FROM THE DIRECTOR
Victor R. Means, MBA, CSP

Welcome to the new and improved SafetyNet newsletter. We hope that you find this format to be user-friendly and that the articles and information provided will be useful. The mission of the Department of Safety Services is to "...promote a safe and healthy workplace, protect the environment, and assure compliance with applicable regulatory requirements at all TTUHSC campuses." To accomplish this mission, the Safety Services staff will emphasize responsive customer service in providing educational, technical, advisory, and operational support in the following key areas:

- Emergency Preparedness
- Fire & Life Safety
- Occupational Safety
- Safety Education & Training
- Environmental Protection
- Laboratory Safety
- Radiation Protection

Through this newsletter, we hope to provide you with information that you can use at work and at home to keep you and your family safe and healthy. We want you to be able to return home each day to your families at least as healthy as when you came to work, and likewise, return to work the next work day in the same condition. Please take time to view this newsletter and share the information with family, friends, and co-workers. The Department of Safety Services is here to serve you and to help you maintain a safe and healthy workplace. Use us as a resource when you have questions or concerns.

Again, we hope that you find the information here to be useful and applicable to your workplace and home.

Don’t Slip Up on Fall Prevention
Maria Garza, Manager, Education & Training

Falls are the second leading cause of accidental deaths in North America—second only to motor vehicle accidents. Most falls occur on the same level than from a height. They are often caused by slips and trips, making them easy to prevent. Slips occur when the foot loses traction on a floor surface. This can occur because the surface is highly polished or it has a spill or water, oil, grease, mud, fine powder, or other slippery materials on it.

Here are some tips for preventing slips:

- Wear non-slip footwear. Soles which are made of non-slippery material will help you maintain traction.
- Slow down. Chances of falling are greatly increased when you are moving too fast. Never run in a work area.

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Noise continues to be one of the most pervasive occupational health hazards growing today, resulting in Noise-Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL) and being described as an environmental pollutant. According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), approx. 30 million workers are exposed to hazardous noise on the job, with NIHL being the 2nd most self-reported occupational injury.

Repeated exposure to noise measuring greater than 85 decibels (dB) can result in anxiety and irritability, increased heart rate and blood pressure, and ulcers.

**WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PROTECT YOURSELF?**

Since NIHL is 100% preventable, the best protection is removing the noise and educating yourself on common exposures that are easily ignored. For example, lawn mowers, weed eaters, leaf blowers, and music concerts range from 90dB to 115dB. Wear hearing protection (e.g.: earplugs or ear muffs) and limit your exposure time.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires a hearing conservation program for employees who meet or exceed an 8-hour time-weighted average of exposure.

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**Did You Know?**

An unguarded wet floor is a significant cause of work-related accidents in the US?

Approx. 13% of all Workers’ Compensation cases are due to injuries sustained from falling or slipping on the job. It is important to spot and report unsafe conditions to prevent such occurrences.

Report unsafe conditions online using the Hazard Reporting Form on the Safety Services web site, or call your local Safety Services office today!

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**Dry Traps Can Be A Source of Odor**

Sinks and floor drains are equipped with a trap usually in the form of a U-shaped pipe. Liquid is trapped in the bend and forms a seal that prevents sewer gases from escaping into your work area. If a drain is not used for a long period of time, the liquid can evaporate and allow sewer gases to escape.

If you detect a foul odor near a drain, try running water through it. Infrequently used drains, such as floor and cup sink drains, should be primed periodically to prevent sewer odors that result from dry traps.
Fall Prevention  [ continued from page 1 ]

Wipe up spills promptly. A common spill, or water and mud accumulated in an entryway, can cause slips and falls.

Floors should be covered with non-slip materials, especially in areas which tend to get wet or greasy (kitchens and shop floors). If you are cleaning such surfaces, be sure to use the correct cleaning agent so as not to damage any special chemical floor finishes.

Inclined floors (ramps) should be clearly marked and covered in slip-resistant material.

Slipping is serious business. Slips and falls can result in serious, even fatal injuries!

When Seconds Count: Early Detection of Heart Attacks Can Save a LIFE

Renee Witherspoon  MS, CSP, CHMM, Manager, Occupational Safety

Each year about 1.1 million Americans have heart attacks with about 460,000 of those being fatal. According to the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute about half of those deaths occur within one hour of the start of symptoms and before that person even reaches the hospital.

Critical to survival is quick action, and when we are able to recognize those symptoms we can help save a life of a friend or loved one.

Here are the warning signs of a heart attack that everyone should know:

**Chest Discomfort.**
Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that last more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back. The discomfort can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain.

**Discomfort in other areas of the upper body.**
This can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach.

**Shortness of breath.**
This often comes along with chest discomfort, but it can also occur beforehand.

**Other symptoms.**
This may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, or light-headedness.

When we recognize these symptoms, time is critical. Call 911 and get medical care as soon as possible. Statistics show that many of these deaths could have been prevented if someone had been trained in the immediate use of an automated external defibrillator or A.E.D.

What is an A.E.D.?

An A.E.D. is about the size of a laptop computer. It analyzes the heart rhythm and detects any abnormalities. If abnormalities are detected, it will direct the user – via the appropriate voice and display prompts – to deliver an electric shock to the victim.

This electrical shock, called defibrillation, may help the heart re-establish a normal rhythm of its own. If no abnormalities are detected, the A.E.D. will not deliver a shock.

Importantly, each person should know the location of their closest A.E.D., and each department should have at least one or two of their personnel trained in how to use it. Contact your supervisor or USO for specific locations in your area.

Also see http://www.texasch.edu/riskmang/heartfirst.aspx for the general locations of A.E.D.’s supported by Texas Tech University Heartfirst program.
What ARE the Real Issues With HazMat Shipping?

Toni Denison, Manager, Laboratory Safety

The regulations concerning shipping hazardous materials (hazmat) are extensive and can be very confusing. However, they are also some of the most important because they have a direct affect on personal and environmental safety, and carry significant civil and criminal penalties if they are not followed.

The purpose of the hazmat transportation regulations has always been to provide for safety and consistency when shipping dangerous goods. It is estimated that there are over 800,000 hazmat shipments per day, so it’s not hard to imagine that accidents can occur.

You might think that your shipment is harmless, but try to remember that it will be mixed with thousands of other shipments of varying hazards and subjected to adverse environmental conditions as it makes its way to its destination. It is this combination of hazards that makes hazmat shipping particularly dangerous.

The very nature of science demands that information be shared openly which often results in the need to ship common hazardous laboratory substances locally or internationally. At the TTU Health Sciences Center, the most common hazmat items shipped are infectious substances (e.g.: human blood, micro-organisms) and dry ice.

All TTUHSC personnel should think about what they are shipping and be informed on the rules governing their shipment. If you wish to ship potential hazmat items you must be trained and certified beforehand.

Safety Services offers two free classroom training courses. One is specific to infectious substances and dry ice. The other covers all areas of hazmat, which includes common lab chemicals (e.g.: methanol). Call your safety office to reserve a place in the next scheduled class.

Additional online training is available on the Safety Services web site: http://www.ttuhsc.edu/admin/safety/hazmatinfo.aspx

This newsletter was written, designed, and produced by Safety Services Lubbock. For more on information contained within this publication, or to suggest content, please contact: richard.rodriguez@ttuhsc.edu or call 806-743-2697