



Environmental Health & Safety News

December, 1997

Creighton University Dept. of Environmental Health & Safety

EDITORIAL: EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS - ARE YOU READY!

The recent October snow storm in Omaha, Nebraska caught and surprised everyone including the weather people. Some people were without power for up to eleven days, and without telephone service for over 20 days. Damage and cost is still at best a calculated estimate. Needless to say, there were thousands of people totally unprepared and without any idea of what to do. FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the American Red Cross have put together an extremely simple, easily read, and very useful "Emergency preparedness checklist". It covers tornados/flash floods/earthquake/winter storms/hurricane/fire/ and hazardous materials spills. This is a pamphlet that in my opinion should be in every household, and that should be accessible to, and reviewed by, all family members. It is available through your local Red Cross Chapter, or from FEMA at H-34, Item #8-0908, P. O. Box 70274, Washington, D. C. 20024.

WHAT IS...that odor?

EH&S receives numerous calls regarding peculiar odors or indoor air quality in buildings. Often the odors create no ill effects for the buildings

occupants except for the unpleasantness of the smell. So...where do these odors come from, and how do they spread through the building? The answer to this question is as multifaceted as architectural design and construction of the buildings. Odors can be caused by things as simple as a forgotten lunch, or a dry sewer trap.

During the last two decades, the push has been toward the construction of "energy efficient," well-sealed buildings. Odor and indoor air quality issues can often be correlated with the attempt to make buildings energy efficient. Most buildings have mechanical heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems. These systems are designed to provide clean air at comfortable temperature and humidity levels. The actual process is much more complicated. Typically outdoor (ambient) air is brought in, conditioned and mixed with a portion of indoor air, and distributed throughout the building. Often the fresh air intake for the HVAC system brings in undesirable odors from outdoors such as vehicle exhaust from a nearby loading dock, or sewer/storm drain.

Although, outdoor odors make up a portion of the calls received, a number of calls are due to sources inside the building. These odors may result from glues, adhesives, dry drain traps, research labs, perfumed cleaners and disinfectants, light fixtures, or numerous other sensitizers. Odors may be spread throughout the building not only by the HVAC but, by stair wells, maintenance chases and elevators. (Elevator piston action acts as draw for surrounding air). In addition, indoor odors may be caused as the result of water damage, due to pipe condensate or accidental flooding, resulting in mold or mildew.

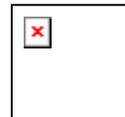
To report any suspicious smells or odors, contact Physical Plant at 280-2780, EH&S at 546-6400, or Public Safety at 280-2911.

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Windchill: The calculation of how cold it feels when the effects of wind and cold are combined.



From the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC):



Fire is the second leading cause of accidental death in the home. Each year, more than 3,500 people die in home fires, and there are more than 400,000 residential fires serious enough to be reported to fire departments.

About 90 percent of U. S. households have smoke detectors installed. However, a 1992 CPSC Survey shows that the smoke detectors in 20 percent of those household -- about 16 million -- were not working, mostly because the battery was dead or missing.

"Smoke detectors can save lives, but they won't work if they are not maintained," said CPSC Chairman Ann Brown. "They should be tested monthly, and the batteries should be replaced at least once a year or when they make a 'chirping' sound."

Long-life smoke detectors with 10-year batteries have been available to consumers since 1995. Long-life detectors, however, should also be tested monthly.

CPSC recommends consumers placing a smoke detector that meets the requirements of Underwriters Laboratories' (UL) standard outside bedrooms and on each level of multi-story homes.

For additional tips on fire safety, explore CPSC Web Site at:
<http://www.cpsc.gov>

***Winter Weather Advisory: Weather conditions are expected to cause significant hazards for motorists. ***



Safety Tips for Holiday Toys: Commission (CPSC):

When buying toys for children, you can help prevent toy-related injuries by following these precautions: Read the label and follow the manufacturer's age recommendations. Make sure you and the child understand the toy's instructions or directions. Avoid all toys that have sharp edges, small parts, or strings. Make sure the toy is nontoxic. Do not purchase electric toys with heating elements for children under age 8. Avoid stuffed toys that have the following contents: beans, chopped walnut shells, or plastic pellets. Look for sturdy construction, such as tightly secured eyes, nose, and other potential small parts. Teach older children to keep their toys away from younger children.
Compiled from: U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and American Red Cross

Winter Storm Watch: Severe winter weather conditions are possible in your area.



Your Child's Safety--"When Company Comes for the Holidays"

Ask guests to keep medications they are carrying in purses or luggage out of children's reach. Watch your children around holiday food--hot dogs, hard candies, nuts, raw carrots, foil-wrapped chocolates, grapes, shrimp, popcorn, square chunks of cheese and candied fruit can all be choking hazards. Please don't assume your guests know your safety rules. Make sure baby gates and latching doors are secured and that your guests know to keep them closed. Compiled from: Children's "Growing Up Safe," The Children's Medical Center

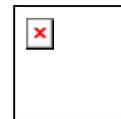
Winter Storm Warning: Severe winter weather is definitely moving into your area.



Decorating the Christmas Tree

Discard strings of lights when broken or cracked sockets, frayed wires or loose connections are present. Use no more than three sets of lights per extension cord and never run extension cords under rugs. Make sure live trees receive adequate water to keep them from drying out. Keep holiday plants out of the reach of children. Mistletoe and holly berries are poisonous; poinsettia can irritate a child's digestive system. Poinsettia can also be poisonous to your pets. Poison Center Phone No. (402)390-5555. Compiled from: Children's "Growing Up Safe," The Children's Medical Center

Blizzard Warning: Heavy snow, strong winds, near zero visibility, deep drifts and severe wind-chill are moving into your area.



Signs of the Times: The Fire Diamond

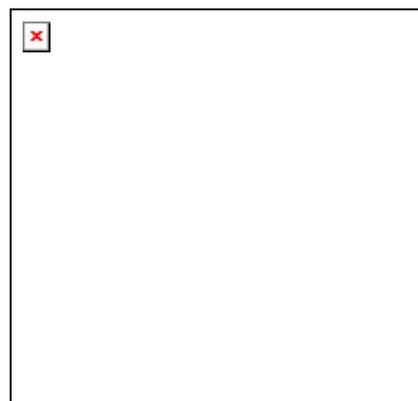
The National Fire Protection (NFPA) 704 is a standardized system for the identification of the hazards of materials for emergency response. The system promotes a simple, easily understood and recognized system of markings that provide a general idea of the associated hazards of the material. The NFPA fire diamond uses a color coded system to denote specific hazards:

Blue = health

Red = flammability

Yellow = reactivity

White = special hazards



Each color has an associated rating between 0 and 4. If a substance has a health rating of 4 the material is described in the system as "materials that, on very short exposure could cause death or major residual injury. The following gives a brief summary of the associated ratings:

<p><u>Flammability:</u></p> <p>0=Will not burn 1=above 200 degrees F. 2=Between 100-200 deg. F. 3=Below 100 degrees F. 4=Flash point below 73 deg. F.</p>	<p><u>Health:</u></p> <p>0=Norm. material 1=Slight hazard 2=moderately haz. 3=extremely haz. 4=deadly</p>	<p><u>Reactivity:</u></p> <p>0=Stable 1-Slight hazard 2=violent chem. change 3=Shock or heat may detonate 4=Rapidly capable of detonation or explosion</p>	<p><u>Health:</u></p> <p>ACID=acid ALK=alkali COR=corrosive OX=oxidizer P=polymerization (W with a line through it)= Use no water.</p>
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An Automobile Winter Survival Kit

Loading your trunk with the right stuff can be a lifesaver. Here is a well-rounded winter survival kit.

- Ice scraper
- Shovel
- Freeze-resistant windshield washer fluid
- Booster cables
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Survival blankets
- Extra hats, mittens and socks for each passenger
- First aid kit and pocket knife
- Tow chain
- Compass and maps
- Paper towels and plastic bags for sanitary purposes
- Fire extinguisher
- Wrench, pliers and screwdriver
- Sand or kitty litter for traction
- Non-perishable, high calorie foods
- Waterproof matches and survival candles with a deep can to melt snow
- Road flares, reflective triangles, and a strip of red cloth or plastic to use as an emergency flag

WINTER 1997-98 - Family Safety and Health



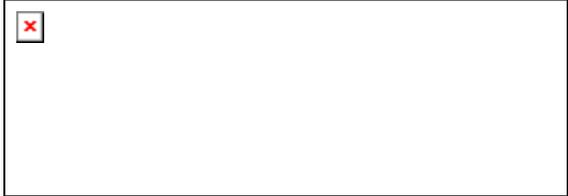
Proposed OSHA T. B. Standard

Informal Public Hearings regarding the proposed OSHA Standard to control occupational exposure to tuberculosis (T.B.), are scheduled to begin on 3 February 1998. At issue are healthcare workers in hospitals, homeless shelters, nursing homes, hospices, clinics and other health care settings. OSHA currently estimates that over 5 million U. S. workers are exposed to T. B. in the course of their work. Issues covered in the proposed standard include: engineering controls, respirator standards and usage, isolation of individuals, early identification, and training. For further information contact: Bonnie Friedman, Office of Information and Consumer Affairs, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Room N-36-47, U. S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20210, telephone (202)219-8148.

<div data-bbox="529 1656 647 1774" data-label="Image"></div> <p>Environmental Health and Safety Staff:</p>	<p>Emergency Telephone Numbers, etc.</p> <p>Public Safety (emergency)-- 280-2911 Public Safety (general)----- 280-2104 Environ.Health & Safety---- 546-6400 Radiation Safety----- 280-5570</p>
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Director-Paul A. Nichols
Chemical Specialist-Lenore Koliha
Admin. Secretary-Cathy Schroder

Chemical Safety----- 546-6404
Chemical Waste----- 546-6404
Physical Plant-----280-2780



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