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## Safety Talk and Tips

Eastern Region's Environmental Safety and Health Newsletter

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### June Is National Safety Month



To assist in your planning each week has a specific focus.

- June 4-8: Workplace Safety
- June 11-15: Driving Safety
- June 18-22: Emergency Preparedness
- June 25-29: Safety in the Home and Community

For more information  
<http://www.nsc.org/nsm/>

### North Carolina Safety and Health Council Wins Award

The North Carolina Federal Safety and Health Council (NCFSHC) received the Department of Labor Meritorious Achievement Award for activities it undertook in calendar year 2005 promoting safety and health in the federal sector. In a letter dated March 14, 2007 to the chair of the NCFSHC, the Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health wrote, "You and your fellow Council members should be very proud of your accomplishments in facilitating the exchange of ideas and information throughout the Federal Government about occupational safety and health." WFO Raleigh MIC Darin Figsrsky and ET Tom Harris are representatives on the NCFSHC.



The NCFSHC holds quarterly meetings, emphasizing training on issues important to a variety of government agencies. Through its participation, WFO Raleigh has discussed weather safety, and both Darin and Tom obtained certificates of completion in the OSHA 10-hour course instructed by qualified members of the NCFSHC. This training was offered free through the Council. Offices are encouraged to become engaged with local safety and health councils as they can offer a wealth of knowledge about ES&H issues, while also serving as resources for training requirements. One is likely close to your office, and a listing of OSHA Field Federal Safety and Health Councils can be found at [http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/federalsafetyhealthcouncil/council\\_region.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/federalsafetyhealthcouncil/council_region.html)

#### Your Eastern Region Environmental, Safety and Health Advisory Board

- |                  |                |
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## Summer Means Rodents, Snakes and Insects For Employees Who Work Outside

Employees who work outdoors are often faced with safety hazards not associated with normal work conditions. In fact, every summer Eastern Region has a few employees that have been stung by bees or wasps, or bitten by ticks and other insects.



The information on the OSHA Quick Card to the right is provided to help protect all workers from stings and bites.

### Safety Tidbits

- ◆ Cold water saps body heat 25 times faster than air at the same temperature.
- ◆ The US Department of Transportation estimates that the typical driver will have a near automobile accident one or two times a month.
- ◆ Only one percent of female black widow bites actually results in death. If bitten, seek medical attention immediately .

Source: Safety Stuff  
[www.MakeSafetyFun.com](http://www.MakeSafetyFun.com)



## Rodents, Snakes and Insects

### Insects, Spiders and Ticks

- To protect yourself from biting and stinging insects, wear long pants, socks, and long-sleeved shirts.
- Use insect repellents that contain DEET or Picaridin.
- Treat bites and stings with over-the-counter products that relieve pain and prevent infection.
- Avoid fire ants; their bites are painful and cause blisters.
- Severe reactions to fire ant bites (chest pain, nausea, sweating, loss of breath, serious swelling or slurred speech) require immediate medical treatment.

### Rodents and Wild or Stray Animals

- Dead and live animals can spread diseases such as Rat Bite Fever and Rabies.
- Avoid contact with wild or stray animals.
- Avoid contact with rats or rat-contaminated buildings. If you can't avoid contact, wear protective gloves and wash your hands regularly.
- Get rid of dead animals as soon as possible.
- If bitten/scratched, get medical attention immediately.

### Snakes

- Watch where you place your hands and feet when removing debris. If possible, don't place your fingers under debris you are moving. Wear heavy gloves.
- If you see a snake, step back and allow it to proceed.
- Wear boots at least 10 inches high.
- Watch for snakes sunning on fallen trees, limbs or other debris.
- A snake's striking distance is about 1/2 the total length of the snake.
- If bitten, note the color and shape of the snake's head to help with treatment.
- Keep bite victims still and calm to slow the spread of venom in case the snake is poisonous. Seek medical attention as soon as possible.
- Do not cut the wound or attempt to suck out the venom. Apply first aid: lay the person down so that the bite is below the level of the heart, and cover the bite with a clean, dry dressing.

For more complete information:

 **Occupational Safety and Health Administration**  
U.S. Department of Labor  
[www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov) (800) 321-OSHA

## Lessons Learned - Driving and Deer

On March 15th, an Eastern Region employee was driving back at night from an outreach event. The employee was traveling the speed limit when he noticed a deer approximately 50 to 60 yards away. The employee slowly applied his brake and swerved toward the left shoulder, but the deer stopped and possibly reversed the direction he was moving. The deer received a glancing blow from the government vehicle and ran off into the woods. The following information is provided for your safety while driving on how to handle the sudden appearance of a deer.



### Car-Deer Crashes

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, car accidents involving deer on roads kill nearly 100 people nationwide each year and cost millions of dollars in insurance claims. The average car-deer collision results in over \$2,000 per claim for repairs and/or injuries. In 2006, drivers are expected to hit nearly 2 million deer nationwide.



### Tips to avoid a crash

- ◆ Stay aware and awake.
- Wear safety belts; they are your best defense in any collision.
- Remember, car-deer crashes occur year-round, but be especially alert in spring and fall.
- Heed deer crossing signs. Signs are placed at known deer crossing areas to alert you of the possible presence of deer.
- Deer are herd animals and frequently travel in single file. If you see one deer cross the road, chances are there are more waiting.
- ◆ Be alert for deer, especially at dawn and dusk. If you see one, slow down.



### If a crash is unavoidable

- ◆ Don't swerve! Brake firmly, hold onto the steering wheel, and bring your vehicle to a controlled stop.
- ◆ Pull off the road, turn on your emergency flashers and be cautious of other traffic if you leave your vehicle.
- ◆ Don't attempt to remove a deer from the roadway. An injured deer can easily hurt you.
- ◆ Report the crash to the nearest police agency immediately and inform insurance company.
- ◆ In a government vehicle, follow guidelines for reporting motor vehicle accidents, found on the Eastern Region website: <http://www.werh.noaa.gov/SOD/ES&H/ESHHome.htm>

# The Environmental Corner—Recycling



## The Four Basic Recycling Principles

1. **REDUCE** the amount of trash discarded
2. **REUSE** containers and products
3. **RECYCLE** products and use recycled materials and compost
4. **RESPOND** to the solid waste dilemma by reconsidering waste producing activities and by expressing preferences for less waste

Source: EPA

## RE-CYCLE

### Part 4 of a 4 Part Series

#### RESPOND

- ⇒ Educate others on source reduction and recycling practices.
- ⇒ Make your preferences known to manufacturers, merchants, and community leaders.
- ⇒ Be creative; find new ways to reduce waste quantity and toxicity.
- ⇒ Share information about source reduction, recycling, and composting with others.
- ⇒ Encourage source reduction, recycling, and composting programs in the community.
- ⇒ Where appropriate, encourage the use of reusable, recycled, and recyclable materials in the workplace.
- ⇒ Encourage the use of efficient, long-lasting equipment.
- ⇒ Urge schools to teach about source reduction, recycling, and composting.
- ⇒ Support an environmentally sound waste program in your community that starts with source reduction.

#### Tips To Reduce Summer Electricity Usage

- \* Shift energy-intensive tasks (laundry, dishwashing) to off peak hours (nights/mornings/weekends)
- \* Maintain your air-conditioning equipment - change filters monthly
- \* Refrigerators account for 10 percent of home electricity—keep its coils clean
- \* Programmable thermostats can reduce cooling bills by 10 percent.

- \* Plug energy “leaks” with appropriate insulation, weather stripping, and caulking
- \* Cut energy bills by 30 percent—look for the Energy Star Label
- \* Replace incandescent bulbs with fluorescent
- \* Listen to your mother - turn off everything not in use (lights, TVs, computers)

Source: Environmental Protection, 1105 Media Inc.

#### **REMEMBER, SAFETY FIRST!**



#### About this Newsletter

This newsletter is brought to you on a quarterly basis by the Eastern Region Environmental Safety and Health Advisory Board to help increase awareness of the importance of the safety and health programs within the Department of Commerce, NOAA, and the National Weather Service. Your comments are welcome. Please send all comments to Kevin Murray.