

Don't let safety take a holiday

*December 2006
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Accident Reporting Git Er Done!

OK, you are a NOAA supervisor, one of your employees has just reported to you that they slipped and fell on a wet spot outside of the restrooms and are experiencing some pain in their left arm and lower back, but, not severe enough to prevent them from returning to work the next morning. You report the accident up your chain of command following your site or region procedures. You know the accident or incident should be reported to the Safety and Environmental Compliance Office (SECO) and possibly the Office of Workers Compensation also, but, there hasn't been an accident at your facility for years and you're just not sure how to "Get Er Done".

Have no fear, your friends and co-workers here at SECO have you covered. We've both automated and simplified the process and there are numerous ways to get the guidance for accident reporting. You may even want to "clip and save" this article for future reference. Here's how to "Get Er Done", step by step;

Step 1 – Report the incident using the NOAA Web-based Accident Reporting System @ <http://www.seco.noaa.gov/Safety/IncidentReporting.htm>, this must be completed within 24 hours of the accident/incident per NAO 209-1.

Or.....go to your one stop safety shopping source, the SECO website at <http://www.seco.noaa.gov>, once there, on the left hand menu, under the "Occupational Safety and Health Program" banner, you'll see "Incident Reporting", click there and it will take you to a page with a couple of paragraphs of information about reporting accidents/incidents and a link for the on line reporting system. Click on the link and follow the step by step instructions for completing and submitting the report.

Step 2 – Fill out a CD-137 for all NOAA related accidents/incidents (including contractors, interns, volunteers, etc....) and send a copy to Thomas.Altvater@noaa.gov.

Or.....find the CD-137 fillable form link on the SECO web site, you can fill out the form on line and attach to an email and send to Thomas.Altvater@noaa.gov.

Step 3 – For federal employees, fill out a CA-1 and submit it to Contract Claims Services Incorporated (CCSI) for processing. (Note: some contractors are also covered by the Office of Workers Compensation Program (OWCP), contact Thomas Altvater @ 301-713-2870 or Thomas.Altvater@noaa.gov for assistance in determining contractors coverage by OWCP).

Step 3a – Fax the CA-1 to CCSI at (800) 743-3293, attention James Gonzales.

Step 3b – Mail the original completed CA-1 form and related medical documents to:

CCSI, L.P.
300 E. Royal Lane
Irving, Texas 75039
Attn: James Gonzales

Step 4 – Send copies of all reports to NOAA Safety Chief, Tom Altvater at: Thomas.Altvater@noaa.gov or mail to:

Thomas Altvater
SSMC 4, Room 11112
OFA 542
1305 East West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

So, there you have it, for accident/incident reporting, follow Steps 1 – 4 and you'll ...



BREAK A LEG!

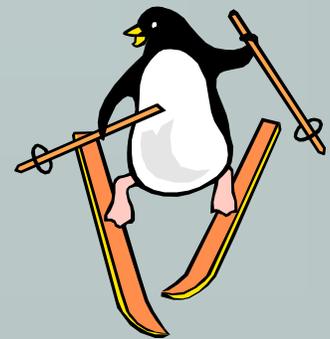
(...or how to ski safely)

Planning to hit the slopes this winter (figuratively speaking, of course)? The following are tips to help you enjoy the sport more and ski safer:

1. Get in shape! Take a ski conditioning class.
2. Make sure your equipment is maintained. Have your bindings checked to make sure they operate and release correctly.
3. Ski at your level and in control.
4. Dress appropriately. Wear goggles in snow conditions to help visibility.
5. Wear sunscreen. Even on cloudy, cold days the sun can damage your skin.
6. Follow the rules and read warning signs. Don't ski in out-of-bounds areas, for example.
7. Never ski alone.
8. Take a lesson. If you are rusty or new to skiing, take a ski lesson.
9. Watch out for trees. Definitely ski in control near trees. Or better yet, don't ski near trees at all. Trees don't move.
10. Ski courteously. The downhill skier has the right-of-way. If you run into someone below you, you are at fault. Just as in street driving, you should anticipate the actions of people skiing below you. And also just as in driving, on a narrowing trail, the slower skiers stay to the right.
11. If you are not feeling well or have an injury, seek National Ski Patrol help right away.
12. Wear personal headgear. Wearing helmets (worn by bikers, kayakers, equestrians, etc.) is a personal choice while skiing. It is becoming more commonplace.
13. Don't ski when you are tired.
14. Buckle up, and be careful driving to and from the ski area.

Follow these tips, and enjoy the slopes!

By Rhonda Carpenter



Safety doesn't happen by accident.

~Author Unknown



A Season for Sharing in Fire Safety

by: Ben Bond, PA

Each year fires occurring during the holiday season injure 2,600 individuals and cause over \$930 million in damage. According to the United States Fire Administration (USFA), there are simple life-saving steps you can take to ensure a safe and happy holiday. By following some of these tips, you can greatly reduce your chances of becoming a holiday fire casualty.

PREVENTING HOLIDAY TREE FIRES

Special fire safety precautions need to be taken when keeping a live tree in the house. A burning tree can rapidly fill a room with fire and deadly gases.

Selecting a Tree for the Holiday

Needles on fresh trees should be green and hard to pull back from the branches, and the needle should not break if the tree has been freshly cut. The trunk should be sticky to the touch. Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree trunk on the ground. If many needles brown and fall off, the tree has been cut too long, has probably dried out, and is a fire hazard.

Caring for Your Tree

Christmas trees must be kept moist to prevent becoming a very serious fire hazard. Do not place your tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace or heat vent. The heat will dry out the tree, causing it to be more easily ignited by heat, flame or sparks. Be careful not to drop or flick cigarette ashes near a tree. Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.

Disposing of Your Tree

Never put tree branches or needles in a fireplace or wood burning stove. When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly. The best way to dispose of your tree is by taking it to a recycling center or having it hauled away by a community pick-up service.

HOLIDAY LIGHTS

Maintain Your Holiday Lights

Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up. Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory.

Do Not Overload Electrical Outlets

Do not link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet. Make sure to periodically check the wires — they should not be warm to the touch.

Do Not Leave Holiday Lights on Unattended

HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

Use Only Nonflammable Decorations

All decorations should be non-flammable or flame-retardant and placed away from heat vents.

Never Put Wrapping Paper in a Fireplace

It can throw off dangerous sparks and produce a chemical buildup in the home that could cause an explosion. Over 90 percent of fire deaths occur in residential dwellings between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. when occupants are asleep. Smoke detectors alert occupants when a fire is still small and there is still time to escape.

Artificial Holiday Trees

If you are using a metallic or artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant.

USE CARE WITH CANDLES

Candles are a traditional and beautiful part of the season. But they are still a direct source of fire in your home.

Candles Can Be Dangerous

If you do use them, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked down. Never leave the house with candles burning.

Never Put Lit Candles on a Tree

Do not go near a holiday tree with an open flame — candles, lighters or matches. Finally,

as in every season, have working smoke alarms installed on every level of your home, test them monthly and keep them clean and equipped with fresh batteries at all times. Know when and how to call for help. And remember to practice your home escape plan.

For More Information Contact:

NOAA SECO: ben.bond@noaa.gov

Or visit other website:

www.usfa.fema.gov

www.usfa.fema.gov/kids

www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/611.html

www.nfpa.com

www.elmwoodpark.org/fire/holiday.htm#xmas

www.usfa.fema.gov/safety/tips/holiday.sht

www.firesafety.gov/goodbye.jsp?url=http://



Driving safety



The NOAA Risk Assessment team recently submitted a white paper on Driving safety involving NOAA and government vehicles. Several years of accident data was carefully evaluated and the over-reaching conclusion was that unsafe driving habits was THE major factor involving vehicular accidents. To this end, it was recommended that NOAA employees and contractors who must drive a NOAA or government vehicle on a regular basis should take a defensive driving course, with refreshers at about every 3 years. This does not apply to the employees who occasionally need a car for a short trip, as those folks have very few accidents.

The person's with the most accidents are the persons driving most of the miles. Periodic safe driving courses will be a good refresher for those drivers .

new things



Safety Seagull is helping with flu shots during the first day of the SSMC flu shot program.

The mid level manager safety training program which used to be called STAR has now been revised and made into an online program. When using instructors, this program usually took 4 hours and has now been reduced to approximately 2 hours of online training time. Once a post test is completed, a certificate of completion may be printed on the students own printer. This class will also be available through the SECO web site sometime before the end of the first quarter 07.

The NOAA Smoking policy has been revoked.

Please find it at: http://www.ofa.noaa.gov/~ames/NAOs/Chap_217/naos_chap217.html

The policy was outdated as it still allowed smoking rooms. Each facility is urged to review their smoking practices and if problems occur to make sure that they are addressed. In the Silver Spring main campus, outside smoking and non smoking areas will be clearly identified to avoid confusion.

A revised Employee Safety and Environmental Awareness Course will be ready for implementation in January 07.

All NOAA employees are expected to take this course in January to keep them abreast of the changes to the safety and Environmental program. It will be accessed from the SECO web site, training page.



Safety Seagull takes one for the team!



Tips: Preventing Pests

Indoor Prevention

Pests seek places to live that satisfy basic needs for air, moisture, food and shelter. The best way to control pests is to try to prevent them from entering your home or garden in the first place. You can do this by removing the elements that they need to survive. Take the following preventive actions:

Indoor Prevention



- Remove water. All living things, including pests, need water for survival. Fix leaky plumbing, and do not let water accumulate anywhere in or around your home. For example, do not leave any water in trays under your houseplants, under your refrigerator, or in buckets overnight. Remove or dry out water-damaged and wet materials. Even dampness or high humidity can attract pests.
- Remove food. Store your food in sealed glass or plastic containers, and keep your kitchen clean and free from cooking grease and oil. Do not leave food in pet bowls on the counter or floor for long periods of time. Put food scraps or refuse in tightly covered, animal-proof garbage cans, and empty your garbage frequently.
- Remove or block off indoor pest hiding places. Caulk cracks and crevices to control pest access. Bathe pets regularly and wash any mats or surfaces they lie on to control fleas. Avoid storing newspapers, paper bags, and boxes for long periods of time. Also, check for pests in packages or boxes before carrying them into your home.
- Block pest entryways. Install screens on all floor drains, windows and doors to discourage crawling and flying pests from entering your home. Make sure any passageways through the floor are blocked. Place weather-stripping on doors and windows. Caulk and seal openings in walls. Keep doors shut when not in use.

Tips from EPA

How do I select the proper footwear for work?

This is an interesting question not just for footwear, but for all types of personal protective equipment (PPE). The trick is not in the selection, but in the identification ... Hazard Identification that is! In order to select effective PPE you must know what the hazard is that surrounds you...ask yourself "What is the Hazard?"

- Will I get hurt if I fall from this elevation?
- Can I slip from a wet floor?
- Can foreign objects enter my eyes?
- Can I suffer chemical burns?
- Can I drown?
- Can my toes be crushed?
- Is it a noisy environment?

Well, you get the picture...before you select PPE, ask yourself "What is the hazard", then call your local safety and health representative and request a workspace analysis to help you determine which selection of PPE will be appropriate and effective!

For more information, contact SECO at 301-713-2870

NOAA SAFETY STATISTICS

Based on accidents per one hundred employees

REPORTABLE INCIDENTS

<u>2006</u>	<u>GOAL</u>	<u>Reduction</u>
1.57	1.82	30%

LOST TIME INCIDENTS

<u>2006</u>	<u>GOAL</u>	<u>Reduction</u>
0.56	0.71	21%

Safety Seagull is happy to report that 2006 again showed another major reduction in injuries which is now well over 50% from 3 years ago. In the past 3 years NOAA has avoided approximately one thousand injuries and a million dollars in costs. "This is one major program goal we are proud to be far below" states the seagull.



Tips: Weathering Prolonged Power Outages



A number of circumstances can cause power interruptions, and damage from severe summer storms can cause outages that last days. When a power outage occurs during hot weather, take steps to maintain safety and comfort until power is restored.

"Many summer power outages are due to severe storms with high winds that topple utility poles and power lines," said Molly Hall, director of Safe Electricity. "It's important to stay clear of downed power lines, and during cleanup efforts, be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard."

Assume that any dangling wires you encounter are electrical and treat all downed or hanging lines as if they are energized. If you are driving and come upon a downed power line, stay in your vehicle, warn others to stay away and contact emergency personnel or electric utility.



Also when driving, be careful at intersections where traffic lights may be out. Stop at all railroad crossings, and treat road intersections with traffic signals as a four-way stop before proceeding with caution.

If power to your home is out for a prolonged period, know and understand important safety precautions and steps to cope with heat until power is restored:

- Remember to call your electric utility immediately to report the outage.
- Dress in loose, lightweight clothing, and stay on the coolest, lowest level of your home.
- Use natural ventilation to cool homes, and consider purchasing battery-powered fans.
- Drink plenty of water. Avoid heavy meals, as well as caffeinated and alcoholic drinks.
- Keep fridge or freezer doors closed. A freezer that is half full or full can keep foods frozen 24 to 48 hours. Foods should stay safe in an unopened refrigerator up to four hours. If an outage lasts longer than four hours, remove and pack meat, milk and dairy products in a cooler with ice.
- Use safe, alternative food preparations. A barbecue grill is an excellent way to prepare food, but a charcoal grill should never be used indoors. Always grill outside.
- Check on friends and relatives -- especially children, seniors and those with medical conditions or disabilities. These people may need to seek emergency cooling shelters.
- Keep a first-aid kit in your home and one in your car. Make sure that it includes scissors, tweezers, safety pins, aspirin, eyewash and rubbing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide.
- Close all drapes and blinds on the sunny side of your residence.
- Take your family and pets to a cool basement location if you have one. Or consider going to an air-conditioned public place during warmer daytime hours.



During an outage, Safe Electricity also recommends turning off electrical appliances and unplugging major equipment, including air conditioning, computers and televisions. This will help protect equipment that could be damaged by electrical surges, and prevent circuit overloads when power is restored. Leave one light on to indicate that power has been restored. Wait a few minutes then turn on other appliances and equipment one at a time.



If you use a standby generator, make sure a transfer safety switch is used or connect the appliance(s) directly to the generator output through an isolated circuit before you operate it. This prevents electricity from traveling back through the power lines, what's known as "back feed."

"Back feed creates danger for anyone near lines, particularly crews working to restore power," Hall warned.

For more information on electrical safety, visit <http://www.SafeElectricity.org>. Spanish versions of electrical safety information also are available on this Web site.

Boulder Labs Employee Gets Free Electricity!

by Rhonda Carpenter

A recently installed solar power system not only powers the author's home, but makes money whenever it sends electricity back to the power company. The solar system provides free electricity and also reduces the pollution caused by coal-burning power plants. It is a win-win situation. Colorado recently offered a 50% rebate system from the local utility company.



Close up of solar panels.

Reasons to go solar:

- The system has a 7-10 year payback on capital costs. With current costs of electricity the system will payback in 10 years. If the cost of power goes up (as it probably will), the payback time shortens to 7 years. Plus at the end of the year the power company pays you back for the electricity that you generated and did not use.
- It is clean energy. For a typical system using electricity generated by the sun saves 8,300 pounds of carbon dioxide/year, 17 lbs sulfur dioxide/year, and 14 lbs of nitrous oxides/year generated by power plants.
- The system is simple – solar panels, and inverter (inverts direct current DC from the solar panels to alternating current AC for your house). The inverter then is connected to the utility company's meter.
- The system is virtually maintenance-free. There are no moving parts. The panels have a 25 year warranty. The inverter has a 7 year warranty (but will probably last 20-25 years).
- Solar panels raise the value of your home by at least the amount that you pay for the system. With the 50% rebate in Colorado, and \$2,000 federal rebate, a standard system runs around \$10,000.
- It is fun to watch the utility meter run backwards (meaning you are making electricity and money from your system!)



Solar panels on the roof.



Inverter

ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is brought to you by the staff of the Safety and Environmental Compliance Office (SECO). The issues will be produced on a quarterly basis and posted on <http://www.seco.noaa.gov/> to help increase awareness of the environmental, safety and health programs. If you have any questions or comments, please contact SECO at (301)713-2870.