SECO Safety and Environmental Compliance Office

National Safety Month
Safety is everybody's job

June 2008
Volume 3, Issue 3

NOAA Safety Day

Safety & Health, Environmental & Energy, & Security Day

June 17, 2008

Tuesday June 17, 2008, is "Safety Day" throughout NOAA and will be dedicated to safety & health, environmental & energy, and security issues.

The main theme throughout NOAA facilities will be "Spring Housecleaning." Time to clean your offices of all those unwanted papers, trash, and other recyclable items. Also a good time to collect and turn-in all that obsolete computer equipment just laying around taking up space and collecting dust in your offices. Just remember to dispose of your equipment properly through your office property custodian.

On the Silver Spring campus, the program will start with an opening ceremony in the NOAA Auditorium at 8:30 am, with opening remarks by Scott Rayder, NOAA Chief of Staff. Following Scott will be Captain Wade Blake, HSPO, presenting an overview of the "Pandemic Flu."

At 9:00 am, the Science Center will open presenting exhibits from approximately 30 outside vendors and NOAA line offices. The Inova Bloodmobile will be parked outside for donors and a Health Unit blood pressure check station set up among the exhibits.

Boulder, Kansas City, Norfolk, and Seattle offices will also sponsor "Safety Day" activities. The Safety & Environmental Compliance Office encourages all line offices to participate on this day.

Locally on the Silver Spring campus, the week of June 16 – 20 is "Campus Clean-up Your Office Week."

"Please visit the National Safety Council website for more information and free downloads on the "June - National Safety Month Celebration" at http://www.nsc.org/nsm/

NOAA Weather Radio

With the hurricane season starting June 1st and the tornado season, sadly already in force, what severe weather warning measures do you have around your home?

Of course you have commercial broadcast radios, TV's, the Internet, your cell phone, and other methods of communications. But what if you were not watching TV, using the computer, or just asleep, how would you get a severe weather warning of say, an inbound local tornado or severe thunderstorm?

Enter the NOAA Weather Radio Network. This network is a series of NOAA broadcast stations with current weather information originating from local NWS offices. The NOAA weather radio system employs the Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME) system, where you can program your NOAA weather radio to receive only weather warning alarms for you local area, county/parish, or state.

NOAA Weather Radios are small compact radios that usually sit in a stand-by mode until a severe weather event alarm is received. At this time, a very loud audible alarm sounds, followed by a broadcast of the alarm details. Some radios also have a very good graphics display for information. Of course, on all radios, the alarm feature may be turned off and you can listen to the normal NOAA weather radio information. NOAA Weather Radios are available at most electronic retail stores such as: Radio Shack, Wal-Mart, Best Buy, Circuit City, etc. and usually sell for under $100.00. Having a NOAA Weather Radio in your home is good and inexpensive protection for your family. Most radios come with a battery back-up for when the power fails.

For outdoor enthusiasts, NOAA Weather Radios also come in small battery-powered pocket-size units. Most are not SAME capable, but can be tuned to the local NOAA Weather Radio channel to receive current weather information.

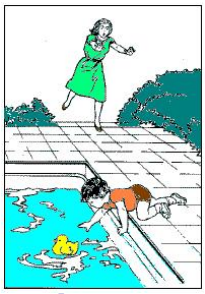
Craig Gillis, NOAA SECO

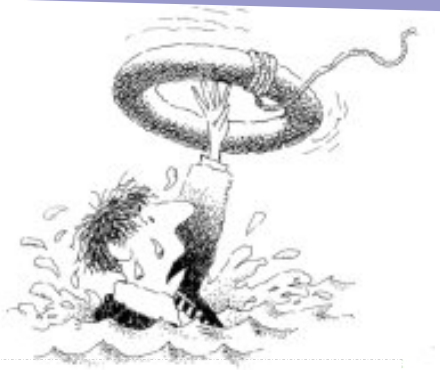
"When the well's dry, we know the worth of water."
- **Benjamin Franklin**, (1706-1790), *Poor Richard's Almanac*.

Water Safety

Drowning is the second leading cause of death in pediatrics. About 4000 people drown each year in the USA with about 1000 deaths in children less than 15 years of age. The male to female ratio is 3:1. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the swimming pool is the most common place for drowning, accounting for about 1/3 of all deaths. In adolescents, alcohol is involved in 50% of all drowning. The national rate is 1.5/100,000 people.

Drowning can occur in a pool, body of water such as lake, ocean, river, or stream, buckets and pails, ice chests with melted ice, bathtubs, hot tubs, spas, whirlpools, irrigation ditches, post holes, wells, fountains, fish ponds, thin ice over any body of water, and toilet bowls. Basically, if it contains water it can be hazardous. Children have drowned in less than 3 inches of water.





If there is a swimming pool:

- Install a four-sided, isolation pool-fence with self-closing and self-latching gates around the pool. The fence should be at least 4 feet tall and should completely separate the pool from the house and play area of the yard.
- Prevent children from having direct access to a swimming pool.
- Install a telephone near the pool. Know how to contact local emergency medical services. Post the emergency number in an easy-to-see place.
- Learn CPR.
- Keep a life preservers and shepherd's hook near the pool at all times.
- Keep electric appliances away from the pool.
- Do not allow wagons or bicycles near the pool.
- Never hold another person under water or call for help in fun.

The best way to prevent drowning is to follow some simple safety tips:

- Whenever young children are swimming, playing, or bathing in water, make sure an adult is constantly watching them.
- By definition, this means that the supervising adult should not read, play cards, talk on the phone, mow the lawn, or do any other distracting activity while watching children.
- Install a safety latch, doorknob cover, or lock on all bathroom doors. Keep toilet covers closed and locked shut.
- Avoid access to electric appliances in the bathroom.
- Never swim alone or in unsupervised places. Teach children to always swim with a buddy.

By following these rules the summer can be fun and safe for everyone.

I hope everyone has a great summer. If there are any questions please feel free to contact Dr. Ben Bond, PA at NOAA SECO ben.bond@noaa.gov and I will be happy to answer them. If anyone has any suggestions for future newsletters or for articles or information you would like to see on the web site, please contact Joe Duran at NOAA SECO joe.g.duran@noaa.gov Thank you for visiting our web site and I hope it is both helpful and informative.

Ben Bond, PA

Summer Safety For Children

Protecting Children From the Sun

Sunburns hurt.

Sunburns also can cause dehydration and fever in children. It is up to adults to take precautions to keep children safe from the sun's dangerous rays.

Babies younger than 6 months of age need extra protection from the sun because their sensitive skin is thinner than adult skin and causes them to sunburn more easily. Follow these specific sun-safety rules for children younger than age 1:

Babies younger than 6 months should be kept out of direct sunlight. Move your baby to the shade or under a tree, an umbrella or a stroller canopy.

- Dress your baby in clothing that covers the body, such as comfortable, lightweight long pants; long-sleeved shirts; and hats with brims that shade the face and cover the ears.
- If your baby gets a sunburn and is younger than age 1; contact your pediatrician at once. A severe sunburn is an emergency.
- For babies older than 6 months of age, choose a sunscreen made for children.

The following sun-safety tips apply to all ages:

- The sun's rays are the strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Try to stay out of the sun during these hours.
- The sun's damaging Ultra-Violet (UV) rays can bounce back from sand, snow or concrete; be particularly careful in these areas.
- Most of the sun's rays can come through the clouds on an overcast day; use sun protection even on cloudy days.
- When choosing a sunscreen, look for the words "broad-spectrum" on the label. This means that the sunscreen will screen out both Ultra-Violet B (UVB) and Ultra-Violet A (UVA) rays.
- Choose a water-resistant or waterproof sunscreen. Sunscreens that are "waterproof" should be reapplied every two hours, especially if a child is playing in the water.
- Use a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15.
- Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outdoors, it needs time to work on the skin.

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Ben Bond, PA

Nobody knows the age of the human race, but everybody agrees that it is old enough to know better.

- Anonymous

How to Keep Mishaps off Your Barbecue Menu

(A highly trained stunt-double was used for this photo)

One of the real treats of summer is a hamburger right off the grill. Probably the best part of a freshly grilled burger is that you get to customize it: slice of cheese, pickles, ketchup, onions, and maybe a few hot peppers. The only real challenge is to decide if you want to get a second one, or maybe shift gears and go for a hot dog. Yes, life is full of tough decisions, like imported or domestic.

Firing-up the grill seems like a fairly straightforward procedure. But, there's always the opportunity to turn a barbecue into an accident and a trip to the hospital.

A young man went to light a gas grill with the propane valve leaking. He put in a hand-held gas igniter to light the grill. The accumulated gas from the leaking valve ignited, flaring up three and a half feet. He suffered serious burns to his face.

Trying to restart a grill, another youngster sprayed lighter fluid onto the hot coals. The flames rushed up and ignited the container. The container exploded in his hands, causing third-degree burns. The damage from the burns was enough to require skin-graft surgery.

Here's how to make sure that starting a house fire or getting burned isn't on the menu:

- Keep your grill at least three feet away from your house, porch, shed, trees, or bushes.
- Use starter fluid that is specially made for barbecue grills. Follow the instructions about how to apply and light it.
- Don't squirt starter fluid on a fire after you've already tried to start it.
- Never use gasoline to try to start or restart charcoal. Gasoline is incredibly explosive and dangerous.
- If you have a gas grill, make sure you read and follow the instructions about how to use and store it.
- Make sure the valves work and that you are completely familiar with how to use them; also know their purpose. Make sure they are off when you aren't using the grill.
- Store gas cylinders outside, and keep them away from buildings.
- If your gas grill needs repairs, take it to an authorized dealer or repair shop.
- Keep children away from the grill while you are cooking and after you finish—while the grill still is hot and when hot coals remain.
- Don't leave lit grills unattended.

Just as important to safely operating the grill is making sure the food you're preparing is safe to eat. While you enjoy a nice, hot, summer day, remember to keep meat chilled until you're ready to cook. Wash your hands, utensils, and cutting boards to avoid bacteria contacting meat. Make sure meat is cooked thoroughly by using a meat thermometer. Meat must reach a temperature of 160 degrees before it is safe to serve. If you have any doubt about whether the meat is safe to eat, throw it out. The dogs under the porch will love you.

Jay Kennedy, AFSC Safety & Environmental Mgr

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.