

In this issue of the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Listserv – September 7, 2022

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1. Situational Preparedness – Complacency Kills

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.

Often, we blame complacency on lack of familiarity with risks of a task but more often complacency is due to the fact that after a while with no consequences humans tend to no longer pay attention to risks. Do you arrive at work with almost no recollection of your drive?

In the United States, studies reported by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reveal that approximately 52 percent of all car accidents occur within a five-mile radius of home, and 69 percent of all collisions happen within a 10-mile radius from home. Yet most of us typically drive the same route with complacency instead of the focus we give to driving on unfamiliar routes.

To add to the complications of complacency, when a task becomes routine or can be completed by rote muscle memory, distractions are often a welcome escape from the monotony. This “boredom” leads to the temptation to check your text messages or email while driving. Justification may be “it just takes a second” or “the road is straight and there aren’t any intersections.”

Before you realize it, 5 seconds at 35 mph have passed and you have traveled 225 ft or more (3/5 of a football field), without seeing what might be in front of your car. The risks are there whether we are watching or not: wildlife/pets, pedestrians, obstacles and debris in the road, and the possibility of drifting out of your lane. Being complacent and not focusing on the task at hand allows complacency to become a killer.

Set yourself the goal of never being complacent while driving, no matter how many times you have driven the route, to work or wherever you regularly drive. Don't become a statistic!

Resources

- McClain, C. (n.d.). *Killing Complacency*. Assp.Org. Retrieved July 29, 2022, from https://www.assp.org/docs/default-source/psj-articles/cpmcclain_0722.pdf?sfvrsn=dd6d9447_0
- The Measure of Things
<https://www.themeasureofthings.com/results.php?comp=height&unit=ft&amt=225&sort=pr&p=1>
- Alternate citation if online one doesn't work: McClain, C. (2022, July). *Killing complacency*. *Professional Safety*, 67(7), 29-30

2. Why You Need a Chemical Inventory

Has your lab/facility/department ever considered having a chemical inventory? Do you have a mechanism to tell at a glance what chemicals are on hand, where they are located, and in what quantity? There are many reasons to maintain not just a chemical list but a chemical inventory. Here are a few:

- **Save money.** Availability of an up-to-date inventory reduces the purchase of chemicals already on hand in sufficient quantity. Inventories can facilitate sharing of chemicals with others in your lab/area and save others the hassle and expense of ordering new. Disposal of unused chemicals can be extremely expensive for the University, sometimes approaching or exceeding 10 times or more of the original purchase cost!
- **Save time.** When planning an experiment, an inventory can easily be checked to see if all the needed chemicals are already on hand. If storage locations are included the inventory, workers can readily locate their supplies. Additionally, an accurate electronic inventory can be a resource when completing the Materials & Methods section of documents such as grant proposals or publications.
- **Emergency response.** A chemical inventory is one of the first things requested by emergency responders when they are called to a chemical use location for assistance.
- **Hazard communication.** Accurate information on chemicals used/stored is essential for laboratory workers. The inventory can be used as a resource to facilitate worker access/review of Safety Data Sheets (SDS) prior to beginning work with new chemicals and review of chemicals used by others in the same workspace.

- **Quality research.** Many chemicals have a shelf life, for example, water and air reactive chemicals, hygroscopic chemicals and peroxide-forming compounds. -An inventory can be used to track when it is time to dispose of old chemicals.
- **Safer workplace.** Inventories simplify an annual check of resources toward the goal of disposing chemicals no longer needed. Additionally, chemical compatibility and proper storage conditions can be reviewed more easily by sorting your inventory by storage location.
- **Simplify clean-outs post project.** For a large quantity chemical clean out, you can easily copy the portions of your inventory no longer needed and send that information to EHS to arrange a laboratory clean out.

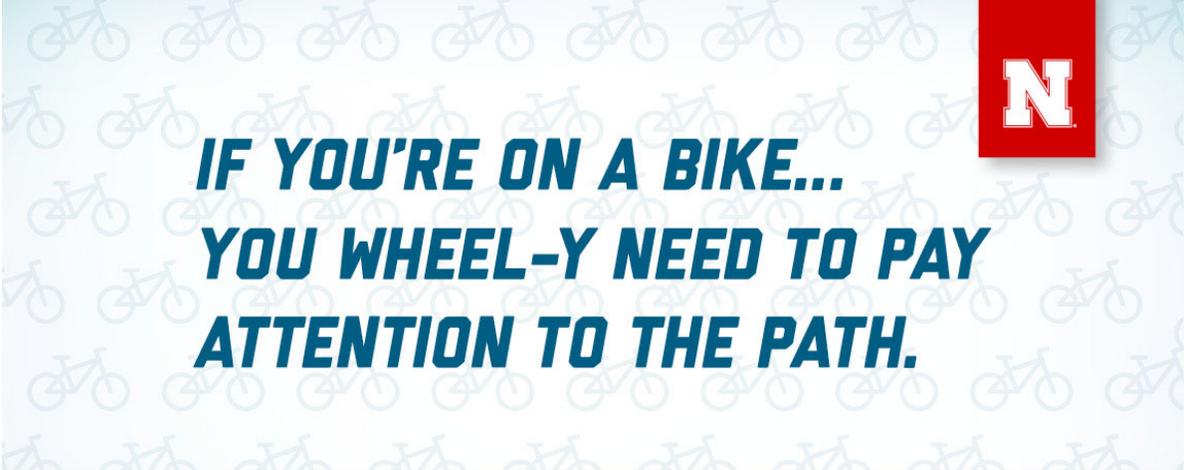
Many find excel a useful tool for aggregating Chemical Inventory information. Additional tips on preparing Chemical Inventories may be found in the Princeton University article referenced.

Resources

- Howell, S. (n.d.). *Chemical Inventory Management*. EHS Princeton University. Retrieved August 19, 2022, from https://ehs.princeton.edu/laboratory-research/chemical-safety/chemical_inventory_management
- EHS **Chemical Safety** Safe Operating Procedures <https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/chemical-safety>

3. Heads Up! – Plan Ahead

Some time ago the Chancellor's University Safety Committee in collaboration with University Communications developed a Heads Up! campaign to promote safe practices for walking around campus, while driving a vehicle or riding a bicycle or motorcycle, as well as while using a scooter or skateboard. Here are a few recommendations:



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***IF YOU'RE ON A BIKE...
YOU WHEEL-Y NEED TO PAY
ATTENTION TO THE PATH.***

 HEADS UP!, HUSKERS.



N

***NOT YOU TEXTING
WHILE WALKING...***

 HEADS UP!, HUSKERS.



N

***WHEN YOU'RE ON WHEELS,
GET OFF IG REELS.***



HEADS UP!, HUSKERS.



N

***GET OFF YOUR
PHONE & GET
THERE SAFE.***



**HEADS
UP!, HUSKERS.**

Plan ahead before starting your work tasks so you don't learn by accident! Here are a few tips you can download to print out an post or get from EHS in a format for digital display:

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BEFORE
STEPPING INTO
THE LAB
PLAN AHEAD ⚠️



N

YOUR WORK
MISTAKE COULD
BECOME A REAL
HEADACHE
PLAN AHEAD ⚠️



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AVOID MISTAKES
THAT TURN
INTO ACHES
PLAN AHEAD 



The graphics for these two campaigns are changed out on the EHS website every two months. You can print out any image directly from the EHS webpage noted. Contact EHS for files in a format suitable for digital displays either by emailing ehs@unl.edu or calling 402.472.4925.

Resources

- Heads Up! Graphics <https://ehs.unl.edu/heads-up-graphics>
- Plan Ahead Graphics <https://ehs.unl.edu/plan-ahead>

4. National Farm Safety and Health Week

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), in 2019 agriculture was the most dangerous sector in America, with 573 fatalities for an annual death rate of 23.4 deaths per 100,000 workers. The National Safety Council has designed the third week of September as National Farm Safety and Health Week in partnership with the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS), the agricultural partner of the National Safety Council.

This year the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS) is promoting September 18-24, 2022, as the dates for this annual observance, in place since 1944. The purpose of the NECAS in general, and the week in particular, is to call attention to the hazards and risks of farm work and promote safe practices to mitigate those hazards. Agricultural field research is subject to most of the same hazards found in family farm operations.

The theme for 2022 is “Protecting Agriculture’s Future.” Daily Topics focus on a particular hazard area:

- Monday –Tractor Safety & Rural Roadway Safety
- Tuesday –Overall Farmer Health
- Wednesday – Safety & Health for Youth in Agriculture
- Thursday – Confined Spaces
- Friday – Safety & Health for Women in Agriculture

The National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS) provides resources supporting each day’s theme, in addition to the vast resources always available online through their website. The AgriSafe Network, another group focused on farm safety, is participating by providing daily webinars. Review the webinar topics online and register for free to attend:

<https://www.necasag.org/nationalfarmsafetyandhealthweek/>. Webinars will be held at noon and 2 p.m. Central Time.

U.S. Agricultural Safety and Health Centers, funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), has produced safety and health videos related to agriculture and other outdoor activities. Popular topics are grain bins, heat illness, tractor rollovers, livestock safety and needlestick injuries. These videos are available through the U.S. Agricultural Safety and Health Centers YouTube channel.

Additional resources are provided by the Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center (UMASH), a multidisciplinary collaboration of five leading research and health care institutions that work to address existing and emerging occupational health and safety issues in agriculture. A few of the resources are forms and checklists, links to other farm safety organizations and a hazard evaluation mitigation tool.

EHS provides resources on a variety of topics relating to safety while conducting agricultural/outdoor operations under the Safe Operating Procedure (SOP) heading **Ag Safety**. Topics include:

- Nebraska Guide G1770 Cleaning Pesticide Application Equipment
- All-Terrain Vehicles
- Animal Feeding Operations
- Grain Bin Safety
- Harvest Safety
- Outdoor Power Equipment Safety
- Sharps Use and Handling with Livestock
- Skid Steer Loaders
- Tractor Safety.
- And more...

Other SOPs relevant to agricultural/outdoor operations are found online in the SOP categories **Heat Stress**, **Landscape**, **Shops**, and **General/Other**.

Resources

- EHS **Ag Safety** Safe Operating Procedures
<https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/ag-safety>
- AgriSafe Network <https://www.agrisafe.org/>
- UMASH National Farm Safety and Health Week
<http://umash.umn.edu/national-farm-safety-and-health-week/>
- NECAS *National Farm Safety and Health Week 2021*
<https://www.necasag.org/nationalfarmsafetyandhealthweek/>
- U.S. Agricultural Safety and Health Centers videos
<https://www.youtube.com/user/USagCenters>

- **The National Education Center for Agricultural Safety** video series (<https://www.necasag.org/safetytraining/videosandwebinars/>) provides safety information on a variety of topics such as:
 - Chainsaw Safety
 - Fatigue Safety
 - PTO Safety
 - Farm Electrical Safety
 - Auger Safety
 - Rural Road Safety
 - Sun Safety
 - Unloading and Loading Trailer Safety...and more.

5. Revised Safe Operating Procedure

- **Pre-Planning & Responding to Chemical Spills**
https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-preplan_respond_spills.pdf
Information updated on contact(s) for large spills.

THINK SAFETY – DON'T LEARN BY ACCIDENT!

Environmental Health and Safety

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