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1. EHS Upcoming Events

EHS Instructor-led training courses are now posted for the next quarter. From the EHS home page (<http://www.ehs.unl.edu>) or Training/Instructor-led page (<http://ehs.unl.edu/training/>), scroll down and to the right you will see a list of Upcoming Events in date order.

2. June - National Safety Month

The goal of the National Safety Council's (NSC) National Safety Month is to raise general safety awareness. One leading cause of injury and a focus of this safety awareness month is "overexertion." Overexertion (sprains and strains, especially of the lower back) is a common cause of painful and disabling injuries. Overexertion injuries are easily avoided. Awareness is the key to prevention. Overexertion in the following areas can take only minutes and result in hours, weeks or even a lifetime of physical harm:

- Using incorrect lifting techniques.
- Trying to lift items by yourself that are too heavy/awkward to lift alone or without mechanical assistance.
- Trying to avoid an extra trip when moving materials by adding items to an already full load.
- Overextending your reach to avoid repositioning or climbing up and down a ladder.

Overexertion does not save time and it can **cost** time when it results in an injury. Ask a co-worker to assist you and you can assist them when the situation calls for it. Before carrying, lowering, lifting, pushing, pulling, and twisting, be sure you have evaluated the parameters for safe lifting/moving to ensure that you are doing the task properly.

A second focus of National Safety Month effort is Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls. The most common locations for falls are:

- Cluttered walkways - Housekeeping does matter. Keep walkways clear.
- Uneven surfaces & Ramps – Periodically check the walking/working surfaces conditions. Repair damage immediately. Wear footwear with slip-resistant soles and appropriate to the task and the surface (ground/pavement) where work is being conducted.

- Areas prone to wetness or spills – Reposition sources of wetness so walking/working surfaces are not impacted by runoff. Clean up spills immediately.
- Unstable work surfaces – Avoid working on unstable surfaces. If you must work on such a surface, exercise additional caution. NEVER stand on a chair, table or surface with wheels.
- Stairs – Use handrails. Pay close attention to where you are stepping.
- Ladders and unguarded heights –Observe safe ladder techniques and fall protection requirements.

EHS Virtual Manual, Safe Operating Procedures (SOPs) and other resources are available for additional safety tips and information on these two areas of concern.

Resources:

- General Material Handling/Safe Lifting SOP http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-gen_safe_lifting.pdf
- Slips, Trips & Falls – Reducing Risk and Avoiding Injury SOP http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-slips_trips_falls.pdf
- Ladder Safety SOP <http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-ladder.pdf>
- Portable Ladder Safety online training <http://ehs.unl.edu/onlinetraining/>
- EHS Virtual Manual <https://scsapps.unl.edu/VirtualManual/>
- National Safety Council: Overexertion https://www.nesafetycouncil.org/images/stories/NSM2011/Fact_English_P1.pdf
- National Safety Council: Slips, Trips & Falls: https://www.nesafetycouncil.org/images/stories/NSM2011/WEEK_4/facts_eng_p1.pdf

3. Working Outdoors

Heat can be a real danger for workers during the summer, especially those who work outdoors. Overexposure to the sun can damage the skin and could cause skin cancer. Heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps and heat rash are possible when workers suffer heat stress from working in the heat. Heat illness should be viewed as a serious health problem—one that can be fatal.

Heat illness is the result of the body's overheating. Normally perspiration serves as your body's "coolant system" to prevent overheating. But when working hard in the heat, particularly if it's humid, this system may not be able to keep up with and adequately dissipate the heat. The negative impact of heat stress is two-pronged. First, as workers overheat, their diminished brain function can cause them to overlook hazards and make mistakes. And then as body temperature increases, physical symptoms/death can occur.

A few simple steps can help decrease the likelihood of becoming ill when working in the heat:

- Minimize exposure to the sun/heat. A wide-brimmed hat to protect the neck, face and ears can help keep your head and face shaded/cool.
- Cover up, wearing light-colored clothing. A long-sleeved shirt will minimize sun exposure and help you stay cooler. Wear loose-fitting clothing UNLESS you are working around machinery where loose clothing could become entangled.
- Carry a source of water with you. Take drinks every 15-30 minutes even if you do not feel thirsty.
- Take frequent breaks in the shade or in a cool environment during the hottest part of the summer day, between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m.
- Adjust gradually to working in the heat over a period of 10-20 days.
- Be aware of any personal health conditions affected by the heat. Read medication labels to find out about any effects of heat and sun.
- Recognize the signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Have someone monitor you as you may not recognize your own distress. Someone suffering from heat exhaustion or heat stroke should be moved to a cool environment, offered sips of water, if conscious, and provided with attention from emergency medical personnel.

The EHS **“Heat Stress”** Safe Operating Procedure is an excellent resource for risk factors and mitigation. This SOP also provides education on the signs/symptoms of various heat-induced illnesses and proper actions to take for a specific illness.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) publishes several materials on heat stress, in addition to the “Quick Card” mentioned below. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a 56-page document **“A Guide to Heat Stress in Agriculture”** available for online review.

Resources:

- Heat Stress SOP <http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-heatstress.pdf>
- Protect Your Skin (From Skin Cancer) SOP- <http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-protectskin.pdf>
- National Safety Council: Sun & Heat Exposure https://www.nesafetycouncil.org/images/stories/NSM2011/WEEK_1/Sun_and_Heat_Exposure.pdf
- OSHA Quick Card: Protecting Workers from Heat Stress <http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-heatstress.pdf>

4. Ag Safety

This is the time of year when agricultural operations are in full swing. Farming is a dangerous occupation, ranking right behind mining for the highest number of accidents and fatalities annually. In addition to the safety concerns already raised above, there are some other specific Ag Safety items that should be reviewed periodically to maintain optimal safety awareness.

EHS has developed several safe operating procedures that address typical agricultural operations. Since agricultural operations can be quite varied from location to location, there are a number of other EHS SOPs that provide information useful in developing/reviewing agricultural safety. Do you work with any of the following either daily or periodically:

- All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)
- Grain Bins
- Tractors
- Skid Steer Loaders
- Outdoor Powered Equipment
- Hazardous Energy Sources that might require Lockout/Tagout during maintenance or repair
- Hand and Portable Power Tools
- Elevated Work Surfaces (heights of six feet or more, sloped roofs, etc.)
- Horses and/or other Animals
- Welding

This list is not meant to be comprehensive, but rather to get you thinking “Agricultural Safety.” The best method to compile all the information you need is to set up an EHS Virtual Manual. The set-up process asks a few questions and, based on your answers, compiles resources for your review.

Remember that times of particular stress to meet deadlines, such a harvest, present their own set of risks. Harvest season can be particularly threatening due to dangers posed by equipment used, exaggerated by human factors such as fatigue associated with long days, environmental conditions (e.g., rain, mud, heat, cold, etc.), and other risks. The “**Harvest Safety**” SOP specifically provides guidelines on the following: General Safety, Servicing (of equipment), Road Safety, Field Operation, Fall Prevention, Fire Prevention, and Grain Wagons.

Resources:

- EHS Ag Safety SOPs <http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/#ag>
- Hand and Portable Power Tool SOP http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-hand_portable_power_tool_safety.pdf
- Elevated Work Surfaces & Fall Protection SOP http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-fall_protection.pdf
- General Electrical Safety SOP <http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-electricalsafety.pdf>
- General Electrical Safety Awareness online training <http://ehs.unl.edu/onlinetraining/>
- EHS Virtual Manual <https://scsapps.unl.edu/VirtualManual/>
- Harvest Safety SOP http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-harvest_safety.pdf
- Foot Protection and Evaluation Checklist SOP http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-foot_protection.pdf
- Personal Hearing Protection Devices SOP http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-hearing_protection.pdf
- Insect Stings SOP http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-insect_stings.pdf

- Animal Safety SOPs <http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/index.shtml#workinganimals>
- Welding Safety SOPs <http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/#welding>
- Lockout/Tagout for Machines and Equipment online training <http://ehs.unl.edu/onlinetraining/>
- National Ag Safety Database <http://nasdonline.org/browse/1/topic.html>

5. NEW and Revised Safe Operating Procedures

- Compressed Gas Cylinders in Laboratories <http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-gascyl.pdf>
- LO/TO for Machines and Equipment: Program Overview http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-loto_program_overview.pdf
- LO/TO for Machines and Equipment: Special Circumstances http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-loto_special_circumstances.pdf
- LO/TO for Machines and Equipment: Training and Inspections http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-loto_training_&_inspections.pdf
- LO/TO for Machines and Equipment: Written Procedures http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-loto_written_procedures.pdf
- Nanoparticle Safety http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-nanoparticle_safety.pdf

Remember...SAFETY IS AN ATTITUDE!

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