

In this issue of the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Listserv – November 16, 2022

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1. NEW SOP: Body Fluid Spill Clean- Up (Non-BBP)

This new Safe Operating Procedure provides guidance for the campus community on how to manage spills of body fluids that are not subject to the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens (BBP) Standard and do not require specialized training to clean up.

This SOP includes proper procedures for clean-up, decontamination, and disposal of non-BBP body fluid spill materials.

Resources

- EHS SOP **Body Fluid Clean-Up (Non-BBP)** https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-bio-body_fluid_spill_clean-up_non-bbp.pdf

2. Reducing Pollution in Stormwater Runoff

Fall is the time of year when excess leaves and landscaping debris may be more likely to enter storm sewer inlets and degrade local lake and stream water quality. Therefore, it is important to take time to clean up fallen leaves and other landscaping debris before it enters the storm sewer system. Other actions you can take to protect receiving waters include:

- Remove grass clippings and leaves from paved surfaces to prevent from entering the storm sewer.
- Fertilize only when necessary and at the correct concentration. Sweep and remove fertilizer from paved surfaces and curbs.
- Clean up after your pets and dispose of pet waste in the trash.
- Prevent litter and trash from blowing out of your trash receptacle by tying down, bagging, or closing the trash receptacle.
- Prevent sediment from entering the storm sewer by planning ahead and using sediment or erosion controls such as erosion matting and wattles for example.

- Avoid having wash water used in cleaning buildings, tools, equipment, or vehicles enter the storm sewer.

If you notice a stormwater concern on City or East Campus, you can report it online at the Stormwater Pollution Reporting Form. This form is available online for your convenience: <https://ehs.unl.edu/stormwater-pollution-reporting-form>

3. Meet EHS Staff

We would like to introduce you to an EHS staff member you may not have had a chance to meet:

Hello, my name is **Lexus Wellman** and I joined EHS as a technician. I have a B.S. in Environmental Studies and a B.S. in Fisheries & Wildlife, with focuses in water science and fisheries ecology. As a technician, I conduct Safety and Compliance Surveys of laboratory spaces as well as collect Hazardous and Universal Waste. I also work seasonally at Campbell's Nursery designing custom container gardens for commercial and residential spaces.

4. Find Out What EHS Training You Have Taken

Everyone can access their own training record for EHS courses they have taken and then print out that record for their own benefit or to send to a supervisor. Log into <https://ehs.unl.edu/web-based-training> as if to take EHS online training. Above your name is a blue Training Records clickable link. When you click that blue button, you can see your training history. To the right of the pop-up is a selection for "options" which will allow you to download your EHS Training History in either PDF or excel format. Here is an image with Training Records button for future reference:

Trainee Information

[Training Records](#)

First Name
Elizabeth (Betsy)

Last Name
Howe

I am, Elizabeth (Betsy) Howe

The radio button shows your name for information only if your name is already in the EHS system. New workers will be prompted to provide additional information to be registered. NEXT find the course and click 'Start'

[UNL Training](#)

<https://ehs-assist.unl.edu/EHSA/login?showwebtraining=yes>

5. Tips to Avoid Winter Injury Incidents

Tips to avoid injury incidents when walking and working or otherwise being outdoors in snowy/icy/cold conditions are the focus of this article. Let's begin by reviewing suggestions for "walking." Walking around campus or from your vehicle/bus to your workplace during the winter can be hazardous. Every winter, slip/trip/fall injuries at UNL attributed to snow and ice account for approximately 3% of the overall number of injuries in a given year. That may not sound like much...until YOU are one of the injured.

Winter Walking. Just like winter driving, winter walking requires anticipation. Think "defensive walking." Follow these guidelines to help avoid injury:

- Use **appropriate footwear** for the surface/conditions. Avoid slick-soled shoes. Wear boots/shoes/overshoes with grip soles such as rubber or neoprene composite.
- Plan ahead to give yourself **sufficient time** to reach your destination.
- Plan your route and **watch where you walk**. Avoid routes that have not been cleared or appear glazed over.
- **Avoid carrying** large/heavy/awkward-shaped objects that can obstruct your view or affect your balance or center of gravity. Consider a backpack instead or use of a cart.
- Use special care in **parking lots**. Try to park in areas free of ice. When entering/exiting your vehicle, use your vehicle for support.
- Think about the **walking surfaces** whenever you move about campus, especially following sunny days. Some areas previously cleared may have partially thawed and refrozen, especially near the edges, leaving a glaze of ice.
- Use caution when **entering a building** as any snow left on your footwear will thaw with the building heat. Notice if the floor is wet from previous entrants. Avoid such indoor wet areas and if they cannot be avoided, traverse them the same as you would walk on ice. Contact Custodial Services to inquire about equipping areas prone to track-in with walk-off mats.
- **Pay complete attention** to your walking. Don't talk on the phone or text, search for items in your purse/briefcase, get distracted by greetings/conversation, think ahead to events of the upcoming day, etc.
- Always use "**defensive walking**" techniques. Watch for hazards like black ice.

If you must walk on slippery surfaces:

- Take short steps or shuffle your feet. Walk slowly so you can react quickly to a change in traction.
- Bend slightly as you walk to keep your center of gravity over your feet. Curl your toes under and walk as "flat-footed" as possible.

- Test potentially slick areas by tapping your foot on them before proceeding.
- Avoid uneven areas and stepping up/down onto icy areas such as from curbs.
- Keep your hands out of your pockets. Use your arms for balance. Imagine you are going to “walk like a penguin.”

Resources Specific to Winter Walking:

- Safe Winter Walking (EMC Insurance Companies, 2:09 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UzuwagOimck>
- UNL Emergency Preparedness “Really Obvious: On Ice”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Gv6QNZytF8>
- Walk Like a Penguin (AHSChannel, duration 1:37)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHaWGibGwyk>

Winter Outdoor Safety. Next, let’s look at safety outdoors in the elements. There are a number of hazards associated with working outside in cold weather. Be aware of potential hazards, their warning signs, and how to avoid the hazard so you can safely navigate this winter season.

- **Hypothermia.** In cold weather, your body may lose heat faster than it is produced. Prolonged exposure will eventually use up all your body’s stored energy, resulting in an abnormally low body temperature. If low body temperature affects your brain, you may not be able to think clearly or realize you are in trouble. Warning signs include shivering, fatigue, and loss of coordination.
- **Frostbite.** Frostbite is an injury caused by freezing, characterized by reduced blood flow, leading to lack of feeling and color in the affected body parts. Most often the body parts affected are nose, fingers, toes, ears, cheeks, or chin. Warning signs include numbness, aching, tingling or stinging, bluish or pale skin, and skin that feels unusually firm or waxy.
- **Chilblains.** Repeatedly exposing skin to cold temperatures can cause permanent damage to groups of small blood vessels in the skin, characterized by redness and itching that return with subsequent exposures. Body parts most often affected are cheeks, ears, fingers, and toes. Warning signs include redness, itching, blistering/ulcers, and inflammation.

Prevention is always the best policy to avoid cold stress or injury. Here are some precautions workers should take if they must work in extreme cold:

- **Wear appropriate clothing.** Clothing layered and not too tight, provides insulation yet allows good blood circulation. Wear footwear designed for cold, wet conditions.

- **Cover your head** to reduce body heat loss. Protect ears, face, hands, and feet.
- **Try to schedule work** for the warmest/driest/least windy part of the day. Take regular breaks in a warm, dry, and protected area. Limit the total amount of time outside during extremely cold weather.
- **Do not touch** cold metal surfaces with bare skin.
- **Stay hydrated** by drinking plenty of fluids, especially warm fluids. Avoid drinks with sugar and/or caffeine.
- **Avoid exhaustion or fatigue** because energy is necessary to keep muscles warm.
- **Be aware that certain medications you are taking might make you more susceptible** to cold stress. Certain medical conditions also increase your risk: diabetes, high blood pressure, or cardiovascular disease.
- **Monitor your physical condition** and that of your co-workers. You may not be aware of warning signs that a co-worker would be able to observe.

A National Weather Service Wind Chill Chart will help you evaluate temperature/wind combinations to enable you to work more safely outdoors when the weather is cold.

Other wintertime hazards, often related to snow cleanup, but also applicable in other outdoor work situations are:

- Lacerations or amputations from improperly attempting to clear jams in snow removal equipment. Make certain all powered equipment is properly guarded, isolated from power sources, and all parts have stopped moving before performing maintenance or attempting to clear a jam.
- Strains and sprains from the prolonged or improper use of shovels or other snow removal equipment. Keep in mind body movement and positioning. Avoid overexertion.

Resources Specific to Winter Outdoor Safety:

- EHS Safe Operating Procedure **Cold Stress** https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-cold_stress.pdf
- National Weather Service (NWS) Wind Chill Chart <https://www.weather.gov/safety/cold-wind-chill-chart>
- OSHA. “Cold Stress Quick Card: Protecting Workers from Cold Stress” <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3156.pdf>
- OSHA “Winter Weather: Plan. Equip. Train.” https://www.osha.gov/dts/weather/winter_weather/hazards_precautions.html
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). “Cold Stress.” <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/coldstress/>

- Iowa State University Environmental Health and Safety “Winter Driving”
<https://www-ehs.sws.iastate.edu/publications/handouts/WinterDriving.pdf>

6. Get Your Safe Winter Walking Display NOW

EHS has developed a number of safety posters of relevance to the campus community. Three posters are available to serve as handy reminders about different aspects of winter surface navigation: entering and exiting buildings, getting into and out of vehicles, walking around campus including navigation of steps. It is recommended that you post all three.



Ask for your FREE posters today. Contact ehs@unl.edu or 402.472.4925 with your name, campus mailing address including Zip Plus4, and quantity desired. These are also available in format suitable for digital display through the UNL Content Library or upon request to EHS.

Resources

- Safety Posters <https://ehs.unl.edu/safety-posters>

7. Revised Safe Operating Procedure

- **Hazardous/Radioactive Material Collection Procedures**
https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-chem_collection_procedures.pdf
Information updated primarily on the 'tag system,' such as how to order Hazardous Materials Collection Tags, tagging small containers such as vials, information on laboratory cleanout, how to tag items in lab, and tag submission guidelines.

THINK SAFETY – DON'T LEARN BY ACCIDENT!

Environmental Health and Safety

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