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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.** Sponsored by the National Safety Council (NSC), the goal of this event is to reduce injuries and deaths at home, in the workplace, and in the community. This year, the NSC will focus on four initiatives.



### **June 1-7 Teen Driving**

Preventable motor vehicle crashes caused by teen drivers are the leading cause of death for teens in America today. There is much you can do to protect your teen as a driver or as a passenger in a car. Determine if your teen is ready to drive. Don't rush the process. Maximize driver education experiences through driver education programs. Finally, practice what you preach. Your teen is more likely to be a calm and courteous driver, wear a seat belt, and obey all traffic laws if they see you doing the same.

### **June 8-14 Fall Prevention**

Prevent falls by looking for hazards at home and in the workplace. Remove obstacles and clutter that cause trips from walkways, and repair all uneven surfaces. At night, use energy-efficient lighting to prevent trips or falls.

### **June 15-21 Overexertion**

Overexertion is an overextension of physical capabilities or performing beyond what our bodies are able to accomplish. There are many forms of overexertion. Working at a physically exhausting job for too long may cause fatigue and reduced awareness, leading to accidents. Working in extreme temperatures also may result in overexertion. Another form of overexertion may occur when attempting to lift or move heavy loads. However, the term overexertion is relative. What may be considered overexertion for one person may not be physically taxing for another.

### **June 22-28 Distracted Driving**

Give your car basic safety inspections to be sure the lights work, tires are properly inflated, and make sure seat belts work. Obey speed limits. Speed is a major factor in fatal accidents because it affects reaction times and stopping distance. Impaired driving, such as driving under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or medication is a major factor in fatalities.

**Be a safety ambassador. Help your fellow employees prevent injuries at home, in the workplace, and in the community—get them involved in National Safety Month.**

*Your Eastern Region  
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## *Aviation Safety for NWS employees who travel on business*

“Accidents are survivable,” says Cynthia Corbett, a human factors specialist at the FAA Civil Aerospace Medical Institute in Oklahoma City. “Plan, read, listen; there are things that a passenger can do to survive... first and foremost, have a plan,” Corbett says, “Read the safety briefing card on every single flight,” she says. “Not all planes are the same. Further, not all planes within the same airline are the same.”



### *Onboard Wardrobe*

- ⇒ “Imagining having to run away from a burning plane,” says Corbett. “If you have to do that, how well are your flip-flops going to perform? How well are your high-heeled shoes going to perform? When you’re sliding down that fabric slide out of the plane, are pantyhose going to withstand?”
- ⇒ “Shorts, skirts, and high-heeled shoes are just not our preferred attire for flying, because it’s hard to run in those kinds of shoes and actually escape when you’re not clothed properly,” Corbett continues.
- ⇒ “We like to see tie-on-shoes that you’re not going to run out of and long pants. Jeans are good. I know in the summer that’s really tough, but shorts are just real dangerous in that event,” says Corbett.

### *Corbett recommends:*

Natural Fibers  
Jacket or Sweater  
Long Pants  
Lace-Up Shoes



### *Before Take off*

- ◆ Ask for an aisle seat or the window seat next to an emergency exit, preferable in the back half of the plane
- ◆ Place heavy items below the seat, not in the overhead bins
- ◆ Buckle and unbuckle your seat belt a few times to make sure it works properly, then leave it buckled for the rest of the trip
- ◆ Listen and watch the pre-flight safety presentation
- ◆ Note the closest emergency exit, counting the number of rows between you and the exit; do the same for the second closest exit

## **More Aviation Safety for NWS Employees. What if a crash is inevitable?**

### **Crash Preparations**

- For passengers with a seat in front of them, the suggested brace position is to cross your hands on the seat in front of you and rest your forehead on top of your hand, says Corbett.
- If you don't have a seat in front of you, bend over as far as you can, grab your legs behind your knees, and keep your head down until the plane stops.
- Tighten your seat belt and make sure your seat back is upright.
- If a flight attendant is able to give directions after a crash, obey them. But sometimes, flight crews aren't able to do that. "Some people sit and wait for orders and if they don't hear any, then they sit right through the disaster." Reports from the National Transportation Safety Board have noted some crash victims "are found sitting in their seats still buckled in," says Corbett. So be prepared to evacuate as soon as the plane has stopped in the event that a flight attendant cannot issue directions.
- Get rid of sharp objects in your pockets and remove sharp objects, such as high heeled shoes.
- Wet a cloth with most any liquid—you can use it to cover your mouth and nose in smoke and fire.
- If its cold outside and you have a jacket at your seat, put it on to help stay warm once outside.
- There are more plane evacuations than people realize... one every 11 days in the US.

### **After the Crash**

Get up as soon as the plane has stopped.  
Keep your hands free - take nothing.  
Lower your head if there is smoke.  
Don't get on the floor – you will be trampled.  
Go over the backs of the seats if the aisle is blocked  
Don't push other passengers – they may fall and be trampled.  
Don't open an emergency exit if you see flames outside the window— check the exits on the other side of the plane.



### **Does It Matter Where You Sit?**

There's no magic seat on an aircraft. And, of course, there is an element of luck.  
The average distance a survivor will travel in an evacuation is seven seat rows.

**Between 1983 and 2000, more than 95 % of people involved in U.S. plane crashes survived.**

## Compressed Gas Safety

When safety precautions are not followed, compressed gas cylinders and/or regulators can become flying projectiles that can injure or kill people. The following are some safety tips for compressed gas cylinders that are in use at all upper air sites and perhaps at other sites as well.

- The gas cylinders should be visually inspected to ensure that they are in safe working condition when they are delivered or shortly thereafter.
- Cylinders should be placed so that the valve handle is easily accessible.
- Store cylinders out of direct sunlight.
- Cylinders must be secured at all times using chains, plastic coated wire cable, or commercial straps to prevent tipping.
- Cylinders should be protected against tampering by unauthorized individuals.
- The storage area must be well ventilated and free from corrosive materials.
- Only properly trained personal should handle and move compressed gas cylinders.
- Always close the valve when the cylinder is not in use.
- Never leave pressure in a regulator when it is not in use.
- When a cylinder is empty, be sure to replace the cap and hand tighten.
- Have some means to identify empty cylinders that is known by all authorized personnel.

Sources: Compressed Gas Safety General Guidelines from the Montana Department of Labor & Industry

## Safety Tidbits

Guns in America kill more people in one week than during an entire year in all of Europe.

Sick Building Syndrome appears on many death certificates as Hypersensitivity Pneumonitis, an inflammatory lung disorder.

A bottle of champagne has three times as much air pressure as the tires on a car.

Downsizing? Americans spend about \$30 billion per year trying to lose weight.

The bite of a brown recluse spider can require over two months to heal.

Heart attack is the most frequent cause of death from rapid overeating.

The U.S. death toll from the 1918 flu epidemic was so high that it created a coffin shortage.

The last Bonaparte, Jerome Napoleon Bonaparte, died in 1945 after tripping over his dog's leash.

Alzheimer's disease is the 7th leading cause of death in the U.S.

Chance of getting a cold within a week after taking a two-hour flight: 20%.

Most Americans are too chronically sleep deprived to awaken without an alarm. Need for an alarm by definition signals some kind of danger.

Since 2001 about 1,000 U.S. children have been killed while buying ice cream.



### 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.

***REMEMBER, SAFETY FIRST!***