



Safety E-Times

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Vacant: Trade Union Rep.

This is the 9th 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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Before you print this newsletter, think about the environment.

Back issues at: <http://www.countyofdane.com/committees/workingconditions/index.html>

What To Do If You Get Sick With the Flu

From: www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/2009-10/pdf/what_to_do_if_you_get_sick.pdf

How do I know if I have the flu?

You may have the flu if you have some or all of these symptoms:

- fever (but not everyone with flu will have a fever)
- cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- body aches
- headache
- chills
- fatigue
- sometimes diarrhea and vomiting

What should I do if I get sick?

If you get sick with flu-like symptoms this flu season, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people except to get medical care.

How long should I stay home if I'm sick?

The CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other things you have to do and no one else can do for you. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine, such as Tylenol®.) You should stay home from work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings.

What should I do while I'm sick?

Stay away from others as much as possible to keep from making them sick. If you must leave home, for example to get medical care, wear a facemask if you have one, or cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. And wash your hands often to keep from spreading flu to others.

How do you know if you should go to the emergency room?

The emergency room should be used for people who are very sick. You should not go to the emergency room if you are only mildly ill. If you have the emergency warning signs of flu sickness,



you should go to the emergency room. If you get sick with flu symptoms and are at high risk of flu complications or you are concerned about your illness, call your health care provider for advice. If you go to the emergency room and you are not sick with the flu, you may catch it from people who do have it

However, anyone concerned about their illness should consult a health care provider, and anyone who experiences these warning signs should get medical care right away:

In children

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In adults

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

Dane County Citizen's Academy & "Gangs and Drugs in Dane County"

by Scott Teuscher

This fall, I was fortunate that I was able to participate in an eye-opening program, the Dane County Citizen's Academy. For eleven consecutive Tuesday evenings, the participants of this academy got to see a different facet of the Dane County Sheriff's Office.

We experienced an insiders perspective of how the Sheriff's office works and some detailed stories of what life is like as a Dane County Deputy. We were presented with demonstrations from select groups such as the Ordnance (bomb) Squad, Hostage Negotiations Team, Tactical Response Team, Crime Scene Unit, Crash Reconstruction Team, Motorcycle and Service Patrol Units and K-9 Units. We took tours with the Marine and Trail Enforcement Bureau, toured the CCB and PSB Jails, Dane County Morgue, 9-1-1 Center and the Dane County Courthouse with members of the Dane County Bailiff's unit. We were even able to try out our shooting skills after we received some initial training at the Dane County Law Enforcement Training Center.

One of this years participants in the academy was former TV News Anchor, John Karcher. John is now working with a different media venue called "Your News". With John's experience as a professional journalist, there is no need for me to make a feeble attempt to capture the essence of one night's presentation. John has given our Safety E-Times permission to re-run one of his articles, "Gangs and Drugs in Dane County," This article depicts a very serious issue in Dane County and how the Dane County Sheriff tackles it. Other Citizen's Academy articles are available on the Your News website: <http://www.yournews.com> under John Karcher's name on the left hand margin.

I would like to thank all the individuals from the Dane County Sheriff's Office who participated in this Citizen's Academy. I also enjoyed the opportunity to meet new friends, co-workers, and fellow citizens. And thank you John Karcher for sharing your perspective and writing talents with us.

Interested individuals for this opportunity can get information about the Citizen's Academy at: <http://www.danesheriff.com/CitizenAcademy.aspx>

by John Karcher

Madison (YN) - A man is shot outside a Sun Prairie bar because a gang member didn't like the way he was being looked at. A Beloit girl, last week, an innocent bystander, is killed in a drive by shooting. A hair-pulling, slug-fest between girls breaks out on a Madison Metro bus on its way to middle school with the young perpetrator hurling profanities at the bus driver. In Sun Prairie, 16 opposing gang members battle it out...a 14 year old is stabbed. It went on, and on, and on.

It was a jaw dropping presentation tonight for 16 members of the Dane County Sheriff Department's Citizen Academy as they heard a "state of the state" on the gang and drug problem in the county. It was delivered by Deputy Joel Wagner and Sgt. Gordy Disch, members of the County Narcotics and Gang Task Force. Officers responded to reports of fights, stabbings, and slashings at several popular family-oriented community events in Dane county this summer. All were gang related. They heard about the long list of attacks, the reasons, the hopelessness of gang members, zero parental involvement in their lives and the drug money that fuels it all. It was depressing to hear and left everyone wondering why are there not more than 3 or 4 officers dedicated to the problem?

Wagner says officers are being "swallowed up" by all the drugs in Dane County and the gangs that peddle them. It is a huge business as Chicago area pushers come to Madison and disperse their drugs to gangs or

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sell their trash at twice the price they get in Illinois. Madison, Wagner says, "is an open air drug market". "It's not just Madison; it's in all of our communities". In Middleton, Wagner says there are 20 to 30 active gang members and "everyone knows exactly where to go to get drugs". 8 and 9 year olds are recruited by drug dealers to sit on street corners with walkie talkies to alert dealers to police in the area and are then paid for their efforts.

Heroin is "the biggest problem in the County", according to Sgt. Disch. So far this year, 15 people have died from overdose...8 were on heroin. "It's a cheap high, but a fatal high", he says, and 'most of those who die from heroin inject it, including an 18-year old Fitchburg girl who still had the needle in her arm". The average heroin user spends \$100 to \$500 dollars a day to support their habit. Disch says much of the money comes from a life of crime.

The demand for drugs is what is fueling the rise in gangs, now estimated at more than 50 with some 1,500 members. The biggest challenge according to Wagner is with Hispanics and female gang members. More than half of Dane County communities report gang activity, according to Wagner. A survey of 9th - 12th grade students in the county shows 38% of students have seen gang activity, 7% have been asked to join a gang, and 6% of students report carrying a weapon to high school.

Much of the recruiting for gang members takes place on popular web sites like My Space and Facebook, according to Wagner. He says kids have secret logins or multiple accounts to hide it from their parents. Wagner says the youths have to go through initiation to get into local gangs. He showed videos of the hazing where prospective members are jumped and beaten by other members. In the case of females,...

they use their bodies. Wagner told of a girl at a Madison middle school who gave oral sex during her initiation

Its clear gang member's parents get much of the blame. In fact, Wagner says, in many cases he'll go to the youth's home to find both parents with gang tattoos. He says, "Parents just don't care. It's hard to defeat when mom and dad are at the door with gang symbols". For parents everywhere, the officer's advice for is; "Know your kid's friends well and their parents better". "If you don't raise your kids someone else will", he adds

What does a community do to solve the gang problem? Dane County, Wagner says, has a lengthy report filled with suggestions from a cross section of people and organizations. What's been implemented? Very little except for about \$150,000 to help get jobs for youths. The problem, according to Wagner, the kids are so young many can't even get a work permit and the low pay does nothing to help them make a living. Their rationale, why work at a fast food place....when they can sell drugs and make a couple thousand dollars in a few hours on a street corner, "it's so lucrative, there's so many drugs out there", according to Wagner.

"I don't wonder why they go into gangs; I wonder how to get them out. I don't have the answers. I have more failures than success". Wagner says, "Not one gang member yet has graduated from High School", but he has been tracking one teenage girl who has left gangs and turned her grades around and is on pace to graduate. He says it will be the highlight of his career when that happens. "I saved one". His motivation, in this worsening gang situation, is to find a second.

There apparently is no shortage of applicants.

[For more information visit www.iir.com/nygc/](http://www.iir.com/nygc/)



Dane County Sheriff's Office
Madison, Wisconsin

Sheriff David J. Mahoney



Dane County Risk Management

Worker's Comp 101

Introduction

Risk Management is charged with ensuring that Dane County complies with Wisconsin's Worker's Compensation Act, which created a system under which employees can recover from work related injuries and illnesses without having to prove that the employer was negligent.

The following is an outline of how you can help us meet our obligations:

Notice of Injury

Dane County employees who are injured on the job or become ill because of a work related experience should:

- 1) Immediately seek first aid, medical attention, and/or (if necessary) call 911; and
- 2) Immediately report the accident or ailment to the supervisor.

Delays in reporting can affect possible worker's compensation benefits. Dane County Risk Management administers Dane County's self-insurance program for worker's compensation. Therefore, after reporting an injury or illness to his/her supervisor, employees do not need to file a worker's compensation claim with an outside insurance company.

After a supervisor receives a report that an employee experienced a work related injury or illness, the supervisor must immediately report the injury or illness to Risk Management. After receiving the supervisor's report, Risk Management works with a Third Party Administrator ("TPA"), which is not an insurance company but does assist Risk Management with paying claims and filing reports to the Department of Workforce Development.

Summary of Benefits

Please see the Administrative Practices Manual on our intra-net for details, but Dane County worker's compensation benefits include:

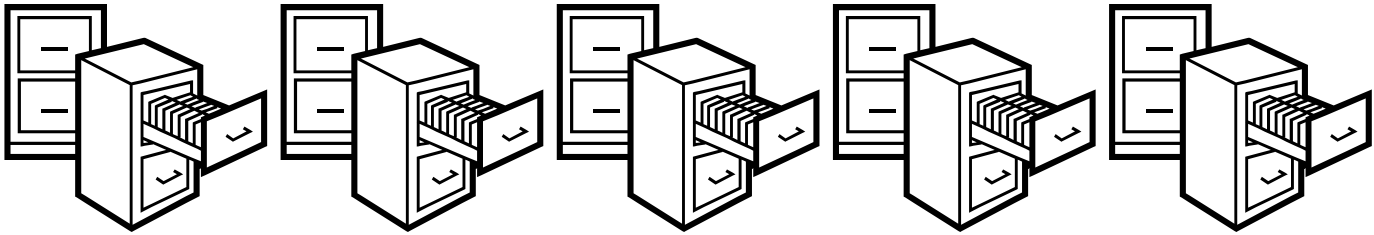
- 1) Coverage of all reasonable and necessary medical expenses.
- 2) Lost Wages.
- 3) Vocational rehabilitation and retraining (see details below under Return to Work).
- 4) If a death occurs, death benefits and burial expense will be paid to qualified beneficiaries up to specified limits.

Forms to be filled out by the Supervisor:

- *Employer's First Report of Injury or Disease* (DWD WKC-12) - please return to Risk Management within two (2) business days after incident.
- *Witness Report* - please return to Risk Management within two (2) business days of incident.
- *Accident Analysis Report* - please return to Risk Management.

Forms to be filled out by the Employee:

- *Employee's Report of Injury* - please return to Supervisor within two (2) business days after incident.
- *Physician's First Report* - please return to Risk Management within 24 hours of physician appointment.
- *Release of Information* - please return to Risk Management before or within 24 hours after physician appointment.



WORKPLACE VIOLENCE: PREVENTION IS THE CURE

From the US Department of Labor, OSHA

There is a range of workplace violence that runs from verbal abuse to physical violence, and, as a responsible employer, Dane County does not tolerate violence in the workplace in any form.

POTENTIAL FOR VIOLENCE

There are a variety of ways to help ensure safety without interfering with official County business. Common indicators of potential workplace violence include:

- Direct or veiled threats of harm;
- Bringing a weapon to the workplace;
- Statements showing fascination with workplace violence;
- Intimidating, harassing, bullying, belligerent, or other aggressive behavior, whether directed at customers, co-workers, or supervisors;
- Indicating desperation over personal problems;
- Extreme change in normal behaviors;
- Substance abuse.

Obviously, different measures are appropriate for different Departments, but safety committees could look at things like:

- Is there the proper distance between staff and the general public through use of counters, windows, door that only open from the inside, doors that require key cards, etc.?
- Are areas where potential attackers can hide in buildings and parking lots limited through, for example, use of mirrors, proper lighting, proper landscaping, proper placement of garbage cans and other obstructions, etc.?
- Does the Department have established procedures for calling for medical assistance and/or notifying law enforcement?
- Does the Department have established evacuation plans and procedures to account for all employees afterwards?

DEFUSING SITUATIONS

Most of us have an instinctive “fight or flight” reaction to conflict. Unfortunately, neither escalating conflict nor running away from its warning signs are effective ways to defuse an unfriendly situation. Therefore, when an employee expresses anger, deal with it as soon as possible. By taking the time to discuss the situation, you are showing that you respect both the employee and their perceptions/feelings.

If anger is expressed in the open (like in a staff meeting), then the angry employee should be asked whether he/she would like to discuss their anger at the meeting or in private. If an angry employee is hesitant to talk, encourage them to talk by saying, for example, *“I can understand that you are hesitant to talk about this, but we would probably both be better off if we got this out in the open.”*

Always allow the employee to talk (don't interrupt) and make sure you have heard what the person said by saying, for example, *“If I understand you correctly, you feel that [fill in the blank]; is that right?”*

Next, convey that you are on the same side by finding something you agree on; for example, *“I think we can agree that neither of us want this issue to interfere with our work, isn't that right?”* If it appears that the employee is still angry, let the moment pass, allow the person to think about the situation, then follow-up in a day or two. This is important because someone who is angry initially may “lose face” by letting the anger go immediately.

Finally, after the anger has been addressed, tackle the issue underlying the feelings.

POST CONFLICT PROCEDURES

Dane County encourages its employees to please report every threat of workplace violence to Risk Management. Of course if there is an incident, please provide prompt medical attention and alert law enforcement prior to reporting the incident to Risk Management. Risk Management investigates all reported violent incidents and threats of violence, monitors reports for trends, and may recommend Departments take corrective action.

Victims of workplace violence, witnesses to workplace violence and their coworkers may need counseling to help recover from the incident. Dane County offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), which offers initial information, assessment counseling and referral at no cost to County employees and members of their immediate families. Participation is voluntary, confidential and easy: just call 6008-280-2630. In addition, employees who have opted for long term/short term disability insurance as an employee benefit can call Unum's EAP program at 1-800-854-1446. Again, the program is voluntary, confidential and free.



Living with Propane

By Laura Huttner

Propane plays an important role in our everyday lives. Propane is used not only as an efficient energy source for heating and cooking but also is used extensively in manufacturing and agriculture.

To most consumers, propane is an invisible fuel, transported in tanks and underground, ready to use in your home or business. But, like all fuels, it must be handled wisely to ensure safety.

Propane is a liquid hydrocarbon that vaporizes into a colorless, odorless, highly flammable gas. In order to detect an uncontrolled release of propane, an odorant, usually ethyl mercaptan, is added to propane.

You should know:

- * Propane is flammable and may cause fires and explosions.
- * No odorant is effective to warn every user all of the time.
- * Improperly vented or defective appliances can cause life-threatening carbon monoxide poisoning.
- * Colds, allergies, smoking, alcohol or age can affect your ability to smell any odor.
- * Strong competing odors may mask the odor of escaping propane. Continued exposure to any odor, including odorized propane, can cause you to get used to the odor and fail to detect its presence. The strength of the odor is not a reliable indicator of the amount of gas present.
- * Propane is heavier than air, making floor-level leaks hard to detect. When smelling for propane, be sure to smell at floor level.
- * Always be sensitive to the slightest propane gas odor. Investigate all foul odors as the propane gas may lose its distinctive odor and can be miss-diagnosed as another odor.
- * When a propane gas tank is close to being empty, you may get a momentary whiff of odorant when stove top burners are ignited. However, if the smell lasts more than a moment, the odor means you may have a serious propane gas leak.

If you suspect a gas leak, **DO NOT** do anything that could cause a spark or flame, **DO NOT** turn lights on or off, **DO NOT** use any type of phone, **DO NOT** use any type of equipment or appliance. Take these steps instead:

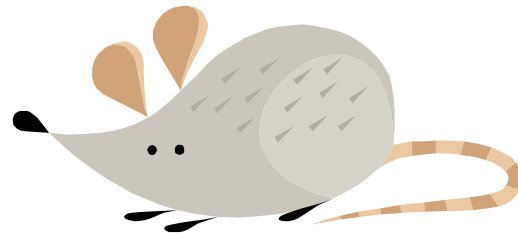
- * If possible, close all gas tank, cylinder or gas meter supply valves.
- * Get everyone out.
- * Ventilate the area.
- * Call the local fire department and propane service professional from a safe place or a neighbor's home.
- * Do Not Re-enter until you are told to do so by emergency personnel or CETP trained propane service professional. Have the professionals repair, test and relight your pilot lights.

Keeping it Green in Dane County

12 Ways to Save More, Waste Less

1. **When washing clothes, try to always wash with a full load. You could save 3,400 gallons a year in water.**
2. **Adjust the water temperature. Unless you're washing oily stained clothes most clothes can be washed in warm or cold water settings.**
3. **Dry multiple loads in fast succession to capitalize on retained heat in the dryer.**
4. **Thirsty? Make water your drink of choice. Carry a stainless steel bottle for refills.**
5. **Transfer shampoo and condition into pump bottles and use just one squirt per application. It's all you need.**
6. **Before grocery shopping, search online for printable coupons. Spend time with the stores website or circular, and plan meals around sale items.**
7. **Use Smart Products like detergent that cleans with plant-based soaps and baking soda and costs up to 50% less per load than the leading detergent.**
8. **Bulk up.... Larger sizes mean lower unit costs. Divide into smaller portions, freezing perishable items as necessary**
9. **Spend less on skin care. Look for tinted moisturizers and body lotions with built-in sunscreen. Read online comparisons...quite often the expensive name brand is the very similar to the less costly one.**
10. **Dine at Home. By being creative with recipes, table settings and even fun activities at the table, you won't feel like you're missing a thing.**
11. **Choose products that multi task such as shampoo and body wash for kids, or shampoo and conditioner all in one.**
12. **Boil water faster by putting a lid on the pot. Or better yet, microwave your water.**

Five Things You Should Know About Mice



By Laura Huttner

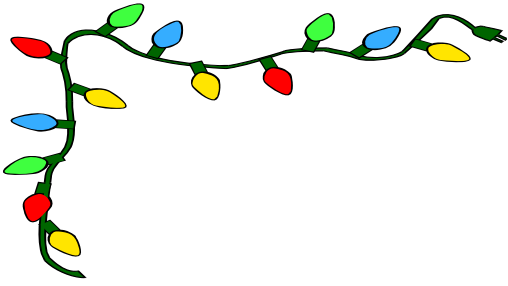
They don't come in unless you let them. Most mice only show up when there's an open invitation, Such as the day you leave the garage open with a bag of grass seed inside (you may as well roll out a red carpet). So don't.

They prefer what they're already eating. If you find that mice have chewed into a Cheerios box, don't bother baiting your traps with peanut butter or cheese- use Cheerios.

They're boring. They run the same routes repeatedly. Place snap traps where you've seen them.....along the edges of rooms or where you see droppings.

They floss, sort of. You can bait a trap with dental floss – they'll think it's nesting material.

Don't try to "Humanely" trap and release them. They'll get killed by exposure – cats, birds, or most likely other mice – they're territorial. Snap traps do work very well.



Holiday Safety Tips

By Laura Huttner

- Look for the label “Fire Resistant” when purchasing an artificial tree.
- When selecting fresh trees, check that the needles are green and do not break when bent. A healthy tree’s base will be sticky with resin.
- Cut three inches from the bottom of the tree to help with water absorption and prevent drying, which can be a fire hazard.
- Use only non-combustible tree trimming materials.
- Never use lights on a metallic tree, as the tree can become electrically charged.
- Position sharp and breakable tree ornaments out of children’s reach
- Use indoor and outdoor lights that have been approved for use by a nationally recognized testing laboratory.
- Discard strings of lights that have cracked sockets or frayed wires.
- Turn off lights and snuff out candles before going to bed or when leaving the room.
- Plug outdoor lights into ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protected outlets.
- Don’t burn wrapping paper or tree branches in the fireplace.
- Keep a screen around the fireplace to contain sparks.



2009 Wisconsin Hunting & Trapping Seasons

The 2009 Wisconsin Deer Hunting season is over and appears to be another success for the state. There are still many other hunting and trapping opportunities in Wisconsin along with a full winter fishing season that is still waiting for all you anglers. To find information about the regulations, deadlines, drawing dates, DNR Service Centers and whole lot more.....look up: www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/wildlife



SAFETY TRIVIA QUESTION

How long should you stay home if you are sick with the flu?

Send your answer to Laura Huttner at huttner@co.dane.wi.us by December 30th, 2009. Correct responses will be placed in a drawing, and a winner randomly selected. The winner will receive a First Aid kit.