

# SECO Safety and Environmental Compliance Office



*When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.*

~ John Muir

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## Please Welcome new Environmental Engineer Gregory T. Falzetta to the SECO staff

Gregory Falzetta was hired in January and joined SECO in Silver Spring, MD as an Environmental Engineer. Greg graduated from the US Naval Academy in 1977 with a Bachelor of Science in Oceanography. He spent the next twelve years in the United States Marine Corps (USMC) as an Artillery Officer primarily specializing in nuclear and chemical weapons, safety and command and control. After leaving the USMC in 1989, Greg attended Drexel University where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering and a Masters of Environmental Engineering. In 1992 Greg was hired at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) at the William J. Hughes Technical Center (Center) as an Environmental Engineer. He was assigned as the Deputy Program Manager for Hazardous Waste Remediation for the FAA. He managed the investigation, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of all Superfund sites at the Center, with a budget of over \$67 million. Greg has also functioned as a Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR) and resident engineer for the Center's environmental task order contract. Greg was also the program manager and technical point of contact for polychlorinated biphenyls, ozone depleting substances, storm-water management, explosives safety, and range management and safety. Lastly, he functioned as the Center's Environmental Management System (EMS) Coordinator managing the creation and ISO 14001 certification of the FAA's first EMS. Please join SECO in welcoming Greg Falzetta and his lovely wife Dianne!



## FIRE SAFETY

### OSHA: No Leeway on 18-Inch Clearance below Sprinkler Heads



You may want to review your fire safety plan and check that your sprinkler system's in compliance. Reason, OSHA just "clarified" its decade-old sprinkler standard (29CFR1910.159(c)(10)). The standard says, "The minimum vertical clearance between sprinklers and materials below shall be 18-inches." So an employer asked OSHA, "Does this apply only to materials placed directly below the sprinkler heads?" OSHA replied: "No. The 18-inch vertical clearance requirement is treated as a **horizontal plane** throughout the storage area or room. All materials must be stored below this horizontal plane." In other words, pull out your tape measure and start drawing imaginary lines.

For more information: <http://snipurl.com/b6f88>



Source: FACILITY MANAGER'S ALERT™ MAGAZINE



## Tips: Winter Fire Safety

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recently urged Americans to take extra fire safety precautions this winter in the wake of several multiple fatality fires over the past few weeks.

- Watch your cooking. Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you must leave, even for a short time, turn off the stove.
- Give space heaters space. Keep fixed and portable space heaters at least three feet from anything that can burn. Turn off heaters when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Smoke outside. Ask smokers to smoke outside. Have sturdy, deep ashtrays for smokers.
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach. Keep matches and lighters up high, out of the reach of children, preferably in a cabinet with a child lock.
- Inspect electrical cords. Replace cords that are cracked, damaged, have broken plugs, or have loose connections.
- Be careful when using candles. Keep candles at least one foot from anything that can burn. Blow out candles when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Have a home fire escape plan. Make a home fire escape plan and practice it at least twice a year.
- Install carbon monoxide alarms. Install CO alarms in a central location outside each separate sleeping area and on every level of the home and in other locations where required by applicable laws, codes or standards. For the best protection, interconnect all CO alarms throughout the home.
- Install and test smoke alarms. Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas. Interconnect smoke alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound. Test smoke alarms at least once a month and replace batteries once a year or when the alarm “chirps” to tell you the battery is low. Replace any smoke alarm that is more than 10 years old.



- Install sprinklers. If you are building or remodeling your home, install residential fire sprinklers. Sprinklers can contain, and may even extinguish, a fire in less time than it would take the fire department to arrive.

## Safe Tips Relocatable Power Taps (RPTs)

Also known as “power strips,” “strip plugs,” and “surge suppressors,” these devices were developed as a way to plug in numerous computer peripherals (monitor, printer, scanner, modem). A typical array of these devices doesn’t require a great deal of power (3-5 amps, 300-600 watts). However, many people make two major mistakes: they try to use RPTs as extension cords, or they plug in high-voltage devices to them, such as refrigerators, coffee pots, space heaters, microwave ovens and toasters.

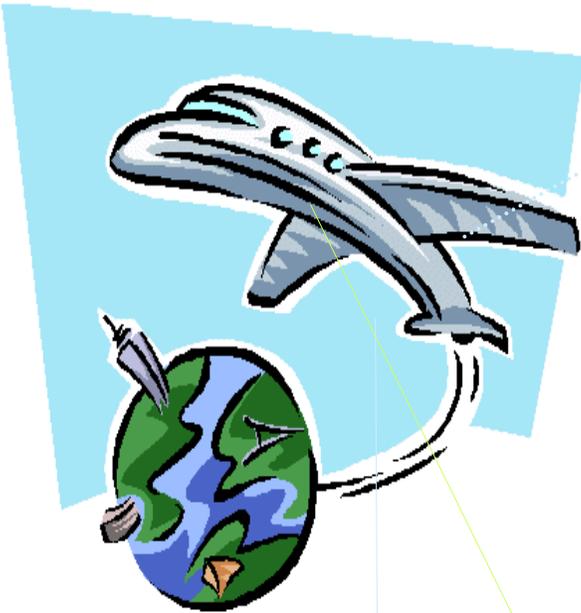
- Connect an RPT only to a permanent receptacle.
- Do not connect RPTs in series or to an extension cord.
- Use them only for their intended use, which should be listed on the instruction manual.
- Avoid damage.
- Keep them dry.
- Don’t plug in heavy appliances.
- Don’t use them outdoors or on construction sites.
- Don’t permanently secure them to structures, tables, work benches or walls.
- Don’t route them through walls, windows, ceilings or floors.
- Don’t use them as a substitute for permanent wiring.



Source: Naval Safety Center



## AIR TRAVEL SAFETY TIPS



As the recent crash of US Airways Flight 1549 into the Hudson River demonstrated, air travel still has a certain amount of risk.

How many times have you boarded an airplane, sat down in your seat, removed your shoes, buckled your seatbelt and relaxed, not thinking about anything else? OR, when going on vacation by air to a warmer climate, fly out of your home airport dressed in shorts, a short-sleeve shirt or blouse, and sandals, ready to enjoy the warmer weather immediately upon your arrival?

The point is, while commercial air carrier travel is safer than U.S. highway travel unfortunately, the “unexpected” can and does sometimes occur. In the event of an in-flight emergency, being prepared and following a few simple tips can improve your survival chances:

- Dress appropriately. Wear clothing made from natural fibers and not synthetics, since natural fiber clothing offer better personal protection in the event of a in-flight or post-crash fire. Wear long pants and long-sleeve shirts or blouses, as well as substantial footwear. If going on vacation to a warmer climate, leave the shorts, t-shirts, and sandals packed away in your carry-on bag until you arrive at your destination.
- Whenever possible, keep your footwear on. Having to evacuate an aircraft is a lot safer and easier with footwear on, than in bare or stocking feet.
- Maintain situational awareness. Try to get your seat either on or near an emergency exit row. If that is not possible, as soon as you board the aircraft, make a mental note of the nearest emergency exits, both in front of and to the rear of your seat.
- Check to see if your aircraft is equipped with personal floatation devices and if so, where they are located. If this is not covered during the pre-takeoff passenger briefing, ask a flight attendant.
- Keep your seatbelt fastened at all times.
- In the event of an emergency evacuation, forget your carry-on bag, briefcase, laptop computer, etc. Your goal is to safely extract yourself from the aircraft.



Finally, always remember to follow the directions of your flight crew.



## Drowsy Driving

Just like drugs or alcohol, sleepiness slows reaction time, decreases awareness, and impairs judgment. Just like drugs or alcohol, it can be fatal when driving.

Death rates based on mileage were 2.3 times higher at night than during the day in 2003.

37% of drivers surveyed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration admitted to falling asleep at the wheel at some point in their driving career.

8% admitted doing so in the past six months

60% admitted falling asleep while driving on an interstate- type highway with posted speeds of 55 MPH or higher.

**The drivers at highest risk are:** third shift workers, people that drive a substantial number of miles each day, those with unrecognized sleep disorders, and those prescribed medication with sedatives.

### Recognize the symptoms of fatigue

- Eyes closing or going out of focus
- Persistent yawning
- Irritability, restlessness, and impatience
- Wandering or disconnected thoughts
- Inability to remember driving the last few miles
- Drifting between lanes or onto shoulder
- Abnormal speed, tailgating, or failure to obey traffic signs
- Back tension, burning eyes, shallow breathing or inattentiveness



### Safety Tips

- Maintain a regular sleep schedule that allows adequate rest.
- When the signs of fatigue begin to show, get off the road. Take a short nap in a well-lit area. Do not simply stop on the side of the road.
- Avoid driving between 12am and 6am

### When planning long trips:

- Share driving responsibilities with a companion
- Begin the trip early in the day
- Keep the temperature cool in the car
- Stop every 100 miles or 2 hours to get out of the car and walk around; exercise helps to combat fatigue
- Stop for light meals and snacks
- Drive with your head up, shoulders back and legs flexed at about a 45 degree angle

Source: National Safety Council

**SLEEP SMART.  
DRIVE SMART.**  
DROWSY DRIVING KILLS

- *Carelessness doesn't bounce; it shatters.*

~Hartman Jule

## Procedures for Atmospheric Testing In Confined Spaces



Atmospheric testing is required for two distinct purposes: evaluation of the hazards of the permit space and verification that acceptable conditions exist for entry into that space. A confined space is one that is large enough to enter and perform assigned work in; it has limited or restricted ways to enter or exit the space; and it was not designed to be occupied continuously by a worker.

### **Evaluation testing**

The atmosphere within a confined space must be tested using equipment that is designed to detect the chemicals that may be present at levels that are well below the defined exposure limits. Evaluation testing is done to: *determine* what chemical hazards are or may become present in the space's atmosphere, and *identify* what steps must be followed and what conditions must be met to ensure that atmospheric conditions are safe for a worker to enter the space. The testing results and the decision decisions about what steps must be followed before entry must be evaluated by, or reviewed by, a technically qualified professional like an OSHA consultation service, a certified industrial hygienist, a registered safety engineer, or a certified safety professional. The technically qualified professional must consider all of the serious hazards in his/her evaluation or review. A permit space is a confined space that has one or more of the following features: it has or may contain a hazardous atmosphere; it contains a material that can engulf a person who enters; it has an inside design that could trap or asphyxiate a person who enters (inwardly converging walls, or a floor that slopes downward to a smaller section); or it has any other serious safety or health hazards.

### **Verification Testing**

Before a permit space that may have a hazardous atmosphere can be entered, the atmosphere must be tested using the steps identified on the permit (developed during evaluation testing). Verification testing is done to make sure that the chemical hazards that may be present are below the levels necessary for safe entry, and that they meet the conditions identified on the permit. Test the atmosphere in the following order: (1) for oxygen, (2) for combustible gases, and (3) for toxic gases and vapors. The testing results must be recorded on the permit near the levels identified for safe entry.

### **Duration of Testing**

For each test required on the permit, you must allow enough time for the air from the space to be drawn into the equipment and for the sensor (or other detection device) to react to the chemical if it is present. This is considered the "minimum response time" and it will be noted by the manufacturer in the operator's manual. Be aware that you will need to add time to this "minimum response time" if you have attached hosing or a probe extension to the inlet. The additional time is needed to allow the air from the different depths of the space to be pulled into the equipment inlet.

### **Testing Conditions in Spaces that May Have Layered Atmospheres**

For permit spaces that are deep or have areas leading away from the entry point, the atmosphere may be layered or may be different in remote areas. For these spaces, testing must be done in the area surrounding the worker, which is considered four (4) feet in the direction of travel and to each side. If a sample probe is used to do the testing, then the worker must move slowly enough so that testing is completed, keeping the equipment "response time" in mind, before he/she moves into the new area.

### **Retesting the Space During Entry or Before Re-Entry**

Test the space routinely to make sure that the atmospheric conditions continue to be safe for entry.

For more complete information: [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

We experience moments absolutely free from worry.

These brief respites are called panic.

~ Cullen Hightower





# February was National Heart Month

One common misconception current today is that only elderly men suffer from heart disease and stroke. While it is true that men are more likely to die of these—one in every 3.7 men do—the truth is that one in every 2.4 women die of the same causes. Heart disease is the number one killer of women, and stroke is number three. Compare that to breast cancer, which kills only one in 29 women.

A majority of American women are unaware of the high risk of heart disease and stroke they face. Nearly 5.2 million Americans are living with heart disease, and nearly 550,000 new cases are diagnosed each year. To raise awareness, the American Heart Association has designated February National Heart Month.

## Automated Electronic Defibrillators AED's

Automated External Defibrillator AED's have the ability to continuously monitor the heart's function during, and after a cardiac arrest event, providing protection against recurring arrhythmia after resuscitation. Its simple, one-button operation eliminates rescuer uncertainty. Clear voice and text prompts guide the user through rescue efforts. It saves precious seconds by eliminating the need to check for pulse before attaching the AED. Biphasic shock technology determines the amount of energy needed to restore heart function based on each patient's unique physiology.



A majority of American *women* are unaware of the high risk of heart disease and stroke they face. Nearly 5.2 million Americans are living with heart disease, and nearly 550,000 new cases are diagnosed each year. To raise awareness, the American Heart Association has designated February National Heart Month. To promote recognition and early intervention, the American Heart Association is reminding everyone to be on the lookout for these warning signs of heart attack:

## Chest Discomfort

Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts longer than a couple of minutes, or goes away and returns, twice as bad as it were. The sensation can feel like an uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain like sensation in the chest.

## Other Upper Body Discomfort

These symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, but more common in the left arm, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.

## Shortness of breath

Difficulty breathing, this may occur with or without chest discomfort.

## Other Signs

These may include breaking out in a cold profuse sweat, nausea and/or vomiting, lightheadedness. Like men, the most common heart attack symptom experienced by women is pain or discomfort in the chest. Unlike men, women more often experience other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea and vomiting, and pain in the back or jaw.

If you or someone you are with feels discomfort or pain like sensation in the chest, especially with one or more of the other signs listed, do not wait longer than five minutes before calling 911. Getting prompt attention from emergency medical personnel or in a hospital could very like make the difference between life and death.



## 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.