
Safety & Working Conditions Study Committee

Safety E-Times

Issue 5

December 2006

This is the 5th issue of the Dane County Safety and Working Conditions Committee's newsletter Safety E-Times. The Committee has existed since 1973 and consists of union and management members from various county departments.

Members:

Mark Twombly – **Chair**
Sheriff/WPPA Sup
284-6151

Bill LeGore – **Vice Chair**
Airport
246-3389

Penny Munson – **Secretary**
Clerk of Courts/Local 720
266-4200

Members at Large:

Bill Huisheere
Human Services/Local 2634
242-6441

Laura Huttner
Human Services
Facilities Management
242-6260

Joel Wagner
Sheriff WPPA Non Sup
284-6149/6157/6164

Dan Behrend

Highway
266-4014

Don Wallin
Highway/Local 65
266-4011

John Talis
Corporation Counsel
Atty. Association
266-9006

Dennis McClain
Juvenile Detention
267-4191

Kevin Gundlach
Badger Prairie/Local 705

Staff:

Scott Teuscher
Safety/Risk Management
267-1555

Vacant:
Trade Union
Management Position

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1. Snow Road-EO
2. Parking Lot Safety
3. Static Electricity/Gas Pump Fires
- 4-5. Cold Weather Safety
5. Retraction
6. Safety Awards
7. Safety Trivia

SNOW ROAD-EO

Dane County Public Works, Highway & Transportation Department on Tuesday, October 10th had its fall training day and Snow Roadeo. The purpose of this day is to provide helpful information and expertise from individuals in the field, as well as to promote safety and efficiency in the work place. This learning experience included some hands-on instruction. The goal is to provide training to make the work safer and easier, so we can more efficiently provide safer roadways for the traveling public.



PARKING LOT SAFETY

Many of us park our vehicles in a parking lot, parking ramp or on a street and enter our work places everyday. We then return to our vehicles at the end of the day to return home.

We have all heard about people being attacked in parking lots, but have you ever thought about what you could do to lessen your risk of being attacked?

These safety tips pertain to your work environment as well as all the other places we park; home, stores, friend's homes, etc.

Parking Tips:

1. Park near other vehicles
2. Park under or near lights
3. Avoid parking next to vans or other large vehicles.
 - a. This blocks your vehicle and provides a place for would be attackers to hide.
4. Do not sit idle in your car for longer than necessary. If you must sit in your car, keep your doors locked.

Walking to Your Car:

1. If possible, do not walk alone.
2. Anyone walking alone, male or female, is a potential target for an assault.
3. Walk with a friend, co-worker, security officer, etc. If you must walk alone:
 - i. Have someone watch you from a window and wave to them.
 - ii. Pretend to wave to someone even if no one is watching you go to your vehicle. This gives the illusion you are being watched by a friend.
4. Be alert to your surroundings and walk with confidence.
 - a. Don't slouch or look down. Using assertive body language can help prevent an attack.
5. Do not wear headphones or let talking on a cell phone distract you.
6. Carry purses or bags close to your body, preferably in front of you.
7. Wear shoes that won't hinder an escape.
 - a. Tennis shoes or flats are best. If you wear high heels, kick them off and run barefoot.
8. Avoid walking near bushes, alleyways or doorway entrances.
 - a. These are great hiding spots for attackers.
9. Have your keys out and be ready to unlock your car.
 - a. Do not dig in your purse or bag on the way to your car.
 - b. Look under and around your car before getting in.
 - c. Look in the back seat and on the floor of your car before getting in.
 - d. Do not place your purse, briefcase, packages or other valuables on the roof of your car.
10. Once you are in your car, LOCK THE DOORS, before you buckle up.

STATIC ELECTRICITY/GAS PUMP FIRES

In the last 10 years, nationwide, there have been 139 reported cases of gas pump fires caused by static electricity. Nebraska reports the highest number at 14 with Texas coming in at No. 2 with 11 reported cases. Wisconsin has only had 2 reported cases.

The No. 1 cause of static electricity causing gas pump fires is getting back into your car after starting to refuel. The Petroleum Equipment Institute (PEI) reports that while there have been a few cases caused by plastic gas cans and nylon windbreakers, getting back into your car is the number one cause of fires and flare-ups. When you return to your car your movements cause friction against the car seat which leads to a build up of static electricity within your body. When you exit your car and touch the gas pump nozzle, the build up of static electricity can create a spark which can ignite the gas fumes coming from the nozzle or your tank.

The #1 injury reported has been burned or singed hair. Burned hands were the #2 injury reported. There has been 1 reported death to a human and 1 reported death of a dog.

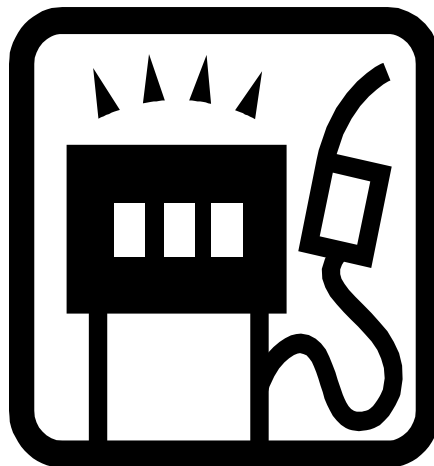
People have reported starting to refuel their vehicles, getting back into their cars to stay warm and/or dry or to retrieve money, and then returning to the gas pump nozzle. When they grab the nozzle they have seen a flash and flames shooting out of their gas tank or the gas pump nozzle.

PEI suggests the following when refueling your vehicle

1. Turn off your engine
2. Do not smoke
3. Do not re-enter your vehicle
4. Before you handle the gas pump nozzle the 1st and last time, touch something metal, NOT NEAR YOUR GAS TANK OR THE GAS PUMP NOZZLE, to discharge the static electricity built up in your body.

Is it dangerous to use a cell phone while refueling your vehicle?

PEI says its time to put this myth to rest. They have investigated hundreds of refueling fires and flare-ups and have not documented one incident caused by a cell phone.



CAUTION – COLD WEATHER IS HERE!

Along with dropping temperatures, there are a few cold-related problems you should be familiar with. Frostbite and hypothermia are conditions caused by overexposure to cold temperatures.

Frostbite is the actual freezing of the body tissue. It usually occurs in exposed areas of the body, depending on the air temperature, length of exposure, and the wind. Although this typically occurs at temperatures below 30°F (-1°C), wind chill effects can cause frostbite at above-freezing temperatures. Some signs of frostbite include:

- Uncomfortable sensations of coldness
- Tingling, stinging or aching feeling of the exposed area
- Lack of feeling in the affected area
- Skin that appears waxy, is cold to the touch, and discolored (flushed, white, yellow, blue)
- Deeper frostbite involves freezing of deeper tissues (muscles, tendons, etc.) causing exposed areas to become numb, painless, and hard to the touch.

Hypothermia occurs when the body's warming mechanisms fail and the body's temperature falls below 98.6°F. It often occurs because of extended periods outdoors in cold, damp conditions but can occur when the temperature falls below 65°F. For instance, hypothermia is common among the elderly who live in cold houses. The signals of hypothermia include:

- Shivering
- Slow irregular pulse
- Glassy stare
- An inability to do complex motor functions
- Numbness
- Mild confusion
- Decreasing levels of consciousness
- Unconsciousness and death can result

If you are the victim of either frostbite or hypothermia, move to a warm area and seek medical attention immediately.

The best way to prevent a cold-related problem is to avoid being out in cold conditions unprepared. Always:

- Dress appropriately for the environment and wear layers of clothes. Wear at least three layers of clothing:
 1. An outer layer to break the wind and allow some ventilation (like Gore-Tex® or nylon).
 2. Middle layers of wool or synthetic fabric (Qualofil or Pile) to absorb sweat and retain insulation in a damp environment. Down is a useful lightweight insulator; however, it is ineffective once it becomes wet.
 3. An inner layer of cotton or synthetic weave to allow ventilation. Pay special attention to protecting feet, hands, face and head. Up to 40% of body heat can be lost when the head is exposed. Keep a change of clothing available in case work garments become wet.
- Allow a period of adjustment to the cold before embarking on a full work schedule.
- If possible, plan your outdoor activities for the warmest part of the day.
- Avoid heavy exercise or work during the coldest part of the day.
- Drink plenty of fluids (warm if possible) without caffeine or alcohol.
- Establish a buddy system for working outdoors.

There are also some major risk factors for cold-related stresses that you should be aware of:

- Wearing inadequate or wet clothing increases the effects of cold on the body.
- Taking certain drugs such as alcohol, nicotine and caffeine, or medications that inhibit the body's response to the cold or impairs judgment.
- Having a cold or certain diseases, such as diabetes, heart, vascular, and thyroid problems, may make a person more susceptible to the winter elements.
- Being a male increases a person's risk to cold-related stresses. Men experience far greater death rates due to cold exposure than women do, perhaps due to inherent risk-taking activities, body-fat composition or other physiological differences.
- Becoming exhausted or immobilized, especially due to injury or entrapment, may speed up the effects of cold weather.
- Aging—the elderly are more vulnerable to the effects of harsh winter weather.

The quiet symptoms of potentially deadly cold-related ailments often go undetected until the victim's health is endangered. Knowing the facts of cold exposure and following a few simple guidelines can ensure that this season is a safe and healthy one.

CORRECTION

In the April, 2006 Newsletter (issue no. 4) an article was written on seatbelt safety. The information provided regarding child safety restraints was incorrect. The law has been changed. We are sorry for the misinformation and hope this correction helps.

Children less than 1 year old or less than 20 lbs. must be in a rear-facing child safety seat in the back seat of a vehicle.

Children ages 1 to 4 or less than 40 lbs. must be in a forward-facing child safety seat in the back seat of a vehicle

Children ages 4-8 and between 40-80 lbs. and no more that 4'9" in height must be in a booster seat.

Everyone ages 8 and older and 80 lbs. or more must be in a seat belt.

INDIVIDUAL/DEPARTMENTAL SAFETY AWARDS

The winners of the 2006 Individual and Departmental Safety Awards have been selected.

They are:

Individual: **Greg Brockmeyer** from Consolidated Food Service. Greg was selected for his outstanding efforts in reducing the number of and costs of CFS injuries. Greg was commended for his proactive approach to safety and promoting a positive safety culture.

Departmental: **Alliant Energy Center (Bob Ehrenstrom, Manager)**. The Alliant Energy Center was selected for their efforts in reducing recordable injuries, lost work days, and restricted work day rates. They utilize safety orientation for new employees, annual safety training for all employees, written safety programs and policies and the formation of a safety committee.

Greg and Bob will be presented with plaques recognizing their achievements at the December 7th, 2006 County Board Meeting.

CONGRATULATIONS GREG AND BOB FOR YOUR EFFORTS IN IMPROVING SAFETY AND WORKING CONDITIONS.

There were several nominations for the individual safety award and although one winner had to be selected, the following individuals should be recognized for their efforts to improve the safety and working conditions for Dane County employees.

The nominees were:

Richard Herro-Dane County Environmental Health
Deputies Todd Endl and Bart Garey-Dane County Sheriff's Department
Brian Wilson-Henry Vilas Zoo
Greg Fruiteger-Dane County Highway Department
Scott Deforest-Dane County Sheriff's Office

Please keep this program in mind during 2007 and feel free to nominate your co-workers for the individual award. Nomination forms can be found on the Safety and Working Conditions Study Committee's web page.



Safety Trivia

This Issue's Question:

Who was piloting the plane during the first documented fatal plane crash. The pilot survived but the passenger died.

Please submit your answer to Penny Munson or Laura Huttner for a chance to win a prize.

e-mail: Penny.Munson@wicourts.gov or Huttner@co.dane.wi.us

Inter-D mail: Penny Munson, Dane County Courthouse, Room 7107

Laura Huttner, Human Services, Northport Office

A winner will be randomly selected from all the correct responses received by January 31, 2007. We'll publish the correct answer and the winner's name in the next issue of Safety E-Times. Good luck!

Last Issue's winner, chosen by random from all the correct answers, was: Isabella Popic.

Ms. Popic correctly identified the question: By volume Carpet is the 2nd largest item filling our landfills in the United States these days, what is the #1 item? **ANSWER: DIAPERS**

Check out our Intranet Site!

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

<http://www.co.dane.wi.us/committees/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.