

# SECO Safety and Environmental Compliance Office



## NATIONAL SAFETY MONTH

JUNE 2009

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 3

## SAFETY IS EVERYBODY'S JOB

### NOAA Safety Day

On Wednesday, June 17, 2009, NOAA's Safety & Environmental Compliance Office, in conjunction with the NOAA Security Office and NOAA Health Unit, will hold the annual NOAA Safety, Security, Environmental, and Health Fair on the Silver Spring campus.

Activities will start at 9:00 am in the NOAA auditorium with a briefing on personal security and protection methods by the NOAA Security Office. The doors to the exhibits in the Science Center will also open at 9:00 am.

Displays will include exhibits from participating NOAA line offices on their NOAA mission and current projects.

There will be an inter-active ergonomic assessment station featuring the latest in work station accommodations and furniture.

NOAA health unit personnel will be on hand to do blood pressure and cholesterol screening.



Local vendors will be on hand demonstrating their services and offering:

- Eye Examinations
- Podiatry Ankle and Foot Assessments
- Body Mass Index Screening
- Seated Massage
- Trigger Point Massage
- Sampling of Nutritious Foods
- Skin Care Products
- Derma Scans
- Hand Massage Treatments
- Body Fat Analysis & Exercise Physiology
- Weight Management Counseling
- Diabetic Screening



Montgomery County, Maryland, Department of Recycling will be on hand demonstrating recycling methods and products for individual and family recycling programs.



INOVA hospital will have their blood mobile on site for NOAA blood donors.

We are looking forward to another highly successful and educational Safety, Security, Environmental, and Health Day.

## DEHYDRATION, NOT JUST A SUMMER PROBLEM

Under normal conditions everyone loses some body water. It is expelled as vapor when we breathe. If a person is sick with a viral infection or fever, or being physically active, water evaporates through the skin in order to cool the body. During outdoor activities in low humidity or windy conditions, body water loss increases. Dehydration can occur indoors when exercising or playing indoor sports like basketball or racquetball. Excessive consumption of caffeine (a diuretic) from coffee, soft drinks, and power and energy drinks can contribute to body water loss.

Some symptoms of dehydration:

- Thirst
- Dry skin or mouth
- Fatigue or sluggishness
- Light-headedness
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Increased heart rate and breathing



A visual clue to the on-set of dehydration is the appearance of white rings or stains on clothing and footwear. This indicates a high loss of body water and sodium due to heat and/or exertion.

Mild dehydration can be corrected by drinking the proper fluids. Water, milk and sports drinks like Gatorade® can restore body fluids. It can be prevented by drinking enough water to satisfy your thirst and a little extra if you have a fever, upset stomach or are involved in physical activity. Fluids to avoid are sodas, and sugary drinks like sweet tea, fruit punches, lemonade, power and energy drinks. When in doubt, water is always best.

Working in desert and higher elevation environments, dehydration can sneak up on a person. Body water loss (sweat) is not readily noticeable, since in the dry desert and higher elevations environments, sweat evaporates directly from the skin pores without ever being visible. A person may think they are not losing body water since none is seen on the skin until it becomes too late.

If not properly corrected, mild dehydration can lead to severe dehydration and cause heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Both heat exhaustion and heat stroke are medical emergencies requiring "911."



Protect yourself against dehydration!

"Everything in nature is lyrical in its ideal essence, tragic in its fate, and comic in its existence."

- George Santayana

## AIRPORT RAMP SAFETY

With the arrival of summer, more and more NOAA personnel will be utilizing light and medium aircraft to perform their duties such as, fish spotting, whale spotting, aerial mapping surveys, and post-tornado and hurricane damage assessments. The first stop for all these activities is of course, the airport.

Airport operating ramps, regardless of size, should be regarded and respected as potentially “noisy and dangerous operating areas.” Unfortunately, every year, there are ramp accidents involving persons walking into moving aircraft propellers or being struck by moving aircraft. Observing ramp safety is vital to your personal safety.

Some basic rules for airport ramp safety:

Airport ramps should be considered “working areas.” If you are not walking to or departing from an aircraft or working at an aircraft, stay off the ramp area.

**THERE IS NEVER ANY SMOKING NEAR OR ON AN AIRPORT RAMP AREA.**

Maintain “situational awareness” at all time when on an airport ramp, keeping your head “on a swivel” for moving aircraft.

When on a ramp having jet or turbine powered aircraft, always have hearing protection.

When coming onto an airport ramp, remove all headgear such as ball caps.

Aircraft with engines running display a red “anti-collision” light and possibly wing strobe lights. Never walk directly behind an aircraft displaying these lights, especially jet and turbine powered aircraft.

On non-running propeller light aircraft, never place any part of your body or hands within the propeller arc of the aircraft.

If you are to board an aircraft with the pilot(s) already at the controls, DO NOT approach the aircraft directly from the front, rear or sides. Maintain a good distance from the aircraft and approach it from a 45 degree angle to the aircraft’s left side so you can see the pilot at the controls. Get the attention of the pilot. ONLY with his/her acknowledgement and approval, approach the aircraft, maintaining a safe distance from the propeller(s) and board the aircraft from behind the appropriate wing.

When departing an aircraft, always do so after asking permission of the pilot(s). Move to the back of the wing and onto the ramp. Walk along the backside of the wing until you get to the wing tip. Before proceeding further, check for moving aircraft and then proceed off the ramp area.

Nighttime ramp operations are slightly more dangerous. It is always a good idea and in many places, mandatory, to wear a reflective vest to improve your visibility.

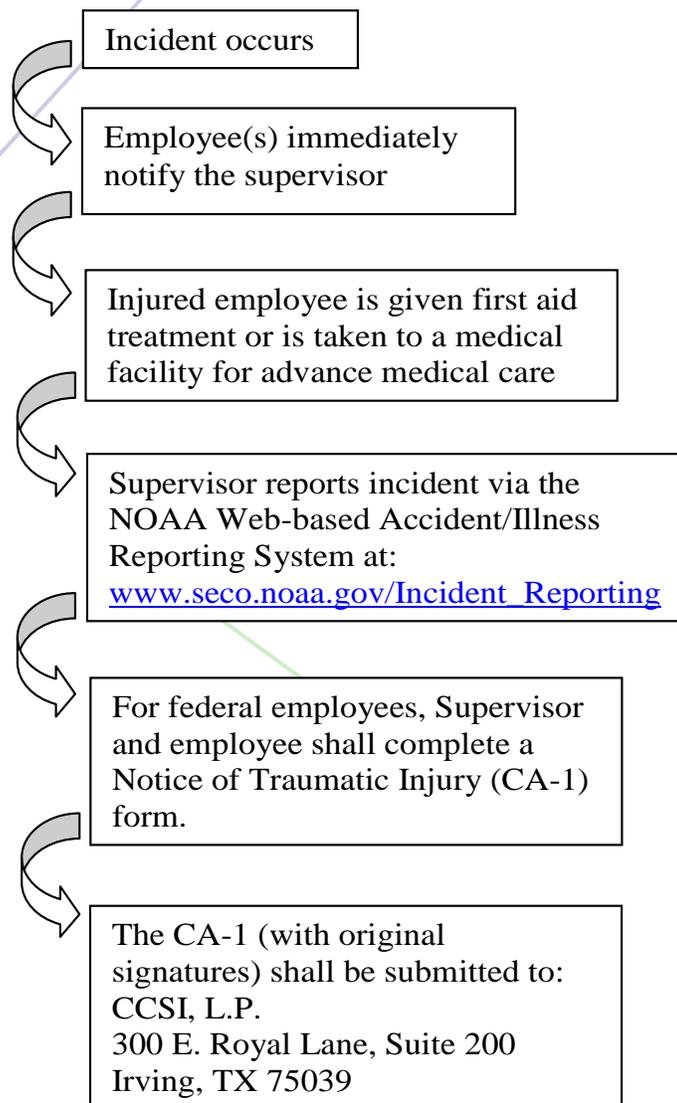


Again, observing airport ramp safety is vital to your personal safety and is your responsibility.

# NOAA INCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURES

NOAA is responsible for providing safe and healthful work places and conditions of employment for all personnel. Prompt investigation and reporting of any incident involving NOAA employees, Contractors or government property will provide information necessary for the systematic identification and correction of safety and health hazards.

All incidents shall be reported within 24 hours of the incident occurrence through the NOAA web-based Accident/Illness Reporting System. If an incident is considered serious in nature (see the definition on the reporting form) such shall be reported as soon as possible, but no later than 8 working hours of occurrence.



*Note: A CD-137 is no longer required*

Contact the NOAA Safety and Environmental Compliance Office (SECO) for additional details or questions regarding the prompt notification of all work-related incidents.

"I wonder what it would be like to live in a world where it was always June."

- L. M. Montgomery

## Safety Metrics for 1st & 2<sup>nd</sup> Q FY '09

### Injuries by Causes

Handling/Mtls/Equip.	30.0%
Falls/Slips/Trips	27.8%
Striking/Struck by	16.5%
All Others	15.3%
Vehicles	10.4%

### Injuries by Types

Near Miss/Minor	68.6%
Vehicle	15.2%
First Aid/Restricted	06.7%
Reportable	06.0%
Reportable Lost Time	03.5%

### Nature of Injuries

Contusions	34.0%
Sprains/Strains/RM	31.0%
All Cuts & Punctures	29.0%
Misc/Chemical/IAQ	06.0%

### Injuries by Body Part

Shoulder/Arm/Hand	36.3%
Legs/Hips/Feet/Toes	22.3%
Head/Eyes/Face	19.5%
Trunk/Back	15.7%
Miscellaneous	06.2%

## KNIFE SAFETY

Caring for pocket knives is simple but important. Keep your knife clean and sharp. If the blade is dull, it can actually be very dangerous. Dull blades may slide while cutting and cause injury. Sharpen your knife as soon as you notice any dulling of the blade and poor cutting performance. Sharpen it by using a fine grit stone and a small bottle of honing oil or plain water. Place a few drops of oil or water onto the stone and draw the blade across it at 20°. Sharpen both sides lessening the pressure with each stroke until the knife is sharp. If you do this regularly, it will not take too long.

Handle your knife safely. A knife is a tool and like any tool there are rules for their proper use. Below are basic safety rules for working with pocket knives:

1) Hold your knife firmly by the handle and when cutting never press on the blade. Do not use your knife to pry or as a screwdriver.

2) Always cut away from your body. If you can cut on a workbench or close to the ground, the chance for striking yourself or other things is reduced. Before passing the knife to others, close the blade.

If you cannot close it lay the knife down and allow the person to pick it up. As soon as you are finished using the knife, close it and put it away.

Pocket knives don't have to be expensive, but they should feel comfortable to use. Knives with many gadgets and features are not necessarily the best quality products. Buy the best quality steel blade you can afford. If you keep the knife clean and sharp it will last for many years.



#### 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.