

## **In this issue of the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Listserv – March 8, 2023**

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### **1. Attend the CUSC Open Forum – Set up a Safety Committee**

The Chancellor's University Safety Committee (CUSC) is a UNL committee established to assist the Chancellor by making recommendations of methods to reduce safety hazards at UNL. The CUSC charter, as well as links to the list of members, upcoming agenda, meeting dates/locations, previous meeting minutes, current year's goal and more, are available online.

Twice a year the CUSC holds an Open Forum meeting to which the campus community is invited. The spring **Open Forum** meeting will be held in the Environmental Health and Safety Training room on East Campus and by Zoom. The meeting is from 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 21, 2023. The campus community is invited to share concerns or just observe the workings of the CUSC. To attend, contact [ehs@unl.edu](mailto:ehs@unl.edu) for the Zoom meeting ID and password.

While the CUSC is a university-level organization, there are a number of department-level safety committees across campus. If your department does not have a safety committee but you would like to explore possibilities, contact [ehowe2@unl.edu](mailto:ehowe2@unl.edu) for assistance.

#### **Resources**

- Chancellor's University Safety Committee  
<http://ehs.unl.edu/chancellors-university-safety-committee-cusc#cusc>

### **2. Situational Preparedness – Aggressive Driving**

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 at UNL. One situation to be aware of is aggressive driving.

Aggressive Driving can be defined as speeding, frequently changing lanes, failure to signal, failure to yield, slowing rapidly, racing, cutting off other drivers, running red lights, tailgating, or boxing in other cars. Following are potential aggressive driving situations and resolutions:

- **Practice polite driving habits.** Avoid tailgating, cutting off other vehicles, speeding, weaving, leaving high beam headlights on, and erratic braking. Don't drive in the left lane slower than the rest of traffic. Merge politely, and always err on the side of being courteous. This is smart to do, not just to avoid road rage, but to make driving easier and more pleasant for every motorist.
- **Slow down.** Simply let aggressive drivers go around you and typically, they will quickly be on their way.
- **Get away from aggressive drivers.** If you notice a driver with aggressive behavior slow down and let that driver move ahead of you or change lanes so you're not right next to each other.
- **Don't make gestures or yell at other drivers.** Remember, you are not the police, and it's not your job to remind others how to drive, even if they're doing a terrible job. Avoid making eye contact with an aggressive driver who is trying to pick a fight.
- **Use your horn sparingly.** Horns should primarily be used in emergency situations. Tap your horn lightly if you need to get a driver's attention and give drivers ahead of you at lights a few seconds of grace before honking to remind them to move through the intersection.
- **Do not make driving a competitive sport.** You are not a race car driver – you don't need to win on the road. In fact, winning as a regular driver is simply getting home safely. Getting worked up over a vehicle that has cut you off or gotten in your way somehow is not worth it. Remember: getting home safely is more important than teaching another driver a lesson.
- **Apologize if you've done something wrong.** If you accidentally cut off another driver, braked too fast, or made some other mistake that could be offensive, simply smile and wave as an apology. This will disarm and calm most drivers.
- **Don't drive when distressed.** Avoid driving if you are angry, upset, or drowsy.

- **Adjust your driving attitude.** Give others the benefit of the doubt. Many mistakes are unintentional and not meant as a personal offense.
- **Have reasonable expectations about your travel time.** Know when there is likely to be more drivers on the road to give yourself plenty of time and not set unreasonable expectations for how fast you will get to your destination.
- **Call 911 if you are under attack.** If an aggressive driver attacks you, call 911 right away and stay on the phone with the dispatcher. Consider driving to the nearest police station, convenience store, or other public location with witnesses. Do not drive home.

~information courtesy of Nebraska Safety Council, Lincoln NE

### 3. Focus on Ladder Safety

The American Ladder Institute (ALI) sponsors National Ladder Safety Month every March. ALI is the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) approved developer of safety standards for the ladder industry. Standards are technical specifications that prescribe rules governing the safe construction, design, testing, care, and use of various types of ladders.

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) annually in the U.S. 500,000 people are treated, thousands suffer disabling injuries, and more than 300 people die from ladder-related injuries. Most ladder deaths are due to falls from 10 feet or less. Ladder fall injuries, a persistent hazard in the workplace and at home, are due to five major causes:

- Incorrect extension ladder setup angle. Approximately 40% of incidents result from a ladder sliding out at the base due to incorrect angle setup or unstable surface. The optimal angle is 75 degrees from the horizontal.
- Inappropriate ladder selection. Select a ladder with the proper duty-rating to avoid structural failure. The ladder should be the appropriate type and be made of the appropriate material for the task.
- Insufficient ladder inspection. Ladder integrity should be evaluated prior to each use.
- Improper ladder use. Overreaching, carrying objects, applying excessive force, slips, and missteps. Maintain awareness of position on the

ladder/step stool when nearing the ground to avoid stepping off before being at ground level, a frequent causes of fall injuries.

- Lack of access to ladder safety tools and information. Take training on safe use of portable ladders.

Training/information to decrease the likelihood of injury from all the items noted above is available through the EHS web-based training portal or through the American Ladder Institute. To assist workers using ladders, NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) has developed a free mobile application designed to improve extension and step ladder safety.

Finally, here a few general tips:

- Stay off a ladder if feeling tired or dizzy.
- Don't use ladders during storms or high winds.
- Wear slip-resistant shoes to climb a ladder.

If you use a ladder or a step stool, review the resources provided to ensure that you do not become a "statistic."

## Resources

- *Falls in the Workplace: Ladder Safety Mobile App* | NIOSH | CDC. (n.d.). <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/falls/mobileapp.html>
- *Ladder safety: The basics*. (2021, February 26). 2021-02-21 | Safety+Health. [https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/20871-ladder-safety-the-basics?utm\\_source=march1st](https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/20871-ladder-safety-the-basics?utm_source=march1st)
- American Ladder Safety Institute <http://www.americanladderinstitute.org/>
- National Ladder Safety Month <https://www.laddersafetymonth.com/>
- EHS **Ladder Safety** SOP <https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-ladder.pdf>
- EHS **Portable Ladder Safety** Web-Based Training <https://ehs.unl.edu/web-based-training#PortableLadder>
- Ladder & Step Stool Safety for Everyone (October 2018 colloquium) <https://ehs.unl.edu/training/Colloquium>

## 4. Safety Shorts – Ladder & Step Stool Safety

Both ladders and step stools are widely used at UNL. The following videos provide information on how to use ladders and step stools safely:

- **Werner Ladder - Climbing Pro Ladder Safety Training** (Werner Ladder Company, 20.22 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3TVRMfnUWhI>

- **Ladder and Step Stool Safety** (Keenan solutions, 3.05 minutes)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XYNkLA3qhyY>

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.

## 5. Wear Eye Protection

March is recognized in the United States as Workplace Eye Wellness Month. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) reports that every day about 2,000 U.S. workers sustain job-related eye injuries that require medical attention. Safety experts and eye doctors estimate that the correct eye protection can lessen the severity or prevent 90% of eye injuries. The two major reasons for eye injuries are not wearing eye protection and wearing the wrong type of eye protection for the job. Bureau of Labor Statistics surveys disclose that nearly three out of five workers were not wearing eye protection at the time of their injury incident.

The type of safety eye protection you should wear depends on the hazards in your workplace:

- If you are working in an area that has particles, flying objects or dust, you must at least wear safety glasses with side protection (side shields).
- If you are working with chemicals and there is a splash hazard, you must wear goggles.
- If you are working near hazardous radiation (welding, lasers, or fiber optics) you must use special-purpose safety glasses, goggles, face shields or helmets designed for that task.

Learn more about your eyes by taking the Prevent Blindness Workplace Safety Quiz ([http://preventblindness.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/MK32\\_WorkSafetyQuiz\\_1.pdf](http://preventblindness.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/MK32_WorkSafetyQuiz_1.pdf)). This quiz answers many questions and clarifies some misconceptions.

Note that many home activities require eye protection. Serious eye injury can occur while doing household tasks such as yard work, using chemicals, and use of power tools. 56% of all eye injuries occur at home but 78% of people report not wearing eye protection while performing household tasks.

Know the requirements for your work environment and WEAR the appropriate eye protection. Have eye protection at home and remember to wear it. Eye protection is not just for the workplace.

## Resources

- R. Lazarus. (2021, July 15). *Eye Protection at Home*. Optometrists.org. <https://www.optometrists.org/general-practice-optometry/guide-to-eye-exams/eye-protection-at-home/>
- *Protecting your eyes at work*. (n.d.). AOA. <https://www.aoa.org/healthy-eyes/caring-for-your-eyes/protecting-your-vision?sso=y>
- *5 Signs It's Time to Replace Your Safety Glasses*. (2023, February 8). Phillips Safety | Leading Manufacturer of Occupational Safety Products. <https://phillips-safety.com/laser-safety/5-signs-its-time-to-replace-your-safety-glasses/>
- **Personal Protective Equipment** web-based training [https://ehs-assist.unl.edu/ehsa/public/webtraining/webtrainingindex?course\\_number=PPE](https://ehs-assist.unl.edu/ehsa/public/webtraining/webtrainingindex?course_number=PPE)
- **EHS SOP Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – Eyes and Face** [https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-PPE\\_eyes-face.pdf](https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-PPE_eyes-face.pdf)

## 6. Fall Injury Incidents at UNL

Over the last year the primary event causing injury incidents at UNL is falls. When considering fall injuries what may come to mind is falls from a height. Falls from any height, even mis-stepping and missing the last couple rungs of a ladder or step stool can cause serious injury. Workers often think falls on ice are a primary contributor to fall injuries. At UNL falls on ice do occur but more often injury falls are from missteps such as stepping off curbs or encountering walkway abnormalities if not paying attention to the walking surface, not carefully navigating stairs, using stairways while wearing improper footwear, or experiencing a slip/fall from liquids or other debris on the walking/working surface.

How do mitigate trip/fall hazards? Here are some suggestions:

- Take your time and pay attention to where you are going. Don't walk while using a device such as phone, tablet, and so on, whether indoors or outdoors. Avoid areas with uneven surfaces or obscured areas, for example, tall grass.
- Clean all spills immediately. Mark wet areas to alert others.
- Tack or tape wrinkled mats, rugs and carpets that do not lay flat.
- Keep clutter and debris from your work area. Do not leave lower drawers in your work area open.
- Keep working areas and walkways well lit. Around campus, report any non-functioning lights to [servicedesk@unl.edu](mailto:servicedesk@unl.edu).

- Cover cables/cords that cross walkways.
- Wear secure footwear on stairs. Use the handrail when on stairs to stabilize yourself should you start to trip or fall. If outdoor stairways appear wet/snowy/icy use an alternate way into or out of the building.
- In potentially icy conditions “walk like a penguin” and observe the other suggestions in the “Really Obvious: On Ice” short video.
- Do not lean or tilt back on chairs. Do not use chairs instead of a ladder or step stool.
- Periodically review ladder and/or step stool safe use.

## Resources

- *Prevention of Slips, Trips and Falls: OSH Answers*. (n.d.). [https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/safety\\_haz/falls.html](https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/safety_haz/falls.html)
- EHS Safe Operating Procedure, **Slips, Trips, Falls – Reducing Risk and Avoiding Injury** [https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-slips\\_trips\\_falls.pdf](https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-slips_trips_falls.pdf)
- University of Nebraska–Lincoln. (2014, December 10). *Really Obvious: On Ice*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Gv6QNZyF8>

## 7. Revised Safe Operating Procedure

- **Safety Protocol: 241 Am (Be) Neutron Probe**  
[https://ehs.unl.edu/SP\\_SOP\\_241Am%28Be%29NeutronProbe.pdf](https://ehs.unl.edu/SP_SOP_241Am%28Be%29NeutronProbe.pdf)  
Added shipping case inspection information and updated the Bill of Lading.

**ADOPT SAFETY AS YOUR ATTITUDE – DON'T LEARN BY ACCIDENT!**

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