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Safety Talk and Tips

Eastern Region's Environmental Safety and Health Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 2

June, 2006

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

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June Is National Safety Month



This year marks the 10th anniversary of the National Safety Council's National Safety Month. Throughout NOAA, the agency will be celebrating Safety Days. The NOAA SMCC facility will be celebrating its safety day on June 20th. MASC and WASC will be celebrating on June 15th. All Eastern Region Offices are encouraged to participate in the celebration.

SAFETY TIPS FOR NATIONAL SAFETY MONTH

June 5-9
Driving

Aggressive Driving
Distracted Driving
Drinking and Driving
Passenger Restraint

June 12-16
Workplace

Ergonomics
PPE
Lifting
Falls

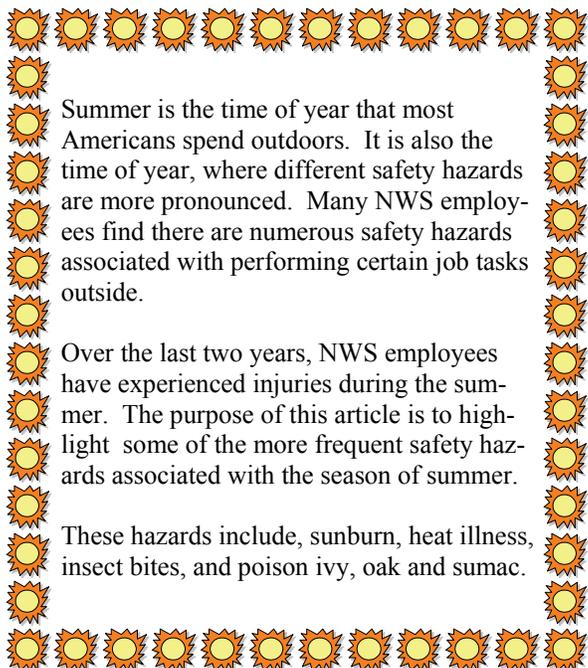
June 19-23
Emergency
Preparedness

Fire
Flood
Hurricane
Tornado

June 26-30
Home and
Community

Home Safety Checklist
Home Falls
Poisoning Prevention
Recreation Safety

SUMMER SAFETY



Summer is the time of year that most Americans spend outdoors. It is also the time of year, where different safety hazards are more pronounced. Many NWS employees find there are numerous safety hazards associated with performing certain job tasks outside.

Over the last two years, NWS employees have experienced injuries during the summer. The purpose of this article is to highlight some of the more frequent safety hazards associated with the season of summer.

These hazards include, sunburn, heat illness, insect bites, and poison ivy, oak and sumac.



Definitions

Sunburn—is an inflammation of the skin that follows over-exposure to ultraviolet light from the sun

Heat stress—the human body's inability to cool itself

Sunburn

Signs and symptoms

- ◆ Red, swollen, painful, and sometimes blistered skin
- ◆ Fever
- ◆ Nausea, vomiting and delirium with severe burns
- ◆ Peeling of skin after recovery

Prevention of sunburn

- ◆ Avoid exposure to sun between 12 and 3 PM
- ◆ Use sun block with a sun protection factor (SPF) greater than 15; baby oil and cocoa butter do not filter out UV light
- ◆ Wear proper clothing; bright colors or white will reflect sun onto your face increasing risk of burns

Source: Medical College Of Wisconsin

Heat Stress

Factors Leading To Heat Stress

- ⇒ High temperature and humidity
- ⇒ Direct sun or heat
- ⇒ Limited air movement
- ⇒ Physical exertion
- ⇒ Poor physical condition
- ⇒ Some medicines
- ⇒ Inadequate tolerance for hot workplaces

Symptoms Of Heat Exhaustion

- ⇒ Headaches, dizziness, light-headedness or fainting
- ⇒ Weakness and moist skin
- ⇒ Mood changes such as irritability or confusion
- ⇒ Upset stomach or vomiting

Source: OSHA

Symptoms Of Heat Stroke

- ⇒ Dry, hot skin with no sweating
- ⇒ Mental confusion or losing consciousness
- ⇒ Seizures or fits

Preventing Heat Stress

- ⇒ Know signs/symptoms of heat-related illnesses
- ⇒ Block out direct sun or other heat sources
- ⇒ Use cooling fans/air-conditioning
- ⇒ Rest regularly
- ⇒ Drink lots of water if you can; about 1 cup every 15 minutes
- ⇒ Wear lightweight, light colored, loose-fitting clothes
- ⇒ Avoid alcohol, caffeinated drinks

Source: OSHA

Sunburn—continued

Treatment

- ◆ Cool moist compresses on skin can reduce heat and pain
- ◆ Cold cream or baby lotion adds moisture to the skin
- ◆ Use a pain reliever for pain and fever
- ◆ Keep pressure off of burned skin to relieve pain

Seek Medical Treatment If You Have:

- ◆ A temperature that is greater than 101F
- ◆ Vomiting or diarrhea
- ◆ Pain and fever that persists for longer than 48 hours
- ◆ Delirium

Source: Medical College Of Wisconsin



Insect Bites

Each year, there are two or three instances where Eastern Region personnel are stung or bitten by an insect. Our Accident and Illness records indicate that most of these are from bees or wasps that nest in our Radomes, ASOS DCPs, or other pieces of equipment.

Additionally, every summer, there are published reports on cases of West Nile Virus or Lyme Disease. Employees who work outdoors have an increased risk of being infected by either. Both the virus and the disease have been reported in most parts of the United States. We are providing this information for your knowledge and protection.

What to Do If A Person Is Stung?

1. Have someone stay with the victim to be sure that the victim does not have an allergic reaction.
2. Wash the site with soap and water.
3. The stinger can be removed using a four by four gauze wipe over the area. Never use a tweezer or squeeze the stinger as this will cause more venom to be released.
4. Apply ice to reduce swelling.
5. Do not scratch the sting.

Reducing The Risk Of Being Stung

1. Wear light-colored, smooth-finished clothing.
2. Avoid perfumed soaps, shampoos, deodorants. Don't wear cologne or perfumes. Avoid bananas and banana-scented toiletries.
3. Wear clean clothing and bathe daily. Sweat angers bees.
4. Cover the body as much as possible.
5. Avoid flowering plants.
6. During the summer, check for new nests during the warmer hours of the day. Bees are very active during this period
7. Keep areas clean. Social wasps thrive in places where humans discard food.
8. If a single stinging insect is flying around, remain still or lie face down on the ground.
9. If attacked by several stinging insects at the same time, run to get away from them. Bees release a chemical when they sting. This alerts other bees. More bees often follow.
10. If a bee comes inside your vehicle, stop the car slowly, and open all the windows.

SOURCE : www.cdc.gov/nasd/docs

Caution: River Gauge Hazards



NWS field offices install and maintain agency equipment at gauge houses, as well as other sites, many of which are owned or maintained by other agencies. Equipment includes rain gauges, LARCs, solar panels, etc. Site repairs by NWS personnel are often hampered by unsafe working conditions. Eastern Region has determined that an effort must be made to address these issues and has established guidelines for WFOs to work cooperatively with the other agencies to mitigate safety hazards.

Common Hazards

- Busy highways with traffic passing at high speeds
- Disease carrying vermin
- Wasps, bees, venomous spiders
- Vagrants
- Exposure to human/animal waste
- Working near or above water
- Working at dangerous heights
- Exposure to the elements
- Improper electrical labeling
- Insufficient security for doors
- No trespassing signs not posted
- Eroded pit or trap door openings
- Wall openings not guarded
- Chute openings not covered
- Ladder integrity questionable
- Well is a confined space (*permit required to enter*)
- Lack of anchoring points prohibit use of fall protection equipment

Affected field office personnel need to identify and define all potential safety hazards at each site and determine an approach for eliminating the hazards.

Ownership of the site should also be determined. Agencies such as the USGS and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers own and maintain many of the river gauges which are critical to the NWS mission. After an office identifies the agency having responsibility for a particular site, the local or state Safety Point of Contact for that agency should be contacted to determine if a job hazard analysis has been conducted and what plans are in place to alleviate any safety hazards.

Each field office should tailor a NWS-specific safety plan for each site to address their safety concerns. Remember, any work performed at remote locations owned by other agencies must be coordinated with those agencies in advance. If local funds are not adequate to address a NWS-specific safety issue, the office should contact the regional headquarters.



Correction Strategy

Eliminate the Hazard: Coordinate with the gauge owner on whether the hazards have already been identified, and whether corrective measures are already planned. If not, is there a cooperative effort that can be arranged with the owner's local office?

Administrative controls: Examples include a policy from the MIC stating that NWS personnel will not visit the gauging station until hazardous conditions are corrected, or that two NWS employees must always visit the site, with the second employee being a safety observer, and avoid all safety hazards.

Proper Safety Equipment: This may include fall equipment or other safety devices.

Check out the Eastern Region ES&H webpage for more specific guidance, including points of contact for various gauge owners.



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

Basic Fact

In 2003, U.S. residents, businesses, and institutions produced more than 236 million tons of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW).

2003 Total Waste Generation— 236 Million Tons (before recycling)

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| ■ Paper | 35.2 % |
| ■ Yard Trimmings | 12.1 % |
| ■ Food Scraps | 11.7 % |
| ■ Plastics | 11.3 % |
| ■ Metals | 8.0 % |
| ■ Rubber, Leather, and Textiles | 7.4 % |
| ■ Glass | 5.3 % |
| ■ Wood | 5.8 % |
| ■ Other | 3.4 % |



Tips For Reducing Solid Waste

REDUCE

1. Reduce the amount of unnecessary packaging.
2. Adopt practices that reduce waste toxicity.
3. Purchase durable, long-lasting goods.

REUSE

1. Consider reusable products.
2. Maintain and repair durable products.
3. Reuse bags, containers, and other items.
4. Borrow, rent, or share items used infrequently.

RECYCLE

1. Choose recyclable products and containers and recycle them.
2. Select products made from recycled materials.
3. Compost yard trimmings and some food scraps.

RESPOND

1. Educate others on source reduction and recycling practices.
2. Be creative—find ways to reduce waste quantity.

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.