Safety Bulletin

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Environmental Health & Safety

What's Inside

Do Your Work Habits Affect Your Health?

Those of us who spend most of their working hours in front of a computer aren't the only ones who should be thinking about ergonomics. Whether you find yourself in front of a computer, laboratory bench, tool bench or behind a piece of machinery, improvements to how you do your work can help reduce strain and discomfort, and help prevent injuries.

Ergonomics covers all aspects of a job, from the physical stresses it places on joints, muscles, nerves, tendons, and bones, to the environmental factors which can affect hearing, vision, and general comfort and health.

Most job-related injuries are caused by repetition, awkward postures, reaching, bending, lifting heavy objects, and application of force. The basic goal of ergonomics is to improve health and safety, prevent injuries, improve productivity and promote long-term health in the workplace.

Some things to look for in identifying workplace risks:

- Work that places the elbows above shoulder height, or the hands behind the body.
- Tasks that call for frequent bending or twisting of the neck.
- Work requiring frequent or prolonged grasping and holding objects, or frequent wrist movements.
- Work that requires frequent lifting of items from below knee height or above the shoulders.
- Work requiring frequent bending or twisting at the waist.
- Tasks that involve carrying, lifting, pushing or pulling heavy or awkward loads.
- Spending long periods with a body part held in any one position without movement.

According OSHA, repetitive strain injuries are the nation's most common health problem, affecting hundreds of thousands of American workers.

Visit 'Ergonomics @ Yale' (www.yale.edu/ergo). EHS's website focuses on ways of improving work habits to help you prevent ergonomic injuries and recommends ways of minimizing or controlling these risks so that you can continue to work productively and free of discomfort.

If you have any questions or concerns, talk to your supervisor or call EHS at 203-785-3550.

Odor Troubles?

Are you experiencing troubling odors in your laboratory? This can be caused from dry sink traps. Try running water in all the sinks including the cup sinks. If the traps are allowed to dry out, unpleasant odors from the sewer system can escape into your lab. Run water in all sinks and drains. After filling all sink traps with water, pour about a ¼ cup of mineral oil in those sinks which are seldom or never used to prevent the water from evaporating. (Do not pour oil in sink drains which are routinely used.)

Can You Survive the Cold?

Winter isn't over yet, and it's not going to let us forget about it anytime soon! CT has experienced frigid temperatures over the last few weeks, and reminders on protecting yourself from frostbite and hypothermia have been leading stories in the news. How much do you know about staying safe when the temperature drops? Can you score 100?

1. Hypothermia is defined as a core body temperature under:
   a. 90 degrees Fahrenheit
   b. 92
   c. 95
   d. 98.6
   e. 88.6
2. Which of the following methods can be use to warm frostbitten tissue:
   a. Warming the tissue using body heat
   b. Warming the tissue in hot water
   c. Warming the tissue in room temperature water
   d. A and B
   e. A and C
3. Which of the following may go away as the hypothermia worsens?
   a. Slurred speech
   b. Confusion
   c. Shivering
   d. Unconsciousness
4. You can only develop hypothermia if the outside temperature is below freezing.
   a. True
   b. False
5. Frostbite can cause ice crystals inside the body.
   a. True
   b. False
6. Drinking alcohol makes your body warmer.
   a. True
   b. False

You'll find all the correct answers posted at ehs.yale.edu/news/ehs-safety-bulletin.

Laboratory Surveys, Waste & Hazardous Materials

Laboratory Surveys: EHS encourages laboratories to conduct safety surveys of their areas on a regular basis. In order to guide researchers in this self-assessment, a checklist of general laboratory safety items that are relevant to most research laboratories at Yale University is now available on our website at http://ehs.yale.edu/forms-tools/lab-self-assessment-checklist. We encourage PIs or Lab Managers to do this safety survey at least twice a year. This self-assessment does not replace the annual safety inspections that are conducted by EHS.

Waste Handling Procedures: If you work in a laboratory and need information on the proper methods of disposing waste, you'll find it here: ehs.yale.edu/policies-procedures/laboratory-waste-handling-procedures.
For an overview of how waste is handled on campus and the importance of proper waste handling, collection and storage, review EHS's "Laboratory Waste Essential Practices" video at: ehs.yale.edu/training/laboratory-waste-essential-practices.

Hazardous Materials Emergencies: During regular weekday working hours (8:30am-5:00pm) if you have an emergency involving hazardous materials, you call the EHS emergency line at 785-3555. But when it's after hours, a holiday or weekend and you have an emergency, who do you call? 911 of course!

Calling 911 from a University phone will put you through to the University Police emergency dispatcher who will take your information and contact the on-call EHS emergency responder. If you dial 911 from a cell phone, you'll reach CT State Police who will be able to route your call to Yale's Police Department.

Don't delay making the call. You will not get in trouble for calling 911. Call as soon as an emergency involving hazardous materials happens or as soon as you are made aware of it.

EHS Employee of the Year

Riccardo (left) and EHS Director, Peter Reinhardt

EHS proudly honors Riccardo Airo as our 2013 Employee of the Year. He was chosen for this award because of his strong work ethic, courteous and professional manner, and his unwavering support of EHS and his Yale clients. This was clearly demonstrated during the months in 2013 when Riccardo put his regular duties on hold to volunteer full-time for the shop safety program and assumed full responsibility for the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) program. Riccardo also has a leadership role in the lock-out/tag-out program, provides training and helps develop site-specific written programs. Congratulations Riccardo! You are a model of dedication to safety and a valuable resource to your EHS colleagues and clients.

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EVALUATION • RESPONSE • PREVENTION
HAZARDOUS MATERIALS MANAGEMENT • TRAINING

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Rules of the Road

First things first, be sure to remove all snow from your vehicle: roof, windows, hood and trunk.

Slow down and increase following distances. If your vehicle is equipped with anti-lock brakes, do not pump your brakes.

Ensure your tires have adequate tread and are suited for use in snow. Consider installing snow tires, it is recommended that they be mounted on all four wheels.

Check your battery's ability to hold a charge, ensure anti-freeze level and strength is satisfactory, ensure the vehicle is running well, all lights and signals functioning, and that wipers are in good shape.

Keep your gas tank greater than one half full.

If you are stranded, stay in your vehicle unless help is visible within a short distance. Tie a brightly colored cloth to the antenna and raise the hood. To stay warm, turn on engine for 10 minutes each hour. When vehicle is running, turn on dome light, this is a signal to rescuers. Keep exhaust pipe clear of snow and when vehicle is running open downwind window slightly. Use minor exercise occasionally.

EHS 2013—Year in Review

EHS trained 14,432 through online training.

EHS trained 5,438 through instructor led courses.

EHS processed 1,081 radioactive material orders.

EHS performed over 712 radiation safety surveys.

EHS performed over 795 laboratory safety inspections.

Over 1,100 fume hoods were tested and certified.

EHS responded to 202 incidents.

189,491 lbs. of electronic waste were recycled.

6,610 lbs. of batteries were recycled.

EHS recycled 228,742 ft. of fluorescent light bulbs (43 miles).

EHS autoclaved/shredded 563,629 lbs. of medical waste on-site.

EHS removed 268,970 lbs. of hazardous waste.

EHS completed 7,920 shipping & export reviews.