

**In this issue of the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Listserv, August 9, 2016:**

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## **1. Emergency Plans: Develop/Review/Update/Train/Retrain**

The purpose of an emergency action plan is to facilitate and organize employer and employee actions during workplace emergencies. Well-developed emergency plans and proper employee training, such that employees understand their roles and responsibilities within the plan, will result in fewer and less severe employee injuries and less collateral damage to the ongoing research or facilities during emergencies.

Putting together an emergency action plan that deals with specifics of your worksite/building is not difficult. It involves describing how employees should respond to different types of emergencies, taking into account your specific worksite layout, structural features, and emergency systems.

The UNL Emergency Planning and Preparedness web site contains a template (“Faculty, Staff & Depts.” tab, “Have a Plan” section). Assistance is available upon request from Mark Robertson, UNL Emergency Preparedness Coordinator ([preparedness@unl.edu](mailto:preparedness@unl.edu)). While the template is designed for developing a ***Building Emergency Action Plan***, it can readily be modified to develop a facility or specific area action plan.

Does your department/area/facility already have an Emergency Action Plan? Emergency action plans should be reviewed at least once a year and more often if necessary to reflect changes in personnel, or other specific attributes of the area/facility.

All workers should be familiar with the emergency action plan, including how they will be notified of an emergency, at least two safe routes of escape from the building, and where they can shelter-in-place, if needed. In an emergency, people tend to freeze, so they need to know what to do without having to think about it—that means training. If they have additional roles to play in an emergency, such as shutting down equipment or assisting disabled coworkers, they must be trained in those duties as well. In addition to regular review/training/retraining, make sure that all new workers are trained on the emergency action plan.

## Resources

- Emergency Planning & Preparedness: Building Emergency Action Plan  
<http://emergency.unl.edu/Building%20Emergency%20Action%20Plan%20Template.pdf>
- EHS **Emergency Preparedness** Safe Operating Procedures  
<http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/emergency-preparedness>
- EHS **Emergency Preparedness** web-based training  
<http://ehs.unl.edu/web-based-training#EP>

## 2. CUSC September Open Forum

The Chancellor's University Safety Committee (CUSC) will host an Open Forum meeting at the Nebraska City Union **3:00 – 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 20, 2016**. The campus community is encouraged to attend to share concerns or observe the workings of the CUSC.

The CUSC is a UNL committee established to assist the Chancellor by making recommendations of methods to reduce safety hazards at UNL. The campus community may contact the CUSC Chair, Kyle Hansen ([khansen2@unl.edu](mailto:khansen2@unl.edu)) at any time with safety concerns or questions.

The CUSC charter, as well as links to CUSC Chair, upcoming agenda, meeting dates/locations, previous meeting minutes, the current year's goal, and more are available online. Plan to attend the upcoming Open Forum meeting!

## Resources

- Chancellor's University Safety Committee      <http://ehs.unl.edu/chancellors-university-safety-committee-cusc#cusc>

## 3. Near Miss: Oil Fire

Recently a fire occurred at a UNL facility when leaked oil came in contact with a hot muffler on a utility vehicle. The fire was immediately extinguished with a fire extinguisher that was mounted on the utility vehicle. Investigation revealed the need for replacement of defective parts.

When operating vehicles or equipment it is important to conduct periodic maintenance and inspection per manufacturer's recommendations to ensure integrity of all components. Workers should inspect the vehicle/equipment prior to use, including observation of vehicle/equipment parking area to determine any fluid leakage which would indicate damage not otherwise apparent. In this case, a readily available fire extinguisher prevented loss of the vehicle.

Workers who may, in the course of their employment, have a need to use a fire extinguisher should take the EHS web-based ***Fire Extinguisher*** training.

## **Resources**

- EHS ***Fire Extinguisher*** web-based training    <http://ehs.unl.edu/web-based-training#FireExt>
- EHS ***Fire Safety – General Prevention and Extinguishers*** Safe Operating Procedure    [http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-fire\\_safety.pdf](http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-fire_safety.pdf)

## **4. Hearing Conservation and Respiratory Protection**

Temporary and permanent hearing loss can result from exposure to hazardous noise levels. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) has a Hearing Conservation Program (HCP) designed to protect workers from developing occupational noise-induced hearing loss. This is accomplished by identifying employees who may be exposed to hazardous noise levels, evaluating and measuring noise levels, requiring the use of hearing protection devices, audiometric testing, and employee training.

The UNL HCP applies to all UNL employees who, in the course of their employment, are exposed to noise levels of 85 decibels or greater based on an eight-hour time weighted average regardless of the number of days of exposure per year. As a reference, a chain saw operates at 120 decibels, a power mower at 96 decibels, and a garbage disposal or dishwasher at 80 decibels. In general, your noise exposure may be excessive if you would have to shout to have a conversation with another person at a distance of three feet. Contact EHS if during the course of your work you may be exposed to excessive noise levels so we can formally evaluate the need for you to participate in UNL's Hearing Conservation Program.

In the course of their employment at UNL, some employees may use respiratory protection equipment (RPE) to reduce exposure to airborne hazards that may cause occupational injuries or illnesses. These airborne hazards may occur in the form of a gas, vapor, fume, smoke, fog, dust, mist, bio-aerosols, lack of sufficient oxygen in the space, or extreme temperatures.

The UNL Respiratory Protection Program (RPP) is applicable to all UNL employees who, during the course of their work duties, are required to use RPE to control their exposure to respiratory hazards and those who are not required to use RPE but voluntarily choose to do so. This program is applicable to both short- and long-term use of RPE. Participation in the program involves medical qualification, training, and formal evaluation/quantification of potential exposures. Contact EHS (402-472-4925 or [ehs@unl.edu](mailto:ehs@unl.edu)) for a formal evaluation if you intend to use a respirator or suspect that you should use a respirator to protect yourself and you are not currently enrolled in UNL's RPP.

## Resources

- UNL Hearing Conservation Program  
[http://ehs.unl.edu/programdocuments/Hearing\\_Conservation\\_Program.pdf](http://ehs.unl.edu/programdocuments/Hearing_Conservation_Program.pdf)
- EHS **Hearing Conservation** Safe Operating Procedures  
<http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/hearing-conservation>
- UNL Respiratory Protection Program  
[http://ehs.unl.edu/programdocuments/respiratory\\_protection.pdf](http://ehs.unl.edu/programdocuments/respiratory_protection.pdf)
- EHS **Respiratory Protection** Safe Operating Procedures  
<http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/respiratory-protection>

## 5. Situational Preparedness – Walking/Driving/Biking

Situational preparedness can encompass a wide variety of hazards. Over the next few listserv issues we will look at a few situations where preparedness can prevent injury. One area of increasing concern is the danger of distracted walking, driving or bicycle riding. There have been a number of near misses reported to and by members of the Chancellor's University Safety Committee (CUSC) and other UNL safety committees. To address the need for increased awareness the CUSC is undertaking a "Heads Up" awareness campaign in conjunction with Campus Rec's Bike Fest on September 14, 2016.

While talking on a phone, texting, emailing, etc., there are three main types of distraction:

- Manual – taking your hands off the wheel of a bike/vehicle, not using handrails where provided, e.g. near steps
- Visual – taking your eyes off the path/road and/or focusing on your phone which restricts your field of vision
- Cognitive – while talking on phones/with others while biking or in a vehicle, texting, looking for Pokeman, etc., your brain is engaged in a task not of relevance to your walking/riding/driving

Studies have shown that talking on a cell phone reduces peripheral vision significantly. While texting or engaged in another activity that requires looking at the device screen, peripheral vision to alert you to all manner of hazards can shrink to one-tenth of the normal range. Not only does this lead to situations of walking into things/in front of vehicles, etc., it makes you vulnerable to attack and robbery. Whether walking, driving or biking, for your personal safety stay aware and be prepared.

## Resources

- Really Obvious Walk    <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-9CcSnWR-c&list=PLh0k4GzppsqEyNcNx-fxPRIdpC-hERTQH&index=21>

## **6. Safety Shorts – Distraction Dangers**

This series features links to short safety resources each month. Statistics on injuries and near misses due to distracted walking/driving/biking are difficult to accurately assess as those involved generally do not admit their distraction. However, accidents known to be caused from walking while texting quadrupled over the last 7 years. The following videos show the danger in not only walking and texting, but also walking while talking on a cell phone. The impaired awareness/judgement noted in the videos also is applicable to operating a motor vehicle or riding a bicycle.

- **Texting While Walking by Casey Neistat** (Casey Neistat, Duration 3:08) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLA1UelcDrE&index=10&list=PLqlrNFaOIGO2CbAXldf6ZqrdxRBm59gg1>
- **Distracted Walking** (NewsCommander21's channel, Duration 1:28) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRN-XDRUzLs>

NOTE: Resources are provided for informational purposes only. Publication does not in any way endorse a particular company or product or affect current UNL policies and procedures.

## **7. AED Disposal Considerations**

Batteries are one of the most important parts of your Automatic External Defibrillators (AED) system. To make sure your AED will work perfectly in an emergency situation, periodically check batteries as directed by the manufacturer to make sure they are in good working condition and replace the batteries when needed. AED batteries contain heavy metals such as mercury, lead, cadmium, and nickel which must be properly disposed. Complete and submit a Hazardous Materials Collection Tag for disposal through Environmental Health and Safety.

Upon occasion there may be a reason to dispose the entire AED unit. When discarding the entire unit, contact EHS for pickup and disposal of device by completing/submitting a Hazardous Materials Collection Tag.

For questions on this topic or other disposal concerns, contact Tony Lloyd, 402-472-4942 or [alloyd4@unl.edu](mailto:alloyd4@unl.edu).

### **Resources**

- **Automatic External Defibrillators** Safe Operating Procedure (SOP) <http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-AED.pdf>
- **Battery Disposal SOP** <http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-batterydisposal.pdf>
- **Hazardous/Radioactive Material Collection Procedures** SOP [http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-chem\\_collection\\_procedures.pdf](http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-chem_collection_procedures.pdf)

## **8. Your Opinion Matters**

Environmental Health and Safety is committed to excellent customer service and offers a *Customer Satisfaction Survey* as an easy method for the campus community to provide feedback on our services and staff. By taking a few moments to complete the survey (<http://ehs.unl.edu/survey>), you will be helping us to identify areas where we might need to focus our attention. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Please feel free to contact Brenda Osthuis, EHS Director, at 402-472-4927 or [bosthus1@unl.edu](mailto:bosthus1@unl.edu) if you would rather communicate outside the parameters of this survey.

**Remember...SAFETY IS AN ATTITUDE!**

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