

**In this issue of the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Listserv, March 12, 2010:**

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**1. Mark Your Calendar – Volunteer Opportunity**

**April 20, 2010** is a Chancellor’s University Safety Committee (CUSC) Open Forum meeting. Open Forum meetings are held twice yearly. This meeting will be held at East Campus Union (room is posted the day of the event). This is an opportunity for faculty, staff or students to bring their safety concerns and questions to the CUSC. If you have questions or issues relating to campus safety and cannot attend, you may e-mail CUSC Chair, Chris Cary at [ccary@nebraska.edu](mailto:ccary@nebraska.edu).

Are you looking for an opportunity to hone some skills you may not use during your workday, or share information with others beyond your department? The CUSC is planning a Safety and Wellness Fair for **October 19, 2010**. Do you have expertise within a particular area of safety or wellness? Would you be willing to provide a 40 minute presentation and/or interactive exhibit between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. that day? Contact Chris Cary, Fair Coordinator ([ccary@nebraska.edu](mailto:ccary@nebraska.edu)) to volunteer or for more information.

Information on EHS instructor-led training courses, radiation safety and various occupational health & safety topics, is now available for **April through June 2010**. Courses and the dates/times offered may be reviewed on the EHS training web site: <http://ehs.unl.edu/training/>. The new Upcoming Events section to the right on this page allows you to see a ‘snapshot’ of all events. Select “See all EHS events” to find a session that fits into your schedule.

**2. Did you know?**

EHS provides an Employee Training Needs Assessment matrix to help employees and their supervisors determine minimal formal training requirements mandated by applicable regulation. The matrix may be accessed at: <http://ehs.unl.edu/pamphlets/EmployeeTrainingNeedsAssessment.pdf>. Additional training topics may be appropriate based on the department, employee’s tasks, or other specific employee needs.

Here are a few points to consider that we will be examining in more depth over the coming months:

- Do you know the difference between a dust mask and a respirator? Do you know that if you wear a respirator you may be subject to the Respiratory Protection Program?
- Do you know what a confined space is, and the hazards a confined space presents?
- Do you operate a forklift or other powered industrial truck? If so, do you know what requirements might apply?
- Do you know what ‘excessive noise’ means from a regulatory standpoint and whether you are subject to the Hearing Conservation program?

**3. Respiratory Protection**

The *Respiratory Protection-Program Summary* Safe Operating Procedure (SOP) provides employees who are **required** to use respirators and their supervisors information on UNL’s Respiratory Protection Program (RPP). Prior to assigning work or working in atmospheres that may require respiratory protection contact EHS. EHS will assess and document potential air contaminants (identity, state, form, and likely concentration), as well as workplace conditions and user factors to assist in selecting the appropriate type of respirator. There are several steps that must be completed by employees required to use a respirator at work:

1. Medical qualification involves, at a minimum, completion of a questionnaire and may require a medical examination. This process is begun by printing a copy of the medical questionnaire from the EHS web page: <http://ehs.unl.edu/forms/ehs-rpp-04.pdf>.
2. Training is conducted by EHS and must be completed prior to initial use and annually thereafter. Re-training is also required under specific circumstances which are outlined within the **Respiratory Protection-Program Summary** SOP and the RPP Program Document. Employees and their supervisors are responsible to ensure that refresher training is completed annually. Training covers a number of specific areas in which the user must demonstrate knowledge.
3. Fit testing is designed to select a respirator that provides the user with an adequate fit so the assigned protection factor remains valid. EHS adheres to the fit-testing protocols established by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in 29 CFR 1910.134. At the time of fit testing, respirator users receive additional training.

In all circumstances, only National Institute of Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH)-approved respirators are appropriate. Other devices are not considered respirators and should never be used for protection against any atmospheric hazard. When respirators are being used in a clinical setting to control exposure, they are also subject to Food & Drug Administration (FDA) approval in addition to NIOSH approval of the respirator.

EHS should be notified of any changes, whether of the user's personal conditions that may affect their ability to wear a respirator, or conditions of use (e.g., temperature extremes, different PPE, exertion requirements, potential atmospheric contaminants or approximate concentrations; etc.). Changing conditions may trigger the need for a new exposure assessment, review by the medical professional, re-training, and/or fit-testing.

Employees who use respirators, but use is **not required** to protect their health, generally because exposures are well below established occupational limits, fall under the 'voluntary use' category. The necessary information for this category of user is provided within the SOP **Respiratory Protection-Voluntary Use of Respiratory Protection Equipment**. Certain information must be provided to any employee who voluntarily elects to use a respirator whether the respirator is provided by the supervisor/employer or by the employee at his/her own expense. In addition, other requirements may also apply, such as medical qualification.

Resources:

Respiratory Protection Program Document [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>

EHS links (scroll down to view OSHA videos on Respiratory Protection) <http://ehs.unl.edu/links/>

OSHA e-tools (Respiratory Protection) <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/respiratory/index.html>

NIOSH Safety & Health Topic: Respirators <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/topics/respirators/>

OSHA Standard 29 CFR 1910.134

[http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show\\_document?p\\_id=12716&p\\_table=standards](http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_id=12716&p_table=standards)

#### 4. Spring Yard Work and the Environment

Spring is just around the corner! Here are some simple things you can do to help protect streams and lakes when you are working in your yard.

- Compost grass clippings and leaves or bag them for pickup. Don't dump them in ditches or let them remain where they can be flushed to drains. While these materials are about as natural as things get, they add to nutrient loading in lakes and streams. High nutrient levels in lakes and streams result in lots of algae which can be unsightly and harmful to fish.
- Take care when applying fertilizers and pesticides to keep them off of sidewalks and streets. If any fertilizers or pesticides get on sidewalks or streets, sweep them into the yard where they do what they are intended to do.
- Consider using fertilizers that do not contain phosphates. Established landscapes do not need much of this mineral to be healthy. You can tell if a fertilizer contains phosphates by the information on the bag.

Number series like 10-10-10 show the amount of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium in the fertilizer. If the middle number is 0, the fertilizer contains no phosphorus.

- Watch the weather prior to fertilizing. Most fertilizers need precipitation or watering in order to dissolve the chemical into the soil but hard rains can wash the fertilizer away before it has a chance to enter the ground.
- Do not apply fertilizers to saturated soil. Saturated soils can hold no more water and so any fertilizer dissolved during the next precipitation event will just wash away.
- Some turf pesticides need damp grass so that the particles stick to it. Apply these chemicals early in the morning when the grass is covered with dew or after watering the grass.

These are just some of the things you can do to help protect local lakes and streams.

### **5. New & Revised Safe Operating Procedures (SOPs)**

EHS has revised the following SOPs on the EHS website:

- Power Generators – UNL Generator List [http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-generator\\_list.pdf](http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-generator_list.pdf)
- Woodworking Machine Safety [http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-woodworking\\_machine\\_safety.pdf](http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-woodworking_machine_safety.pdf)
- Hand and Portable Power Tool Safety [http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-hand\\_portable\\_power\\_tool\\_safety.pdf](http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-hand_portable_power_tool_safety.pdf)

EHS has created a new SOP which is available on the EHS website:

- Safety Protocol: Rb-86 [http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/SP\\_SOP\\_Rb-86.pdf](http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/SP_SOP_Rb-86.pdf)

Additional SOPs relevant to various hazards and tasks are available through the EHS website at <http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/>.

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