NOAA's National Weather Service

STAT Safety Talk and Tips

Eastern Region's Environmental Safety and Health Newsletter

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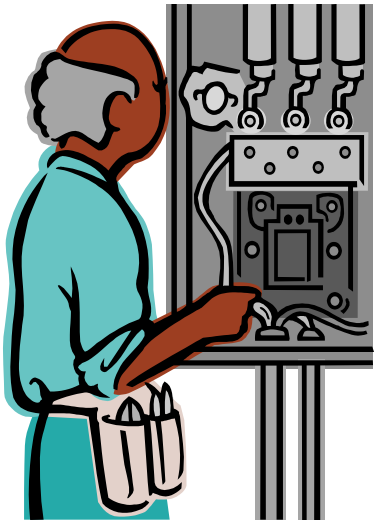
Electrical Safety

Electrical Hazards Can Cause Burns, Shocks, and Death.

SAFETY TIPS:

- Assume that all overhead wires are energized at lethal voltages. Never assume that a wire is safe to touch even if it is down or appears to be insulated.
- Never touch a fallen overhead power line. Call the electric utility company to report fallen electrical lines.
- Stay at least 10 feet (3 meters) away from overhead wires during cleanup and other activities. If working at heights or handling long objects, survey the area before starting work for the presence of overhead wires.
- If an overhead wire falls across your vehicle while you are driving, stay inside the vehicle and continue to drive away from the line. If the engine stalls, do not leave your vehicle. Warn people not to touch the vehicle or the wire. Call or ask someone to call the local electric utility company and emergency services.
- Never operate electrical equipment while you are standing in water.
- Never repair electrical cords or equipment unless qualified and authorized.
- Have a qualified electrician inspect electrical equipment that has gotten wet before energizing it.
- If working in damp locations, inspect electric cords and equipment to ensure that they are in good condition and free of defects, and use a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).
- Always use caution when working near electricity.



More Electrical Safety

It Doesn't Reach!

When attempting to use a piece of equipment, it can be difficult to reach the nearest outlet with the given length of cord. There just never seems to be quite enough. So what can you do? Get an extension cord, of course!

Contacting electrical current can be dangerous, so before using a cord, inspect it for damage. Extension cords will wear over time and prongs can be loosened, or the cord's covering can be cracked or partially missing, exposing wiring. If this is noticed, certainly don't use the cord and alert someone to the problem! Also, be sure to plug the cord into an outlet fully and securely, and use three-prong cords for added safety.

When removing an extension cord from an outlet, pull on the plug, not the cord, to avoid wear and tear. Finally, remember that extension cords are for temporary use. If after a period of time you find you're still using an extension cord for the same thing, your temporary plug needs a permanent home. By using an extension cord to extend your reach temporarily, and following a few, simple precautions, you'll do a lot to ensure safety is "first, last, and always" in your office!

Courtesy of the Texas Department of Insurance, and OSHA on-line, a product of Stevens Publishing

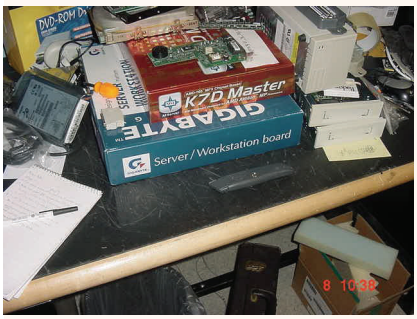
Extension Cord Safety

Extension cords are handy items, but they also come with hazards if used inappropriately. A common hazard is running a cord through a high-traffic area. Avoid this if at all possible, but if you must, be sure to use a cord cover. Many styles of these covers can be found on-line. When using extension cords, avoid:

- Stringing extension cords together, or overloading electrical outlets
- Using two-prong extension cords, or cutting off the third prong "to make it fit"
- Plugging in a three-prong plug into a two-prong electrical cord
- Attaching an extension cord to something with nails or staples
- Using an indoor-rated extension cord outdoors, or using a cord when it's wet

Tips: Electrical Safety At The Office

Unkempt work environments can be electrical safety hazards, but even the tidiest office is still subject to accidents. Electrical equipment used in the workplace can cause serious shock and burn injuries to employees if not used properly. Remember the importance of electrical safety and practice safety procedures in the office. You can greatly reduce the risk of electrical injury:



- Clean up clutter. Messy offices can cause an increase in accidents.
- Keep liquid away from all equipment connected to an electrical supply. Electrically powered machines may become live to the touch after having liquid spilled on them.
- Items like coffee pots or space heaters need to have a sticker indicating Underwriters Laboratories Inc. approval.

- Do not store or block electrical panels.
- Examine all cords on a monthly basis.
- Discard any cords which are frayed. Damaged cords can cause fire or shock.

Source: Stevens Publishing
Pictures—NWS Office Visits

6 Major Changes to SPCC Rules

Are you subject to EPA's Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) regulations? Here are the six major changes EPA announced on December 18.

1. Proposed extension of compliance date for all owners and operators of facilities (other than farms) to July 1, 2009, including new SPCC and amended plans. Existing farms are required to submit SPCC plans and await new rules from EPA; new farms should prepare and implement a plan after EPA promulgates its final rules.
2. Creation of new operational category with a discharge history criteria, which is defined as having less than a 1,000-gallon spill in one event or having two spills of less than 42 gallons each in a 1-year period. These volumes are calculated by EPA based on the amount of oil that actually reaches the navigable water, not the total amount spilled. In addition, spills related to natural disasters or acts of war or terrorism are not included in this definition.
3. Facilities that store less than 10,000 gallons of oil (including farms) and meet the discharge history criteria definition can self certify their SPCC plan and amendments rather than use a professional engineer (PE). These smaller oil storage facilities are also able to describe current security conditions and are not required to comply with the security requirements as outlined in the regulations. In addition, owners can follow industry standards and use on-site staff to develop tank integrity and inspection schedules and procedures. Determinations about environmental equivalence and impracticality still require a PE certification if they are included in the SPCC plan.
4. There are alternatives for the current secondary containment requirements for certain oil-filled operational equipment that meet the discharge history criteria. The oil must be used solely by the equipment to qualify. Examples include hydraulic systems, gear boxes, coolant systems, and transformers. The owner/operator of this equipment can implement an oil spill contingency plan that includes inspection and monitoring instead of secondary containment (40 CFR 112.7c). In addition, individual determinations do not need to be completed for each piece of equipment.
5. Motive power containers (MPCs) are exempt from SPCC requirements. MPCs include onboard bulk storage containers used to power trucks, cars, bulldozers, cranes, aircraft, and other heavy vehicles. This exemption does not include oil rigs or containers used for transfer or further distribution of oil.
6. Mobile Refuelers (MRs) are bulk storage containers used to transfer oil to heavy equipment and vehicles. They are now exempt from sized secondary containment (this includes the total volume of the tank plus precipitation for the area). MRs must comply generally with the secondary containment requirements in 40 CFR 112.7c and the containment requirements for oil transfers.

Source: Business & Legal Reports
Www.enviro.blr.com

Top 10 Safety Slogans

1) Before you do it, take time to think through it.
2) One rung too high and you can die.
3) To avoid a scene keep your work place clean.
4) Don't lose your head to gain a minute. You'll need your head, your brains are in it!
5) Seat belts are for kids. Hug them at home. Belt them in a car.
6) Drive as if every child on the road was your own.
7) When putting away a chemical shipment, remember Personal Protective equipment.
8) A wound neglected may be a wound infected.
9) Safety comes in cans. I can, you can, we can.
10) Your safety gears are between your ears.

Source: Safety Stuff from Richard Hawk

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 3 of a 4 Part Series

When you've done all you can to avoid waste, recycle. Producing goods from recycled materials typically consumes less energy and conserves raw materials. Recycling points to consider:

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

What Can We Recycle

- Paper
- Glass
- Aluminum
- Other metals – Steel cans, auto bodies, refrigerators, stoves and batteries
- Used motor oil
- Plastics

Benefits Of Recycling

- Conserves resources for our children's future
- Prevents emissions of many greenhouse gases and water pollutants
- Saves energy
- Supplies valuable raw materials to industry
- Creates jobs
- Stimulates the development of greener technologies
- Reduces the need for new landfills and incinerators

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.