

## **In this issue of the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Listserv – July 13, 2022**

1. Safe Use of Extension Cords
  2. Safety Shorts – Extension Cord Tips
  3. ATV & UTV Safety
  4. Situational Preparedness – Summer Driving Tips
  5. GHS Awareness Quiz
  6. Get To Know EHS Staff
  7. Revised Safe Operating Procedure
  8. Satisfaction Survey
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### **1. Safe Use of Extension Cords**

Extension cords are flexible, insulated electrical wires with a plug(s) at either end. They are designed for temporary use. Extension cords are found in many workplaces, including office and retail locations. Workers often are not familiar with how to safely use extension cords. Misuse can lead to fire or worker injuries such as electrical shock. Observe the following for safe use.

#### **Do:**

- Inspect the extension cord and plug for physical damage before use.
- Check that the cord matches the wattage rating on the appliance or tool you're using.
- Make sure all cords have been approved by an independent testing laboratory such as UL.
- Fully insert the extension cord into the outlet.
- Keep cords away from water.
- Use ground-fault circuit interrupter protection when using extension cords in wet or damp environments.
- Unplug extension cords when not in use.

#### **Don't:**

- Use an indoor extension cord outdoors.
- Overload cords with more than the proper electrical load.
- Run extension cords through doorways, holes in ceilings, walls or floors.
- Daisy chain, or connect, multiple extension cords together.
- Move, bend or modify any of the extension cord plug's metal parts.
- Force a plug into an outlet.
- Drive over an extension cord.
- Attach extension cords to the wall with nails or staples.

One final note: Extension cords on floors are a common trip hazard, resulting in fractures, lacerations, contusions, or sprains caused by people tripping over the cords. Keep extension cords out of high traffic areas like doorways or walkways where they pose a tripping hazard.

## Resources

- *Safe use of extension cords.* (2022, June 29). 2022-06-26 | Safety+Health. Retrieved July 7, 2022, from [https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/22692-safe-use-of-extension-cords?utm\\_source=officetips-topic&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=topic](https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/22692-safe-use-of-extension-cords?utm_source=officetips-topic&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=topic)
- Insurance, K. (2017, March 27). *Extensions Cords Could Spell Disaster if Not Used Properly.* Kuhl Insurance. Retrieved July 7, 2022, from <https://kuhlinsurance.com/extensions-cords-spell-disaster-not-used-properly/>

## 2. Safety Shorts: Extension Cord Tips

The following videos provide further tips on using extension cords.

- Extension Cord Safety (Electrical Safety Foundation International, Duration 1:16 minutes)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dq5YrBAew48&t=11s>
- Extension Cord Safety Virtual Demonstration (Electrical Safety Foundations International, Duration 2:13 minutes)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VmWlka-SG1o&t=28s>

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.

## 3. ATV & UTV Safety

All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV) and Utility Terrain Vehicles (UTV) are commonly used in outdoor operations. The differences and advantages for each style vary and the machine used should be chosen based on expected use. Operators should be familiar with the manufacturer's operational and maintenance procedures.

ATVs should not be used on pavement as they may be more difficult to control. If an ATV is to be transported to a job site, it must be properly loaded and unloaded using ramps if necessary and restrained over the axles. It is important

that the operator be familiar with the area where the ATV will be operated. If not, they should assess the area, as much as possible. The operator should also evaluate weather conditions, road, soil and possibly water conditions before accessing the area on an ATV. In areas where ATVs are routinely operated, terrain hazards such as culverts, fence lines, large rocks, poles and wash outs should be well marked.

It is important for the operator to be appropriately dressed including wearing a helmet, long-sleeve shirt and over the ankle boots. No passengers should ever be carried on single-rider ATV.

In case of a mechanical breakdown or other emergency, a means for communication that will effectively work in the area should be available to the rider. Cell phones or radios may be appropriate. A first aid kit and a few tools may also be a good idea to have readily available.

More information on precautions when using an ATV or UTV, selecting the appropriate equipment, selecting personal protective equipment and much more may be found in the UNL SOP, **All Terrain Vehicles (ATV)**. The ATV Safety Institute, [ATVsafety.org](https://atvsafety.org), offers free online training courses and additional safety tips. The Nebraska Safety Council located in Lincoln offers on-site training upon request (402.483.2511, extension 115).

## Resources

- EHS SOP **All Terrain Vehicles (ATV)** [https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-atv\\_2.pdf](https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-atv_2.pdf)
- EHS SOPs **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – General** <https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/personal-protective-equipment-ppe-general>
- ATV Safety Institute <https://atvsafety.org/>

## 4. Situational Preparedness – Summer Driving Tips

Situational preparedness is so important that we will be looking at various aspects over time, as well as providing resources to assist you to “be prepared” for whatever situations you may encounter while driving, bicycling or walking.

Following are some tips for safe summer driving:

- Drive the speed limit.
- Inspect your tires. Heat causes tires to expand. Too much pressure can cause your tires to blow out. Check tire tread. Too little tread can cause loss of traction, in particular during wet conditions.
- Check fluid levels, batteries, lights and wiper blades to ensure continued safe operation.
- Stay alert. Focus on your driving instead of your upcoming plans. Watch for pedestrians, children or pets in or preparing to enter the roadway.

- Wear sunglasses to help you avoid the sun's glare which may cause accidents as glare impairs visibility.
- Never drink and drive. Drunk driving is especially a problem during the summer, in particular around holidays and weekends.
- Look out for dangerous potholes that developed over the winter.
- Watch for construction projects which often increase over the summer months. Be careful to obey all signs and watch for workers on the road.
- Watch for motorcycles, bicycles, scooters, skateboards, use of which typically increases in the summer months. Give them plenty of space.
- Remember that motorcycles and bicycles have the same rights and responsibilities as motorists but can be more difficult to see. When driving next to a motorcycle envision the body of a vehicle around it to help maintain a safe traveling distance.

## Resources

- AAA Staff. (2021, June 9). *Stay Safe With Summer Driving Tips from AAA*. Your AAA Today. Retrieved July 7, 2022, from <https://magazine.northeast.aaa.com/daily/life/cars-trucks/summer-driving-safety-tips-aaa/>
- Myers, B. (2021, March 24). *19 Tips for Summer Driving Safety — Summer Defensive Driving Tips*. DefensiveDriving.Org. Retrieved July 7, 2022, from <https://www.defensivedriving.org/dmv-handbook/summer-driving-safety-tips/>
- *Summer Driving Tips*. NHTSA. Retrieved July 7, 2022, from <https://www.nhtsa.gov/summer-driving-tips>
- *Top 7 Summer Driving Tips*. American Safety Council. Retrieved July 7, 2022, from <https://blog.americansafetycouncil.com/top-7-summer-driving-tips-2/>

## 5. GHS Awareness Quiz

The United States adopted the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) in March 2012. The GHS is a set of guidelines for ensuring the safe production, transport, handling, use and disposal of hazardous materials. This system of classification refers to safety information sheets as Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) and standardizes the content and formatting information into 16 sections with a strict ordering.

The GHS is meant to be a logical and comprehensive approach to:

- Defining health, physical and environmental hazards of chemicals (although environmental hazards are outside OSHA's jurisdiction)
- Creating classification processes that use available data on chemicals for comparison with the defined hazard criteria

- Communicating hazard information in a prescribed and uniform way on labels and safety data sheets

All those who work with or around chemicals should take the EHS Chemical Safety Training applicable to their job tasks. There are several options for online training to fulfill the requirement:

- Chemical Safety Training (4 units) for laboratory workers
- Custodial Services: Chemical and General Safety
- Facility and Grounds Maintenance Operations: Chemical and General Safety
- Housing Custodial Operations: Chemical and General Safety
- Housing Dining Services: Chemical, General and Equipment Safety
- Visual and Performing Arts: Chemical and General Safety

After taking the required chemical safety training, take a GHS quiz to see if you can match the pictogram to the hazard:

<https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/9561-match-the-pictogram-to-the-hazard?page=3>

## Resources

- *GHS quiz: Match the pictogram to the hazard.* (2022, May 13). Safety+Health. <https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/9561-match-the-pictogram-to-the-hazard?page=3>
- *10 GHS Facts in 60 Seconds.* (2021, July 27). VelocityEHS. Retrieved July 7, 2022, from <https://www.ehs.com/resources/ghs-answer-center/10-ghs-facts-in-60-seconds/>

## 6. Get To Know EHS Staff

We would like to introduce you to some EHS staff you may not have had the chance to meet:

Hi, I'm **Rachael Warhurst**. I am the Assistant Biosafety Officer (ABSO), a Select Agent Alternate Responsible Official, and a Senior Safety Specialist for EHS. As the ABSO, I am tasked with ensuring safe research and use of biological materials at UNL through various institutional biosafety programs and functions. As a Senior Safety Specialist, I am a liaison between EHS and several buildings, departments, and safety committees on campus. I currently hold a Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Sciences, a Master of Health Administration, a graduate certificate in Bioinformatics, and am currently working on a Master of Biotechnology. I am certified in Medical Laboratory Sciences and Lean Six Sigma and am working on achieving biosafety certifications.

I'm **Aaron Araiza**, an EHS Safety Technician. I hold a bachelor's degree in Emergency Management from UNO. I am from California and enjoy playing basketball, bowling, and spending time with family. I manage the Hearing Conservation Program, the Respiratory Protection Program, and injury incident reports for the University.

Hello, my name is **Dalton Ringland**, an EHS Technician. I earned a Bachelor of Science in Health and Fitness Studies from Nebraska Wesleyan University. Duties typically conducted include Hazardous and Universal Waste pickups on all three campuses in Lincoln. I also conduct Safety and Compliance Surveys of selected spaces, mainly laboratories.

## 7. Revised Safe Operating Procedure

- **Disposing of Biohazardous Materials, Including Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acids** <https://ehs.unl.edu/s-bio-dispose.pdf>  
Revised to clarify vacuum trap system requirements and that the use of HEPA filters in addition to disinfectant traps only applies to BSL-2 or higher labs. Added requirement for lids/covers on biowaste collection containers so they can be closed when not actively being filled. Updated guidance on disposing of serological and other pipettes.

## 8. Satisfaction Survey

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. Would you please take a few moments to complete the survey (<http://ehs.unl.edu/survey>)? This will help EHS to identify areas where we might need to focus our attention.

In order to effectively evaluate potential areas for improvement, please provide specific information or examples and your name and contact information. The Director, Brenda Osthus, follows up on all submissions. We greatly appreciate your participation.

Please feel free to contact Brenda Osthus, 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.

**THINK SAFETY – DON'T LEARN BY ACCIDENT!**

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