



Guardian

Environmental Health & Safety
www.safety.fsu.edu

Spring Semester 2004

Don't Throw That Away!

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GUARDIAN, is published semesterly by The Florida State University- Department of Environmental Health and Safety, 4400 UCC Tallahassee, FL 32306-2663 (850) 644-6895 Fax (850) 644-8842

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GUARDIAN is available in alternative format upon request and on the web at www.safety.fsu.edu/guardian.html

Please recycle this newsletter when finished.



FSU is not unlike Tallahassee or any other community in that we generate garbage, all kinds of it. On campus we create normal household waste, many forms of industrial waste, and some very specialized forms of research related waste. In this article we will look at the largest category, normal old garbage. Except here at FSU there is no such thing!

When you throw garbage in the trashcan by your desk it starts its journey to a landfill. The various groups on campus that collect the trash place it into cans that eventually are emptied into the dumpsters outside of the buildings across campus. Those dumpsters are then emptied into trucks and taken to the transfer station on Gum Road. From that location the garbage is transported to a landfill for ultimate disposal. There are several major reasons to limit what you put into those innocent trashcans, first we should be concerned with what goes into the landfills and eventually into the environment and second there are laws and limitations regarding the disposal of certain items.

When it comes to disposing of many common items we have restrictions. Unlike at home, our trash is looked at more closely. Some of the items that we cannot place in our trashcans include things like aerosol cans, fluorescent light bulbs and any chemicals. On campus we have programs in place to help recycle many things. On Madison Street there is a facility where our waste paper is taken for recycling. Across the street are collection areas for metal waste, construction debris, and yard debris. We also have programs to collect chemicals from all campus sources, fluorescent light bulbs, and aerosol cans.

Some of the problems that have been identified on campus recently have included inappropriate chemical disposal and air conditioners thrown away in dumpsters. During the investigation of a suspected fire in a dumpster, several large containers of chemicals were found, one of which was leaking. This material was very caustic and was reacting with the other materials causing the smoke. A total of over fifty gallons of various chemicals was removed from the dumpster.

In another complaint several air conditioners were discovered by maintenance personnel in a dumpster. Air conditioners and refrigerators contain Freon and oil that must be removed prior to disposal. On campus these types of equipment should be sent to Surplus for final disposition. If the device is not designated for auction, it must be inspected by maintenance and any Freon and oil must be removed.

If you have questions concerning disposal of items on campus please give EH&S a call.

Building Safety Week

You can be a part of Building Safety Week, April 4 – 10, 2004. Since 1980, Building Safety Week has helped Building and Fire Officials remind people nationwide of the importance of safe construction and occupancy of the built environment. FSU Building Code staff endeavor to ensure building safety through enforcement of the Florida Building Code. However, it remains the responsibility of building **owners and occupants** to preserve a building's safety through wise usage and maintenance.



Two places where everyone can have a significant impact on building safety are at home, and in the workplace. Building Officials verify that original construction plans comply with the current codes for life safety. However, after an initial move-in, the occupants often diminish a building's safety without realizing they have done so.

A fundamental aspect of fire safety is building compartmentalization. This is done to limit the spread of fire and provide safe corridors for emergency exiting. EHS inspectors often observe fire-rated doors with closure devices propped open with wood wedges. In the event of a fire this will defeat the compartmentalization, and

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Office Relocation

In December, some of the offices of EH&S relocated to the University Center C. Risk Management, Workers' Compensation, Administration, and a majority of Fire Safety are all now housed in 4400 UCC.

The mail code for the new offices in UCC is 2663. The phone numbers remain unaffected.

National Poison Prevention Week March 16-22



Avian Flu

The avian flu virus is a subtype of Influenza Type A. Wild birds are the natural hosts, and birds worldwide have been infected, many of them fatally, including many infected domesticated birds like chickens. Recent human infections of the avian flu virus in Asia have resulted from human contact with infected poultry or with surfaces contaminated by secretions from infected poultry. Human infections transmitted from birds have been reported in Vietnam and Thailand. So far, efficient transmission of the virus from human to human has not been observed.

Travel to countries with Avian-flu infected areas has not been restricted. Potential travelers are advised to start checking for travel alerts 4-6 weeks before any international travel to obtain the latest information about potential health risks. Individuals traveling to areas with recent incidences of avian flu are advised to avoid contact with animals in live food markets. The World Health Organization does not report a current risk of infection from poultry products, but good food preparation hygiene and frequent handwashing is advised, especially when handling poultry. Influenza viruses are destroyed by heat. Therefore, poultry meat and eggs should be thoroughly cooked.

Critical to containing an outbreak is the destruction of sick or exposed birds, a practice currently underway in affected regions. Patients are being treated and isolated and investigations to determine the source of each infection are conducted. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) are coordinating emergency responses, investigating transmission routes, testing viruses, working on developing vaccines, and providing information to the public. For up-to-date information on the Avian Flu Virus or other health concerns, check with the CDC and WHO at www.cdc.gov and www.who.int.

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compromise both the structure and the occupants' safety. An alternative to doorstoppers is magnetic hold-open devices, which release upon activation of the fire alarm system. Another means by which occupants can preserve building safety is to avoid blocking a means of egress. EHS inspectors often observe furniture or other items stored in a means of egress or exit way, possibly restricting passage. It is also important, at home, to maintain clear access to a bedroom window that is sized for both emergency escape by trapped occupants and entry by rescue personnel.

The value of rigorous building code enforcement in the United States is demonstrated by the lowest loss rates in the World. Do your part to keep up this record.

Storm Water and FSU

Do you know where the water goes when it rains? If we get a large rainstorm any of the water that does not soak into the ground moves to the lowest point, it all runs downhill! The western portion of the main campus is located in a 100-year flood plain, which means it is the lowest spot for much of the area to the north and east, also it has the potential to flood periodically; the University Center Complex is located in the area which historically was the most likely to flood. Also, campus is crossed by several large underground culverts that carry water from various parts of town and campus to the ditch on the south side of campus adjacent to Stadium Place Training Center. Over the past several years, FSU, in conjunction with the City and County, has created a series of retention and treatment facilities on either side of Lake Bradford Road to help alleviate flooding on and around campus and to help control the water flow to Munson Slough.



In addition to the many physical changes on and around campus affecting storm water, FSU recently received a federally mandated storm water permit. In response to changes in federal laws, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection required small municipalities and other facilities that provide living quarters (like FSU dormitories) to acquire storm water permits. The permit is for a five-year period and contains requirements that will help to control and reduce pollution via storm water. Over the period of the permit and into the future, there will be a series of initiatives that will target various activities on campus to help maintain the quality of the storm water that exits campus.

In the future we will be identifying some of the various activities taking place on and around campus that relate to storm water. Additionally, FSU will be working internally to identify practices to protect the environment and present them in upcoming articles. For more information contact EH&S.

Fire Evacuation

If you see a fire...

1. Dial 911 or 4-1234 (FSUPD Dispatch).
2. Give your name, name of the building, and location of the fire in the building.
3. Whether the alarm has sounded or not, pull the nearest Fire Alarm pull station.
4. If you are trained to use a fire extinguisher, can do so safely, and the fire is in its very early stages, you may wish to attempt to put out the fire.
5. Immediately leave the building via the nearest exit. If unable to leave the building, shelter in your office, the stairwell, or other pre-designated area.

DO NOT USE THE ELEVATORS.
6. Walk quickly, do not run.
7. Stay at least 100 feet from the building. All departments / organizations are encouraged to designate a rally point so that all members of the office can be accounted for.
8. Give FSUPD and other emergency personnel your complete cooperation while awaiting further instructions.

Ouch, Quit Biting!

Flowers aren't the only thing that April showers bring. With an increase in rainy days also come the proverbial Floridian pest: the Mosquito. County and State health departments are encouraging residents to take proper precautions against mosquito bites. The Florida Department of Health is recommending the following:

- Avoid outdoor activities between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are likely to be active;
- If you must be outdoors when mosquitoes are active, cover up by wearing closed shoes, socks, long pants, and long sleeved shirts;
- Use mosquito repellent; and
- Eliminate stagnant water in birdbaths and any other receptacles in which mosquitoes might breed.

For more information relating to mosquitoes, visit the Leon County Mosquito Control at www.co.leon.fl.us/mosquito/index.htm.

Disinfect Your Desk

Eating lunch at your desk is even less desirable when you hear what may be lurking there. A recent study of offices in four cities found the average desk has 400 times more bacteria per square inch than a toilet seat. The phone is even worse.

Clorox, which funded the study, recommends wiping surfaces with an appropriate disinfectant to reduce bacterial levels by 99.9 percent in two days.

| <u>Surface</u> | <u>Germs per square inch</u> |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| Phone | 25,127 |
| Desktop | 20,961 |
| Keyboard | 3,295 |
| Mouse | 1,676 |
| Fax Machine | 301 |
| Photocopier | 69 |
| Toilet Seat | 49 |

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