

Safety & Working Conditions Study Committee



Safety E-Times

Issue 2

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This is the 2nd Issue of the Dane County Safety and Working Conditions Study Committee's newsletter Safety E-Times. The Committee has existed since 1973 and consists of union and management members from various county departments.

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Sheriff/WPPA Sup
267-1561

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Severe Weather, Lightning, and Tornado Safety

As you read this article, an average of 1800 thunderstorms are creating havoc somewhere on earth in one or more of the following ways: lightning, floods, hail, tornadoes and high winds. In a typical year, 73 people are killed and more than 300 injured by lightning with lightning killing more people than any other weather event including tornadoes.

Half of the casualties from lightning occur during activities in open fields such as baseball, soccer, and golfing. Here are some ways to stay safe when a thunderstorm approaches.

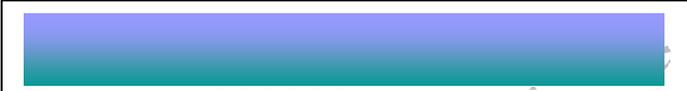
If you're near a house or other building...

- Go indoors. If the storm is severe, head for a basement or a room in the middle of the house or building. Keep away from glass.
- Keep away from objects that might conduct electricity such as radiators, pipes and metal doorframes.
- Do not take a bath or shower during an electrical storm. Water helps to conduct electricity, and walls don't always protect from the high energy of a lightning bolt.
- Do not get close to electrical appliances such as plug in radios and TV's. Use battery operated radios.
- Restrict all calls to cell phones.

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The West Nile virus was first recognized in the United States back in 1999 as the cause of severe and fatal human illness in New York City. It is commonly found in Africa, West and Central Asia and the Middle East. Thus far the virus has spread throughout the eastern half of the USA.

West Nile virus is transmitted by mosquito after becoming infected when feeding on a bird carrying the virus in its blood. It takes 10-14 days for the virus to be active enough to be transmitted to another bird, person or other animal. West Nile virus is not spread from person to person.

Symptoms: Most people who are infected with the virus will not develop any symptoms, although others may become ill 3 to 15 days after the bite from an infected mosquito. They may develop a fever, headache, body aches, and sometimes-skin rash and swollen glands. There are no known long-term effects from the mild illness.

West Nile virus infrequently results in a severe illness, however it is then called West Nile encephalitis. This is an inflammation of the brain that may be marked by headache, high fever, stiff neck, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, and paralysis. A very small number of cases have been fatal.

People who are at risk are those who are in areas where the virus is circulating at peak times, like the Midwest states during the summer months. The risk for West Nile encephalitis is high for persons 50 years or older. As a side note, the virus's transmission rate is still relatively rare, 2.6% in places such as New York City ... a highly affected area of the virus.

Treatment: There is no specific treatment or therapy for the infection at this time. In cases of West Nile encephalitis, intensive care is required such as hospitalization, intravenous fluids, respiratory support and good nursing care. Persons with severe or unusual headaches should seek medical attention as soon as possible.

Prevention:

- Apply insect repellent to exposed skin. The most effective contain DEET.
- Use care in applying repellent to children—don't place on hands, and avoid mouths and eyes.

- Children 2-12 yrs should have products containing less than 10% DEET.
- Wear protective clothing such as long sleeves, long pants and socks when outdoors.
- Spray clothing with repellents
- Have screens on windows-doors and fix the holes!
- Consider staying indoors between dusk and dawn.
- Empty water from flower pots, swimming pool covers, buckets, bowls and other containers that provide breeding areas for mosquitoes.
- Alert local officials to potential breeding sites such as ditches and abandoned properties with water.

For more information on West Nile Virus, check out the website www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid ♦



**IT'S THAT
TIME OF
YEAR
AGAIN!**



“MOSQUITO AND TICK SEASON”

One thing we should all watch out for is Lyme Disease carried by deer ticks. The best prevention is to not come in contact with deer ticks, but this is not always possible as most of us go outside. However, there are things you can do to protect yourself while outside.

- ✓ Wear enclosed shoes and light-colored clothes
- ✓ Keep long hair tied back
- ✓ Use insect repellent containing DEET
- ✓ Stay on cleared, well-traveled trails
- ✓ Avoid sitting directly on the ground
- ✓ Check yourself/clothes frequently while outdoors and do a full-body tick check at the end of the day

The symptoms of Lyme Disease include: (going from early stages to late stages)

- Solid red or bulls-eye rash, starting at site of bite
- Swelling of lymph glands near tick bite
- Generalized achiness, chills, fever, joint pain
- Fatigue
- Migrating pain in joints/tendons
- Tingling or numbness in extremities
- Stiff, achy neck
- Severe fatigue
- Facial palsy
- Arthritis in one or two large joints
- Disabling neurological disorders

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What about S.A.R.S. and the MonkeyPox Virus?

The Safety E-Times staff found so many articles on both SARS and Monkey Pox that we thought it would be a disservice to try and paraphrase the excellent information that sites like CDC and other clinical agencies have provided on the net. Instead, we decided to review a few and direct you to some of the more up-to-date sites where you can get the best information.

Go to:

www.cdc.gov

www.michigan.gov/mdch

www.wisconsin.gov/state/home



WILD PARSNIP

We have all heard about poison ivy but what about wild parsnip? It is the juice in the leaves and stem of the plant that cause the problems.

The wild parsnip plant has bright yellow flowers on a stalk 2-5 feet high.

If your skin comes in contact with the juice and you are then exposed to sunlight you can develop a painful burn-like rash and/or blisters. Wearing protective clothing may not help if the juice soaks through onto your skin and you then expose your skin to sunlight.

If you need to remove wild parsnip it should be done in the early evening. Wear protective clothing, gloves, long pants/sleeves, and remove the clothing, indoors, as soon as done.

For further information about this plant the following web site may help:

www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/er/invasive/factsheets/parsnip.htm



Photo by Paul E. Berry
Courtesy of Wisconsin Vascular Plants Website from WDNR

ERGONOMICS – What a computer user should know!

Ergonomics is the practice of adapting the job to fit the person, rather than the person to the job.

Ergonomics for Computer Operators

Injuries that may be caused by poor ergonomics include:

- 1) Carpel Tunnel Syndrome (note: recent medical studies are disputing this being caused by poor ergonomics)
- 2) Tendon Disorders
- 3) Back and Neck Problems
- 4) Eye and Vision Problems
- 5) Stress

Main risk factors that cause most injuries and discomfort to computer operators:

- 1) Awkward Posture
- 2) Repetition (according to known OSHA standards)
- 3) Duration
- 4) Lack of Recovery
- 5) Force
- 6) Uncomfortable Environment
- 7) Organization of Work

Although we can't always change where we work or the equipment we work with there are things we can do to help prevent injuries to ourselves.

The photo on page 4 shows how a computer workstation should be set up. Use the photo to help you adjust yourself and your environment to provide the best ergonomics possible. ♦

Computer workstation recommendations:

- Chair height – 16-20 inches
- Lower back support present
- Feet flat on floor or on footrest
- Keyboard height 23 to 28 inches (most people – 26inches)
- Keyboard flat or slightly sloped 5-20°
- Wrists straight and off sharp edges
- Elbows at 90° angle
- Shoulders hanging down to sides
- Mouse at same height as keyboard
- Top 1/3 of monitor level with eyes
- Monitor 18-30 inch viewing distance
- Head and neck looking straight ahead
- Keyboard and monitor directly in front of user
- Document holder at monitor height and angle

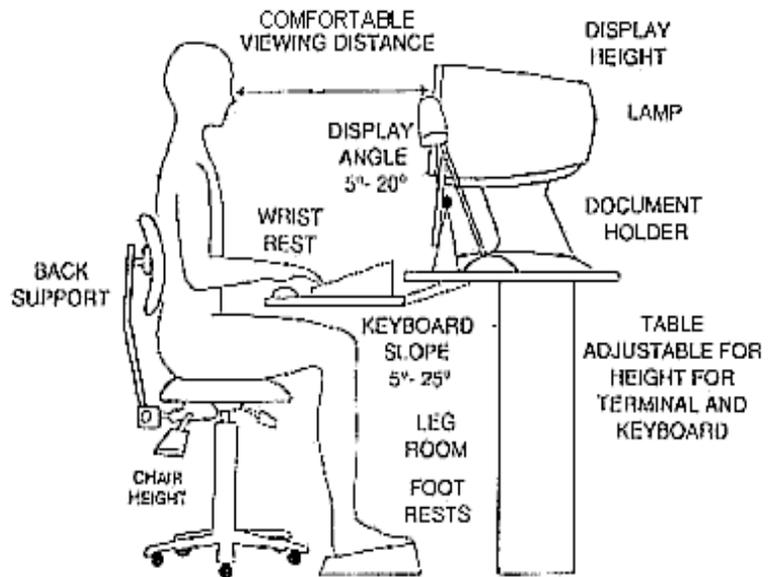


Diagram from "Ergonomics and VDT Use," flyer prepared by the Library of Congress Collections Services VDT Ergonomics Committee, 1991-92.

Severe Weather, Lightning,....Cont.

If in an open field or on a golf course...

- If you feel your hair start to stand on end or your skin tingle, or if you hear crackling sounds, lightning may be about to strike you.
- Drop down quickly, bend forward with your feet together and hands on knees.
- Do not lie flat. You want to make yourself as small as possible and have minimal contact with the ground.

In the city...

- Don't stand on a roof during a thunderstorm.

If you're swimming...

- Get out of the water at the first sign of lightning or thunder.
- Find indoor shelter or get into a car.
- Wait until you haven't heard thunder for 30 minutes before re-entering the water.
- Stay away from metal fences or flagpoles.

If someone is struck...

- Heart attacks, resulting in fatalities, may be caused by lightning-person strikes.
- Seek medical help at once. ♦



Ticks continued....

If you find a tick on yourself and it has not yet become engorged, it has not been there long enough to transmit Lyme Disease. Nevertheless you should remove it and monitor the site of the bite for the symptoms listed.

To remove a tick

- Using a pair of precision tweezers, grasp the tick by the head or mouthparts right where they enter the skin. DO NOT grasp the tick by the body.
- Without jerking, pull firmly and steadily directly outward. DO NOT twist the tick out or apply petroleum jelly, a hot match, alcohol or any other irritant to the tick, this could increase chances of transmitting the disease.
- Place the tick in a vial or jar of alcohol to kill it. If you are unsure if it is a deer tick, check with your doctor or healthcare provider.
- Clean the bite wound with disinfectant.

For further information please check out the following websites: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/lyme

♦

Safety Trivia – Your chance to win approved safety apparel!

Last issue's question:

You've seen various filters in respirators, vacuums, air cleaners, and home furnaces labeled HEPA and HEPA-type. What does HEPA stand for and what is the difference between HEPA and HEPA-type filters?

The Correct Answer:

The Letters in the word HEPA stand for High Efficiency Particulate Arrestance. (You may see others saying that the A means Arresting, Arrestor or Air but they all have the same basic meaning: "to capture")

For a filter to be called a "True" HEPA, it must retain and filter out all particles from the air that passes through it down to 0.3 microns in size at an efficiency rating of 99.97%.

For a filter to be labeled "True" HEPA, it must be certified 99.97% efficient in capturing 0.3 micron (not 0.1 or 0.01 etc.) respirable-size-particles (RSP) according to the U.S. Military Standard MIL-STD-282, commonly known as the DOP test. Other methods of testing do not give a true picture of efficiencies relative to respirable-size-particle (RSP) capture.

"HEPA-Type" filters are lower cost, not as efficient, and not an equivalent to a "TRUE" HEPA filter. "HEPA-Type" filters are simple low cost impersonators of a "TRUE" HEPA filter.

Thanks to all who provided an answer. Congratulations Bill Franz of the Controller's office! Bill's response was randomly chosen from the correct entries. He won approved safety apparel that included hearing protection, respirator, and safety glasses.

This Issue's question:

Recently the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis issued a report concerning traffic fatalities and the use of cellphones while driving. Many newspapers have come out with stories about how dangerous it is to use a cell phones and drive. OK, it is quiz time: Which of the following activities are the most likely to cause death?

1. Using a cell phone and driving.
2. Driving with a BAC of .10
3. Not wearing a safety belt.
4. Driving a small versus a large vehicle (1,000 pound weight difference)

Please submit your answer to Mark Finarty for a chance to win safety apparel.

e-mail: finarty@co.dane.wi.us

Inter -d mail: Mark Finarty, Risk Management-DOA, Rm. 425 CCB

A winner will be randomly selected from all the correct responses received by July 31ST, 2003. We'll publish the correct answer, and the winner's name, in next issue of Safety E-Times. Good luck!

Check out our Intranet site!

The Safety & Working Conditions Study Committee's Intranet website is located at:

<http://dcinet/resources/workingconditions/index.html>.

The Intranet website is specifically designed for you to access more safety information. You will find the committee's meeting times, agendas, and minutes along with useful links to more safety information. The Intranet site also allows you to contact the committee with your suggestions and comments. There is even an [Anonymous Contact Form for Dane County employees](#) to report safety problems or concerns.

Add this site to your favorites and periodically check for informative updates.

NOTE: Some comments that were made to the anonymous contact form after the 1st issue could not be addressed because the location of the problem was missing and the department was not listed. If you made comments through the anonymous contact form that weren't acted upon, please report these issues again through the [Anonymous Contact Form for Dane County employees](#). Corrections have been made to prevent this from occurring again.

