
Safety & Working Conditions Study Committee

Safety E-Times

This is the 8th issue of the Dane County Safety and Working Conditions Committee's newsletter "Safety E-Times." The Committee has existed since 1973 and consists of union and management members from various county departments **dedicated to providing Dane County employees with a safe working environment** and the ability to bring positive change to their workplace.

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Morel Mushrooms

"Don't be misled by the common names of these mushrooms referring to colors, particularly *Morchella esculenta*, the "Yellow" morel. It appears in a wide variety of colors from light gray to dark gray, light tan to golden brown, pale yellow to yellow to dark brown. The shape of the cap can vary as well, from tall slender and pointed to short squat and round. Some mycologists argue that there are different species or sub-species in this group but if you find a mushroom in the Spring with a honey combed, pitted cap, you have a pretty sure indicator that you have a morel, whatever the taxonomic name is."

"Don't pick mushrooms from contaminated habitats. These include polluted areas, chemically treated lawns, ornamental trees, and places close to highways, landfills, toxic waste sites, crop fields, power lines, railroads, buildings, industrial areas, or firebreaks. Contaminants may accumulate in wild mushrooms. "Scientific research has produced evidence that mushrooms concentrate heavy metals present in rain, air and soil as environmental contaminants."

A good resource for more information on edible mushrooms:

["Edible Wild Mushrooms of North America: A Field-to-Kitchen Guide"](#)

Golden rule: "When in doubt, throw it out!"



In each newsletter we will attempt to continue to offer new and interesting ways for you, your coworkers, and your families to help make a difference in keeping our lives "green."

GREEN MYTHS DEBUNKED!

Myth 1: Recycling wastes more energy than it saves.

Energy-intensive recycling processes could use some work, but recycling is still better than hauling waste to the landfill and manufacturing new products with nonrenewable resources and virgin supplies. Plus, recycling reduces pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, lessens pressure on biodiversity, and creates local jobs. And, yes, recycling saves energy. It takes 95% less energy to recycle aluminum than to make it from raw materials according to the US EPA. Although some types of recycling save more energy than others – for instance, glass recycling saves less energy (40%) than recycling plastic (70%) or steel (60%)-recycling still saves.



Myth 2: Green cleaners don't work.

Even if you're worried about nasty bacteria like Ecoli, there's no need to reach for toxic sprays. Research from the Food Science and Technology program at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University shows that a combo of household hydrogen peroxide and undiluted white or apple cider vinegar is enough to chase away scary Salmonella and its friends. And in the bathroom, household vinegar is effective at wiping out 82% of mold

strains. You may have to scrub a bit harder with natural cleaners, but your lungs, skin, and biceps – not to mention the environment – will benefit from that extra bit of elbow grease. The toxic chemicals found in most purchased cleaning supplies have been shown to cause health problems ranging from eye irritation and rashes to coughing and headaches, and much worse. That seems like a terrible price to pay for gleaming countertops.



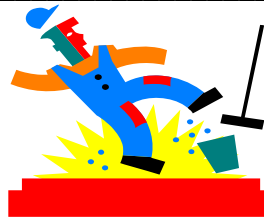
Myth 3: Keeping old appliances is better than upgrading.

Using what you have is better than buying new. But are appliances the exception to the rule? Yes and no. If you have a 1970s fridge, it’s gobbling 70 to 90% more energy than a new model. Recycle that relic and replace it with a more efficient one. Even if your fridge is 10 to 15 years old, replacing saves energy, although the manufacturing process takes its toll on the environment and may negate the energy benefits. With energy hogs like a 15 year old fridge, follow ENERGY STAR recommendations and invest in a new one. With older, less energy intensive appliances (dishwasher and microwave), keep them until they call it quits. Then donate or recycle by visiting earth911.org for recycling locations or contacting your electric service provider.



Myth 4: I’ll save the environment more if I wash my own car.

Not any more. Automatic commercial car washes control water output, using 60% less water than when you wash your car at home. Plus, commercial car washes treat wastewater before it enters the sewer system and many even recycle and reuse water on site.



Slips-Trips-Falls account for approximately 25% of all of Dane County’s employee reported injuries. Many of these reported injuries turn into workers compensation claims. Lost workdays and restricted duty, leave our employees unable to perform their regular job functions. The primary concern with this particular type of injury is the well-being of the employee. These injuries often result in unnecessary pain and discomfort to our workforce ranging from mild to severe. Many of us may have experienced this type of injury, or know of someone who has. These injuries can lead to multiple doctor visits, and in some cases, result in financial hardship or permanent disability.

By heightening the awareness of this particular type of injury, the goal is to reduce the frequency of slips, trips and falls for Dane County employees. The cause needs to be identified before the problem can be fixed! Listed below is a table of the percentage of injuries caused by slips, trips and falls during the past 5 years by department.

Airport	34%	DC Sheriff Office	
Alliant Energy Center	29%	Jail Operations	7%
Courts - Clerk of Courts	31%	Patrol / Field	27%
Consolidated Food Service	21%	Badger Prairie	12%
Fac. Mgmt.	15%	Parks	20%
Highway	22%	Public Works	21%
Human Services	42%	Zoo	30%

Slips, Trips, & Falls not only impact Dane County employees at a high rate, but statistically, the NSC (National Safety Council) indicates that they are the 2nd leading cause of all workplace injuries. The NSC estimates that workers compensation and medical costs associated with employee slips, trips, and fall injuries are approximately 70 billion dollars per year. This does not include intangible costs of training replacement workers and lost productivity.

Since we live in Wisconsin, many view these incidents as somewhat unavoidable! That may be some people's perception, but that is far from the truth. These injuries are prevalent in warmer months as well as our snow-covered times. Incidents of slips, trips and falls can easily be prevented by a few simple suggestions.

1. Slowing down or paying closer attention to the terrain is a first step each of us should take.
2. Shortening your stride on slippery surfaces. Take wide turns when changing directions or approaching a corner.
3. Maintain proper visibility with adequate lighting.
4. Keep obstructions out of walking surface pathway.
5. Clean up spills from flooring surface.

Another suggestion that works well to minimize injuries from slips, trips, falls is to incorporate a stretching regiment into your daily schedule. Limber muscles and tendons not only help improve flexibility but improve one's reaction time, which may prevent a fall. This also helps to minimize muscle and tendon damage in the event of a mishap. This daily routine does not have to be a lengthy work out. Even a few minutes of targeted stretches reduces the likelihood of injury, and helps to improve a person's overall wellness. If you have any medical concerns, please consult with your physician before beginning any stretching routine.

You can improve your overall well-being by examining and changing some of your personal behaviors. Many times it's the little things that we do not perceive as harmful that get us into trouble. Sometimes, it's the smallest actions we take that pay the biggest dividends!

(1) ISSA article: Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls for Custodians



Move Over Law Could Save Lives

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While working on the side of a highway during a traffic stop or to assist a motorist, State Patrol and other law enforcement officers often confront the deadly danger of being hit by fast-moving vehicles traveling within a few feet or even inches of where they are standing or parked.

To help protect law enforcement officers, emergency responders, road maintenance workers, and others who work on the side of roadways, Wisconsin has a Move Over Law.

The law requires drivers to shift lanes or slow down in order to create a safety zone for a squad car, ambulance, fire truck, tow truck or highway maintenance vehicle that is stopped on the side of a road with its warning lights flashing.

Drivers have two options for creating a safety zone.

"If the road has more than one directional lane, like the interstate, and you can switch lanes safely, you must move over to vacate the lane closest to the law enforcement or other emergency vehicle," said Wisconsin State Patrol Superintendent David Collins.

"If the road has a single directional lane or you can't safely move over, you must reduce your speed," he said.

Violating the Move Over Law can be expensive as well as dangerous. A citation costs \$249 and three demerit points are added to the offender's license.

Signs to remind motorists about the Move Over Law are posted on highways near main entry points to Wisconsin. They read: "State law. Move over or slow down for stopped emergency vehicles." "Failure of motorists to move over or slow down is one of the major reasons that motor vehicle crashes kill more law enforcement officers on duty than any other cause," said Collins. "Obeying the Move Over Law will help protect motorists as well as our officers from needless deaths and injuries."

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FLOOD AWARENESS

Flood Awareness Week was back in March, but as you may recall with the recent flooding last June 2008 and also August 2007, it is important that people realize the dangers of flooding and take action now to prepare according to the American Red Cross – Badger Chapter.

Most deaths associated with flooding could be avoided if people were better prepared. Being prepared is easy and does not take much time; we just need to do it. If everyone would make a plan and get a disaster kit we would be better equipped to deal with the next disaster. Flooding can happen anywhere. Nobody is immune to flooding, and we can all feel the effects of it on some level. We need to take action now and take steps to being better prepared.

Here are some tips to better prepare for a flood or other type of disaster:

Get A Kit --It is important for everyone to have a disaster kit ready to go. Many of the items that we would include in our disaster kit are items that are already around our home. Everyone's disaster kit may be a little different depending on the needs of our family. A disaster kit could be put together in a plastic bin, duffle bag, or anything else that could hold the items that we need. We should check our kits about every six months to make sure that items like water and non-perishable food are still good.

Some of the items that should be included in your disaster kit are: flashlight, radio, batteries, first aid kit, water, non-perishable food, map, blanket, toiletry items, extra cash, important phone numbers, tools, important documents, medications, etc.

Make A Plan --Everybody needs to have a plan in place to deal with a disaster situation. Some basic things that we would want to include in our plan are family contacts, meeting places for different types of disasters, an out of town or state contact, medical information, etc.

We should complete our plan as a family and also review it at least once a year. The most important thing is to practice your disaster plan. Actually pretend that there is a flood and go through the steps of what you would do. These steps should be written out in your plan. If you have pets, remember to include them in your disaster plan.

Be Informed --Know the different types of disasters that can happen in your area. It is also important to know what to do in different situations. If there is a flood or flash flood watch, any outdoor items that can be brought indoors should be brought in. We can also move items to a higher floor in our home if it looks like flooding could happen. When a flood warning or flash flood warning is issued, we should continue to monitor the weather and reports from local authorities in case we are told to evacuate. We should also gather items that we need to take with us and our disaster kit so we are ready to evacuate as soon as we are told to do so.

If there is flooding do not drive or walk through flooded areas. Six inches of water can move your vehicle. Children should not play in flood water, since they could become sick and there could also be things in the water that we cannot see that could hurt us.

If you live in a flood prone area, you should check into getting Flood Insurance. Most homeowner's policies do not cover flood damage, so you should check with your local insurance provider about specific details.

You should also check with the Red Cross about signing up for a CPR/First Aid course. The more people that know how to help or save a life, the better off everyone will be. You can contact the Red Cross in Madison at 608-227-1253 to sign up for a course. It is important to take steps now to prepare for a disaster. The more we do now, the less disruptive a disaster will likely be in our lives.

Other nominations for this year's individual safety award were:

- Bruce Pedrick, Dane County Parks, was nominated for being an excellent role model in safety for his efforts in following safety procedures. Bruce was praised for his diligence in following the pre-operational inspection guidelines for all of the equipment used and other safe work habits.
- Deputy Michelle Merrill, DCSO, was nominated for her continued involvement as Recreational Deputy for the inmate worker program. Deputy Merrill was also recognized for her efforts involving the Bloodborne Pathogen Training program for inmate workers, specialized quarterly cleaning efforts in the jail, and for her vigilance for safety in the jail for her fellow employees.
- Fred Babcock, DCSO Sheriff's Aid, was nominated for his outstanding efforts in the Public Safety Building (PSB) storeroom. His work is much greater than just delivering supplies to the jails. He was recognized for his cleaning activities and organizational skills, which have greatly improved the storeroom efficiency. He has also updated and reformatted the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) books for the jail. These books are an important part of the HAZCOM program that offers protection for jail staff and inmates.
- Mike Schnabel, DCSO, was nominated for his efforts to improve safety in the Sheriff's Office vehicle fleet. Mike currently works as the Vehicle and Equipment Coordinator for DCSO. Mike is relentless in his efforts to improve visibility with the squads, from employing reflective taping to specifying LED light bars. Mike continually looks at ways to improve existing lighting packages for better daytime and nighttime visibility, to enhance safety for the deputies and for the members of the public.

The Dane County Departmental Safety Achievement Award goes to the **Dane County Sheriff's Office**. DCSO receives this award because of their efforts in reducing safety related injuries and illnesses. The departmental award process involves both quantitative and qualitative data used to track recordable injuries and illnesses. The evaluation process looks at the OSHA 300 log to determine recordable injury, lost work days, restricted work days, and job transfer rates. This data is then compared to the department's previous year's data and measured for level of improvement. There were 27 departments in Dane County government evaluated this year. These departments were measured for improvement against themselves, not other departments; due to the diverse nature of job classifications within the county. This places all departments on a level playing field since certain jobs are inherently more hazardous than others. This year our data was collected for the 2008 calendar year. In previous years, we used a fiscal calendar from July to June for OSHA rate calculations.

This year's award not only looked for improvement, but also established targeted goals for each department to improve by 10% from last year's data. The DCSO exceeded the 10% benchmark in three of the four selected OSHA categories.

The DCSO has continued to focus their efforts on qualitative criteria as well. They have maintained a functional safety committee that meets quarterly. The department provides effective safety programs and training for its employees and reviews their injury data regularly.

The nature of the Sheriff's Office work is inherently dangerous by itself. Their efforts to control injury and illness rates in a highly unpredictable work environment can be very challenging. With one of Dane County's largest staff, logging over 1.1 million work hours in 2008, efforts to control workplace injuries for their employees is a huge commitment. The DCSO has continued to show improvement in a very difficult work environment. This success illustrates the Sheriff's Office's belief that workplace safety is important and attainable, continually striving for improvement in all areas of safety.

Both Cheri and the Dane County Sheriff's Office will be recognized for their achievements at an upcoming County Board meeting.

Congratulations to Cheri Harwood, the Dane County Sheriff's Office, and to everyone who participated in this year's Safety Awards process.



SAFETY TRIVIA QUESTION ????????????????????

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Americans own more than 275 million televisions which consume more than 50 billion kilowatt-hours of energy. That is enough electricity to power all the homes in what state for one year?

Send your answer to Laura Huttner at huttner@co.dane.wi.us by June 15th, 2009.

Reduce your contribution to that energy use by understanding the basics of TV efficiency. Unfortunately with the implementation of the digital set which uses more energy, the old analog is no longer option although it does use less energy. If you do buy a new TV, cut energy costs and reduce the amount of pollution and waste that results from manufacturing by buying a model that's smaller than 27 inches.

If you upgrade to a TV that's smaller than 50 inches, opt for a liquid crystal display (LCD) model over plasma. A 42-inch LCD flat panel TV consumes 200 watts, compared to up to 500 watts for a plasma model of the same size, plus LCD TV screens contain fewer hazardous chemicals.

If you want a TV that's 50 inches or larger, a projection model is your most efficient option. Choose ENERGY STAR TVs which use about 30 percent less energy than standard units.

Lastly, TVs still have a current of electricity passing through them when switched off. Unplug your TV when not in use to increase energy savings.

*Last issue's winner was Chris Scoville with the correct answer to **how many thousands of women die annually of lung cancer each year vs. the 40,000 that will die of breast cancer?** 70,000*

CHECK OUT OUR INTRANET SITE!

The Safety & Working Conditions Study Committee has a intranet website located at:
<http://www.co.dane.wi.us/committees/workingconditions/>

This website is specifically designed with information and links for you to access more safety information. You will also find the committee's meeting times, agendas, and minutes. The site also allows you to contact the individual committee members with your suggestions and concerns.

There is even an Anonymous Contact Form for Dane County employees to report safety concerns that can be accessed from the website.