerate it, reheat it, or throw it away.
- 🍷 Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Put on the table only the food you can use immediately; keep the rest of the food hot or cold until you serve it.
- 🍷 Refrigerate leftovers right away; don't leave them out on the counter to cool.
- 🍷 Reheat all leftovers to at least 165 degrees F.

### Thanksgiving Safety Tips

Follow these fire prevention tips to help you and your family have a safe and happy Thanksgiving.

- \* Keep your family and overnight guests safe with a working smoke detector on every level of the house, in every bedroom, and in the halls adjacent to the bedrooms. Test smoke detectors monthly and replace batteries at least twice each year.
  - \* Overnight guests should be instructed on the fire escape plan and designated meeting place for your home.
  - \* Have a 2-1/2 lb. ABC class multi-purpose dry chemical extinguisher not more than 10 feet from the stove, on the exit side of the room. Know how to use your fire extinguisher.
  - \* Start holiday cooking with a clean stove and oven.
  - \* Keep the kitchen off-limits to young children and adults that are not helping with food preparations to lessen the possibilities of kitchen mishaps.
  - \* When cooking do not wear clothing with loose sleeves or dangling jewelry. Clothing can catch fire; jewelry can catch on pot handles, causing spills and burns.
  - \* Cook on the back burners when possible and turn pot handles in so they don't extend over the edge of the stove.
  - \* Never leave cooking unattended. If you must leave the kitchen while cooking, turn off the stove or have someone else watch what is being cooked.
  - \* Candles are often part of holiday decorations. Candles should be located where children will not be tempted to play with them, and where guests will not accidentally brush against them. The candle holder should be completely non-combustible and difficult to knock over. The candle should not have combustible decorations around it.
- Have a safe and happy holiday!

### Notable Quotation

"We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give."

**Sir Winston Churchill**

### SAFE SURFING FOR CHILDREN

There are some very important things your children need to keep in mind when surfing the internet at home or at school. Remind your children:

- + Never to give out personal information such as their name, age, home address, school name, or telephone number in a chat room or on bulletin boards. Also, they should never send a picture of themselves to anyone they chat with online without your permission.
- + Never communicate online or in any other manner with anyone that has made them feel uncomfortable or scared.
- + Do not meet someone or have someone visit them without your permission.
- + Tell you immediately if they read anything on the internet that makes them feel uncomfortable. Keep the lines of communication open between you and your children.
- + Remember that people online may not be who they say they are. People misrepresent themselves to obtain what they want. Children are often the victims of these misrepresentations.

### On the Lighter Side...

New employee to Boss: Well, if I can't have a raise, how about the same pay more often?

\*\*\*\*\*

Boss: Jones, how long have you been working here?

Jones: Ever since I heard you coming down the hall.