

SECO Safety and Environmental Compliance Office



Safety is as simple as **ABC - Always Be Careful.**

~Author Unknown

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Please welcome CDR James “Jamie” Verlaque, NOAA Corps and newly assigned as the Director of the Safety and Environmental Compliance Office (SECO) for the next two years. CDR Verlaque has experience commanding two NOAA vessels, where he dealt with many of the difficult daily decisions that challenge senior NOAA leaders, most recently responding to and providing support in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The OCAO and SECO is excited he is joining our team. His experience and commitment in safety and environmental compliance makes him a natural fit to assume the SECO leadership role.



He can be contacted at: James.Verlaque@noaa.gov or
phone: 301.713.2870x102

Former Director of SECO, John Pierson, has accepted
other senior management duties within the CAO office.

OSHA Top 10 2007 Violations at NSC

Richard Fairfax, director of OSHA's Directorate of Enforcement Programs, previewed OSHA's most frequently violated standards for the first 11 months of fiscal year 2007 to a packed audience at the National Safety Council's 2007 Congress and Expo in Chicago on Tuesday, October 16.

The list should come as no surprise to those who follow such statistics as the same standards seem to appear year after year. The violations are:



<u>Standard</u>	<u>29 CFR</u>	<u>Violations</u>
Scaffolding	1926.451	7,592
Hazard Communication	1910.12	5,099
Fall Protection	1926.501	5,095
Respiratory Protection	1910.134	3,145
Lockout/Tagout	1910.147	2,973
Powered Industrial Trucks	1910.178	2,577
Electrical - Wiring	1910.305	2,412
Ladders	1926.1053	2,113
Machine Guarding	1910.212	2,054
Electrical - General	1910.303	1,848



This list is for federal OSHA and does not include state plan states. However, Fairfax said that he believes the violations in state plan states would correlate to the federal.

DRIVING SAFETY

Craig Gillis

Recently a sister agency lost two personnel in two weeks to weather-related vehicle crashes. If you have not done so, please review the following for basic winter driving safety awareness.

- Always buckle up.
- Plan your trip with adequate time so that you don't feel pressured to speed.
- Get adequate sleep before a long drive and don't drive when drowsy.
- Don't give in to road rage. Your job is to arrive at your destination safely.
- Monitor road conditions before you head out and make allowances for adverse conditions.
- Ensure your vehicle's lights, windows and mirrors are clear of snow and ice.
- Personally inspect your vehicle before each trip, with particular attention to tires, lights, and testing the brakes.
- If you are driving your POV, ensure you carry an emergency kit containing, a blanket, first aid kit, a small container of sand or kitty litter, a small shovel, road flares, battery jumper cables, and a small supply of light snacks, such as candy or power bars.



BE PREPARED FOR ADVERSE CHANGES IN WEATHER AND ROAD CONDITIONS



Secretary of Commerce, Honorable Carlos Gutierrez, recently signed the DoC Pandemic Influenza Department Plan. In it he states the DoC and its component bureaus are committed to maintaining the functions with minimal or no interruptions during national security emergencies. He also committed DoC resources to aid the national response effort to limit the impact of influenza pandemic, if it occurs.



To this end, NOAA will shortly complete its own plan as a subset of the existing NOAA COOP plan. Part of the effort is to identify mission critical functions and appropriate personnel to maintain these functions. NOAA will make plans to set aside number sets of personal protective equipment for use by these personnel during the contagious period. Other administrative plans to limit human to human exposure such as telework, limiting meetings, increased cleaning of work spaces, limiting travel and others items will also be initiated.

Activation of such plans will be made only at the highest level after consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services, the World Health Organization, Center for Disease Control and others.

Offices Look too Safe!



Compared to the molten metal and massive machines found in other workplaces, office hazards seem pretty tame. However, each year an estimated 40,000 workers receive disabling injuries from office accidents.

In addition, there are many more cases of bad backs, skin rashes, and bruises that go unreported.

Falls:

The leading causes of office injuries are slipping, tripping, and falling. Sound familiar? Falls are also a big cause of incidents in the plant and at any jobsite.

Falls from the same level can cause more incidents and injuries than falls from ladders or scaffolds, and they can happen just as easily in the office as anywhere.

Here are some ways to prevent falls:

- Keep the office free from clutter. Boxes should be stacked out of the way of traffic in the proper storage area. Trash and spills should be cleaned up from the floor.
- Re-route electrical cords away from traffic areas.
- Report and repair any defective chairs. Be extra careful with chairs that have wheels on them.
- Close drawers so nobody will trip over them. A trip over an open drawer can cause much worse injuries than just bruised shins.
- If you see loose carpeting, close off the area and report it.
- Don't use makeshift ladders such as boxes stacked on chairs. Use stepladders and stepstools correctly.
- Hold on to the hand railing when walking up and down steps.

Fires:

- Know where to find the fire extinguishers and know how to use them.
- Post emergency numbers, first aid contacts, and evacuation procedures for your office where everyone will be sure to see them.
- Do not overload electrical circuits.

- Use appropriate protective equipment, such as gloves or safety eyewear when handling these products.

Safe Lifting

A worker might consistently make a conscious effort to safely lift loads in the warehouse because he is prepared for the possibility of injury. The same person can be injured by lifting a box of envelopes. They are not expecting to get hurt in an office environment and fail to lift properly.

- Don't lift a load you cannot handle, such as office furniture or equipment.
- Plan your lift carefully so that your leg muscles, rather than your back, handle most of the load.
- Don't twist your body even when lifting a light load.
- Make sure your back is straight and your footing is secure. Use ladders and stepstools safely.

Heavy Objects:

- Filing cabinets can cause serious injury. Open just one drawer at a time. If you open more than that, you risk the cabinet falling over onto you. Load filing cabinet drawers evenly, starting with the bottom ones.
- Make sure shelves are securely anchored, and do not overload them. Do not place heavy objects on overhead shelves.

Office Entanglements:

- Long hair, jewelry, and loose clothing are all potentially hazardous around office equipment. They can become entangled in moving parts of typewriters, computer printers, postage meters and other equipment.



Safety Tip of the Quarter: Remember, each year an estimated 40,000 workers receive disabling injuries from office accidents. Many of those injuries could have been prevented.



Safety Depends on You



FACTOID

Did you know that:
Minor or Near Miss Incidents involve 39.7% of all accidents
First Aid: 12.1%
Reportable Medicals are 20%
Reportable Lost Timers are 16.4%.
These are incidents where at least one full day is lost.
Non injury vehicle incidents involve 11.8% of all accidents.



**How to Escape Down an Airplane Slide —
and Still Make Your Connection!**

Find this article at:
<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1706188,00.html>

NOAA-Wide STATISTICS

Rating Period

October 1, 2007-Jan 31, 2008

Injuries

- 57 minor injuries
- 3 First aid
- 15 Recordable
- 22 Lost time

Incident Rate

- 1.01
- 1.20 same time last year
- 1.33 "not-to-exceed" goal
(we are meeting our goal of
reducing injuries)

Lost Time Rates

- .60
- .62 "not-to-exceed" goal
(we are meeting our goal of
reducing lost time inju-
ries)



Stop Static.

Shell Oil Comments - A Must Read

Safety Alert!

Here's some reasons why we don't allow cell phones in operating areas, propylene oxide handling and storage area, propane, gas and diesel refueling areas.

The Shell Oil Company recently issued a warning after three incidents in which mobile phones (cell phones) ignited fumes during fueling operations

In the first case, the phone was placed on the car's trunk lid during fueling; it rang and the ensuing fire destroyed the car and the gasoline pump.

In the second, an individual suffered severe burns to their face when fumes ignited as they answered a call while refueling their car!

And in the third, an individual suffered burns to the thigh and groin as fumes ignited when the phone, which was in their pocket, rang while they were fueling their car.

You should know that:

- Mobile Phones can ignite fuel or fumes
- Mobile phones that light up when switched on or when they ring release enough energy to provide a spark for ignition
- Mobile phones should not be used in filling stations, or when fueling lawn mowers, boat, Etc.
- Mobile phones should not be used, or should be turned off, around other materials that generate flammable or explosive fumes or dust, (i.e., solvents, chemicals, gases, grain dust, etc.)

To sum it up, here are the:
Four Rules for Safe Refueling

- 1] Turn off engine
- 2] Don't smoke
- 3] Don't use your cell phone - leave it inside the vehicle or turn it off
- 4] Don't re-enter your vehicle during fueling



Bob Renkes of Petroleum Equipment Institute is working on a campaign to try and make people aware of fires as a result of 'static electricity' at gas pumps. His company has researched 150 cases of these fires.

His results were very surprising:

- Out of 150 cases, almost all of them were women.
- Almost all cases involved the person getting back in their vehicle while the nozzle was still pumping gas. When finished, they went back to pull the nozzle out and the fire started, as a result of static.
- Most had on rubber-soled shoes.
- Most men never get back in their vehicle until completely finished. This is why they are seldom involved in these types of fires.
- Don't ever use cell phones when pumping gas
- It is the vapors that come out of the gas that cause the fire, when connected with static charges.
- There were 29 fires where the vehicle was re-entered and the nozzle was touched during refueling from a variety of makes and models. Some resulted in extensive damage to the vehicle, to the station, and to the customer.
- Seventeen fires occurred before, during or immediately after the gas cap was removed and before fueling began.

Mr. Renkes stresses to NEVER get back into your vehicle while filling it with gas.

If you absolutely HAVE to get in your vehicle while the gas is pumping, make sure you get out, close the door, TOUCHING THE METAL, before you ever pull the nozzle out. This way the static from your body will be discharged before you ever remove the nozzle.

As I mentioned earlier, The Petroleum Equipment Institute, along with several other companies now, are really trying to make the public aware of this danger. You can find out more information by going to <http://www.pei.org/> Once here, click in the center of the screen where it says 'Stop Static'.

I ask you to please send this information to ALL your family and friends, especially those who have kids in the car with them while pumping gas. If this were to happen to them, they may not be able to get the children out in time. Thanks for passing this along.

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.

