



Guardian

Environmental Health & Safety

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Hearing Conservation

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One harmful agent in the workplace that many people never or rarely think about is noise. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has set down a five step program for employers to comply with the standard (29 CFR 1910.95, Occupational Noise Exposure):

1. Measure the sound levels at noisy sites such as utility plants or of noisy equipment such as leaf blowers.
2. Provide annual hearing tests for employees who are exposed to an average of 85 decibels or higher in an eight-hour workday.
3. Provide training.
4. Provide hearing protection devices such as earplugs or earmuffs.
5. Keep records of hearing tests and noise measurements.



To make things worse, we expose ourselves to potentially harmful noise at home and at play too such as mowing the lawn, shooting firearms, listening to loud music, etc.

Some rules of thumb to tell if noises around you are too loud:

- You have to raise your voice to be heard.
- You have trouble hearing someone less than two feet away.
- Speech sounds are dull or muffled after exposure to the noise.
- You have ringing in your ears after the noise exposure (ringing means damage has already been done).

How does noise make you lose your hearing? A healthy inner ear has about 40 million hair cells that transmit sound vibrations to the brain. When exposed to excessive noise without proper hearing protection, some of these cells are damaged and destroyed, resulting in noise-induced hearing loss. Think of the hair cells as grass, you can step on it and the individual blades spring back up, but keep stepping on it and the blades do not spring back up; they stay flattened down. Keep on walking on them and the grass disappears and you have a dirt trail. Grass can grow back; hair cells will never grow back.

If you think you are being exposed to excessive noise, give us a call and we will monitor to find out.

Don't Forget

Many of the items commonly generated throughout campus which are often discarded in trash cans need to be managed in a different manner. Three items that are often overlooked are aerosol cans, fluorescent lamps and rechargeable batteries.

To dispose or recycle these items, please contact our office at 644-6895.

Web Site

A new section has been developed on the EH&S web site to aid you in finding information regarding worker's compensation. Policies, procedures, forms, and FAQ's are all available at www.safety.fsu.edu/wc.html.

Also, in the upcoming months, look to our web site for additional FAQ's and new information.

October 12-18 is National Radon Week



Cuts and Needlestick Injuries



It's has been a long day, and you are finishing up work for the day and looking forward to a quiet evening. As you are concluding for the day, you accidentally knock over a glass and cut yourself. What do you do?

As a member of the FSU community, one can be associated with a wide variety of potential hazards. However, it has been shown that the most common injury in laboratories is not from chemical, radioactive material or biological agent exposure, but from cuts and accidental needle sticks. That is why it is important for everyone to review their departmental "Exposure Control Plan" in dealing with cuts and needle stick injuries. The Department of Environmental Health & Safety has developed a generic "Exposure Control Plan" that each department can use and modify to tailor to its needs. The "Exposure Control Plan" is available on line at: www.safety.fsu.edu/expctrplan.html.

In general, the following procedure should be followed when a cut or needle stick has occurred:

- Alert co-workers.
- If contamination of intact skin with blood or body fluid occurs, wash with plenty of soap and water. This would not be considered a significant exposure.
- Contact your supervisor, the University's Worker Compensation Office at 644-7684, and the Biological Safety Office at 644-5374, as soon as possible to an file injury report.
- For cuts, mucous membrane, or wound exposure that has punctured the skin, wash the area with plenty of soap and water.
- For oral exposure, use saline solution or rinse with plenty of water.
- If you strongly feel that unknown human blood, potentially infectious blood or biological agents have infected you. **OBTAIN MEDICAL ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY.**

For spills that involve human blood, potentially infectious blood, or biological agents; the following procedure should be followed:

- Alert people in immediate area of spill.
- Define and isolate the spill area.
- If it is a large spill contact University Maintenance at 644-2424.
- If it is a minor spill:
 - Put on proper personnel protective equipment including gloves, gowns, aprons, laboratory coats, face shields, eye protection, etc.
 - Pick up sharps and broken glass with dustpans, tongs, or forceps.

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- Discard the sharps and broken glass into a sharps containers. Be careful not to touch sharps, even when wearing gloves.
- Cover spill with paper towels or other absorbent materials.
- Carefully pour a disinfectant (such as a 10% bleach solution) around the edges of the spill and then into the spill. Avoid splashing.
- Wait 15 minutes for adequate disinfectant contact time.
- Use paper towels to wipe up the spill, working from the spill's edge toward the center.
- Repeat applying disinfectant to towel surface and allowing adequate contact time.
- Wipe the area again with fresh paper towels soaked with alcohol, soapy water, or disinfectant.
- Properly dispose of the clean up and spilled materials.
- Notify your supervisor, and if it is necessary the Biological Safety Office at 644-5374 as soon as possible.

Automobile Insurance

Liability insurance for state-owned vehicles is provided through the State Risk Management Trust Fund. The Division of Risk Management in the Department of Financial Services is responsible for administering the program, including the investigation and payment of claims.

State employees and other authorized representatives of the state are covered while using state-owned vehicles or their private vehicle on official business. They are not covered if the vehicle is being used for personal travel.

Things to remember in case of an accident:

- Have the accident investigated by a law enforcement officer.
- Report any accident immediately to your supervisor.
- At the scene of the accident, do not discuss details of the accident with anyone except the appropriate investigating law enforcement officer.
- Obtain information about the other driver(s) from the law enforcement officer.
- Get the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of any witnesses to the accident.

Hurricane Season isn't over yet

Although summer has drawn to a close and the weather is thinking about getting cooler, there are still two months left in the 2003 hurricane season. The season officially ends November 30. So be sure to keep those hurricane survival kits handy for another couple of months.



Vehicle Insurance Cards

All state-owned vehicles are required to have an insurance card located in the vehicle. If yours does not, please contact our office to obtain one.



Holiday Decoration Reminders

With the holiday season fast approaching, here are a few things to remember for decorating your office.

- Natural vegetation (trees, wreathes, hay, straw, corn stalks, etc.) are not to be used as decorations.
- All lights, or other electrical devices should be UL listed, in good condition, and turned off at the end of the day.
- Extension cords should not be used.
- Decorations should not interfere with exit or emergency lights, exit doors or pathways, extinguishers or sprinklers.
- Lit candles are not permitted in any University facilities.

Fall and Winter Fire Safety

- Become familiar with outdoor burning regulations in your area. Most outdoor fires, including burning leaves, are illegal unless approved by the appropriate authority.
- Make sure holiday decorations and children's costumes are fire retardant.
- Use flashlights, not candles, in jack-o-lanterns.
- When at home, light candles beyond a child's "reach-zone". Keep lit candles away from curtains, off shelves and away from flammables. Put out candles when they are unattended.
- Keep space heaters away from furniture and curtains and make sure they are off before retiring to bed.

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