

SAFETY TALKS



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The Environmental Health & Safety Office



2004

Spring is here as well as Spring cleaning incidents:

Old man winter is calling it quits, and warmer weather is on the way. With longer days approaching, people are coming out of their winter hibernation to focus on projects like spring cleaning, home repairs and yard work. Many people are lacing up their shoes and stepping outdoors for their first outdoor activity like walking or jogging. These activities are beneficial, but they also involve some health risks and safety hazards. These can be avoided with the proper precautions.

House Cleaning:

- All household and pool chemicals, paints, poisons should be marked properly and be stored away from a child's reach. Dispose of any that are leaking, expired, or that look bad.
- When cleaning up Hazardous chemicals, wear rubber gloves and follow the directions that are provided on the label.
- Never mix chemicals in the same container. If you don't know how to dispose of them, seek advice from SPSA or the EHSO. NEVER put them in the trash or pour down any drain.
- Start off slow; your muscles haven't been used much through winter.
- Use proper techniques when lifting, carrying and bending. When lifting objects, keep your feet shoulder width apart, bend at the knees and tighten you stomach muscles. Lift with your leg muscles as you stand up. Don't try to lift anything that is too heavy or is an awkward shape.
- It's also a good time to replace all your homes Smoke alarm batteries.
- Remove all fire hazards including rags, newspapers and magazines. Pay special attention to the spaces around your furnace, hot water tank, and heaters as well as under the stairs.
- When storing heating devices to be used next winter, make sure the electrical cords are not frayed or separating. Remember to remove kerosene before storing your kerosene heater.

Yard Work Safety:

At least 55,000 people each year sustain injuries from lawn mowers, trimmers, lawn edgers, pruners power saws, and chain saws. Read the manufactures instructions carefully before using any tool or machine.

- Stretch and limber up, Yard work may seem easy, but they involve using muscles that haven't been used all winter.
- Inspect your equipment for damage or defects, and don't use them if there are problems.
- Wear proper eye protection.
- Wear gloves if using pesticides or fertilizers.
- Before getting down and dirty with weeds, make sure you know how to identify poison ivy, sumac, oak and similar toxic plants. Find out ahead of time how to treat the rashes these items cause.
- Rake before you mow. (Prevents any stones or loose debris from becoming a projectile)
- Never use a mower with bare feet and avoid loose or baggy clothing.
- Always start your mower outside.
- Don't use electric mowers on wet grass.
- Make sure you use the right tool for the task.
- Unplug all tools when not in use and make sure the tool is set in the "OFF" position before plugging it in.
- When using a ladder, be careful not to let metal ladders come in contact with overhead wires.
- Read the manufactures instructions that come with the ladder. It will provide information for weight and height limitations as well as proper use of their item.
- Inspect the ladder before using it, make sure they are no defects, loose or broken rungs.
- Avoid using a metal ladder near electrical sources.
- NEVER stand on the ladders bucket shelf or top most rung.
- Make sure the ladder is completely open and the feet are planted firmly on a level surface.

Outdoor Safety:

- Jogging or walking: Don't over do it, start off slow and build your way up.
- Check your barbeque grill for leaks or cracks, and be sure to store any propane tanks away from your house and garage.
- If the skies look threatening, check to see if a storm watch or warning has been issued before you start any outdoor activity. (Source: www.UJ.com)

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We're also on the web:

www.odu.edu/af/ehs

National Electrical Safety Month, May 2004

Here are some checks you can make in your home today to ensure electrical safety:

Outlets

Check for outlets that have loose-fitting plugs, which can overheat and lead to fire. Replace any missing or broken wall plates. Make sure there are safety covers on all unused outlets that are accessible to children.

Cords

Make sure cords are in good condition—not frayed or cracked. Make sure they are placed out of traffic areas. Cords should never be nailed or stapled to the wall, baseboard or to another object. Do not place cords under carpets or rugs or rest any furniture on them.

Water and Electricity Don't Mix

Don't leave plugged-in appliances where they might fall in contact with water. If a plugged-in appliance falls into water, NEVER reach in to pull it out—even if it's turned off. First turn off the power source at the panel board and then unplug the appliance. If you have an appliance that has gotten wet, don't use it until it has been checked by a qualified repair person.

Outdoor Safety

Electric-powered mowers and other tools should not be used in the rain, on wet grass or in wet conditions. Inspect power tools and electric lawn mowers before each use for frayed power cords, broken plugs and cracked or broken housings. If damaged, stop using it immediately. Repair it or replace it. Always use an extension cord marked for outdoor use and rated for the power needs of your tools. Remember to unplug all portable power tools when not in use. When using ladders, watch out for overhead wires and power lines.

Circuit Breakers/Fuses

Circuit breakers and fuses should be the correct size current rating for their circuit. If you do not know the correct size, have an electrician identify and label the size to be used. Always replace a fuse with the same size fuse.

For more information pertaining to electrical safety at work or in your own home, check out www.esfi.org/index.php. ESFI's website is full of information about electrical safety for your home, work, and electrical safety for children and senior citizens.

Safety Tip:

How To Prevent Bicycle Injuries

- Follow the rules of the road.
- Ride on the right hand side of the road with traffic.
- Stop and look both ways before entering a street.
- Always wear your bicycle helmet.
- Watch out for opening car doors and parked vehicles pulling away from the curb.
- Stop for pedestrians at crosswalks.
- Check and adjust your bicycle before each use.

Upcoming National Safety Events:

March 2004

National Sleep Awareness Week
www.sleepfoundation.org

May 1-8, 2004

National SAFE Kids Week

April 2004

Sports Eye Safety Month

May 22-28, 2004

National Safe Boating Week
www.safeboatingcouncil.org

April 26-30, 2004

EARTH DAY

June 2004

NATIONAL SAFETY MONTH
(www.nsc.org/nsm)

April 26-30, 2004

National Playground Safety Week

May 2004

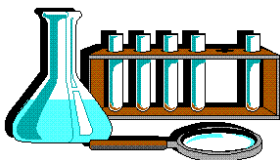
National Electrical Safety Month
www.electrical-safety.org

July 2004

Eye Injury Prevention Month
www.aao.org

Attention Laboratory Employees!

Have you completed the Laboratory Safety Training Program? If not, contact Doug Alexander at 3-4495 to reserve space in the next session or to schedule a session.



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