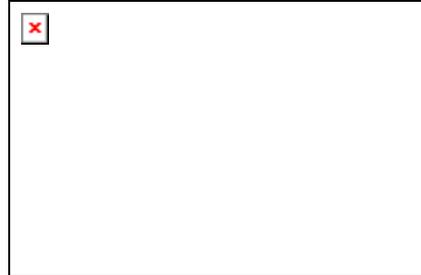


Environmental Health & Safety News



March 1999

EDITORIAL:

RISK

My dictionary defines risk as: "exposure to possible loss or injury : DANGER/PERIL. So, why do we take risks? To a degree, it is probably human nature, possibly machismo, maybe sprit of adventure, probably because of inexperience, and who knows how many other excuses there are for taking risks. We insure against risk, have managers of risk, educate against taking risk, and have laws regarding reckless endangerment which is just another way of saying risk. There are examples of risk takers and the problems associated with safety issues on nearly every newscast and every edition of the paper.

Road Rage is risk, in your face confrontation is risk, taking drugs is risk, drinking and driving is risk, disobeying the law is risk, and the list goes on and on. Throughout my life, I have heard the adage "the Good Die Young". Often this is explainable because of lack of experience. You seldom see old folks jay walk. They know they are not faster than automobiles. The experience of white hair and old age is that they can and have been hurt because they were, and were lucky enough to live through it. The experience of youth is lack of experience. We have all lived through that phase of our lives. So when you are teaching your offspring to drive, don't forget the seat belts. When they reach the age of temptation involving drugs and booze, talk and work with them. Quite possibly the greatest thing that the older generation can pass on regarding risk taking is to make succeeding generations aware of the consequences of their actions.

A job well done may save someone

MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEET INFORMATION

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and Chemical/Drug information related web sites are available on the web. The [EH&S Web Page](#) has many of these that are accessible by just clicking on them. We will always be on the lookout for new sites and will be adding them in the future. In the meanwhile, take a look at:

chemfinder.com msdssearch.com msdsonline.com

To assist the researcher who is having a problem in identification of degree of hazard, I refer you to the University of Kentucky Hazardous Material Identification Guide at www.chem.uky.edu/resources/nfpa.html I find this guide to be excellent in assisting the researcher in determination of NFPA ratings where none have been provided by the manufacturer.

It's your head - Use it or lose it

HOME IMPROVEMENTS

When remodeling or building, take care in choosing safe materials. Latex based paints generally emit lower Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) than oil-based or lacquer types. Some carpeting emits high levels of VOCs. Look for natural or nylon fiber carpet to reduce VOC levels. Non-fiber flooring such as vinyl or tile, have minimal off-gassing and help to eliminate dust and mildew problems. Choose woods for cabinetry which are laminated on both sides or "exterior" grade pressed wood to eliminate formaldehyde off-gassing from pressed wood cabinets.

Compare products and ask questions, that "new" smell may be just what you are trying to avoid. After installing or introducing any new building material into your home, make sure to appropriately ventilate the house to reduce pollutants.

The price of negligence can be explosive!

NATIONAL POISON PREVENTION WEEK MARCH 21-27, 1999

Since 1961 the third week of March has been designated as National Poison Prevention Week. "Children Act Fast... So Do Poisons" is the theme of its annual event, which was intended as a means for local communities to raise awareness of the dangers accidental poisonings.

For more information about preventing accidental poisonings in your home, refer to, "List of Materials - 1999" for available resources and their sources of supply. The list can be obtained from Secretary, Poison Prevention Week Council, P.O. Box 1543, Washington, DC 20013.

Don't let anger place you in danger

STEPS TO STAIRWAY SAFETY

According to the National Safety Council, more than 75% of fatalities from a fall are over the age of 65. People of all ages, however, need to use caution and common sense when going up and down stairs.

- ALWAYS use the handrail, not just when you *think* you may need it.
- If possible, paint the lowest step white or yellow to make it more visible
- If carpet is being used on stairs, choose a plain pattern so that the last step can be easily noted.
- Do not use the stairs as a storage area. If you have a large load to carry up or down, make more than one trip.

A spill can kill

GAS CYLINDER DISPOSAL

When purchasing lecture bottles of compressed gases, be sure to review return or refill options with the vendor. Currently disposal costs for gases can run from \$100.00 per cylinder for inert gases to \$1,000.00 for corrosive or highly toxic gases. Many small lecture bottles become "forgotten", making return to the original vendor an impossibility.

When purchasing cylinders from major chemical supply companies, be aware of any transportation costs for returning empty Or partially used cylinders. The Department of Environmental Health & Safety highly recommends procuring all gas products from the campus vendor currently contracted through the Purchasing Department. They are required to take back their cylinders at no charge. The current vendor is "Air Products". Contact Purchasing if you require assistance.

Patience is a virtue - safety is a must

NEW WEB SITE FOR KIDS...

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has a new web site directed exclusively towards children. The "Kid Safety" web site is designed to educate kids about everyday safety issues from home hazards to preventing sports injuries. The site features interactive games including a memory game, hangman and a few puzzles. If you have children (even if you don't it's still pretty fun!) check it out at:

<http://www.cpsc.gov/kids/kidsafety/index/html>

To be able to face tomorrow, try safety today.

DECONTAMINATION OF EQUIPMENT

Before any lab equipment can be taken out of service or repaired, the equipment must be thoroughly decontaminated. Centrifuges, refrigerators/freezer, incubators, etc. may be contaminated with chemicals' biological material, or radioisotopes. The exact decontamination procedure will depend upon the hazards suspected during equipment use. It is the laboratory's responsibility to inform all non laboratory staff of any potential hazards.

After the equipment is thoroughly decontaminated, the equipment should be tagged "Decontaminated", dated and signed by the laboratory supervisor.

Attention - the key to prevention

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY CITED BY OSHA

The Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) cited Columbia University, College of Physicians & Surgeons, Health Sciences division, and proposed penalties of \$77,000 against the university. Citations include: one alleged willful, eight alleged serious, and seven alleged other-than-serious violations. The willful violation alleges the university violated the laboratory standard by failing to carry out the provisions of a written chemical hygiene plan. The alleged willful violation carries a total proposed penalty of \$55,000. A willful violation is defined as one committed with an intentional disregard for, or plain indifference to, the requirements of the OSHA act and regulations. For complete news release visit the OSHA website at www.osha.gov/media/oshnews/jan99/reg2ny111.html

Safety's intention is accident prevention

SAFETY SHORT...

Next time you get hurt because you did something foolish, think back to this little phrase. Might just prevent the next foolish act on your part.

- It is impossible to make anything foolproof because fools are so ingenious.

- Paul's Law - You can't fall off the floor.
- First Law of Socio-Genetics: Celibacy is not hereditary.
- Hartley's First Law: You can lead a horse to water, but if you can get him to float on his back, you've got something.
- Never call a man a fool. Borrow from him.

Courtesy of Dr. Ann Weeks

Avoid the worst; think safety first

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The EH&S Newsletter is published by the Creighton University Environmental Health and Safety Department. It is provided to disseminate safety information to Creighton University Employees and Students inclusive of regulatory updates and policy changes. Questions regarding newsletter content and suggestions for ways to improve the newsletter should be addressed to Paul Nichols, Director, Environmental Health and Safety at pnichols@creighton.edu. We welcome any and all constructive criticism via E-mail (pnichols@creighton.edu), Fax at (402)546-6403, or Telephone at (402)546-6400.

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