



*Environmental Health  
Safety*

# Guardian

Florida State University

Spring-Summer 2007

A Newsletter of the  
FSU

**EH&S**

Department

EH&S: 850-644-6895 Fax 850-644-8842  
www.safety.fsu.edu email:ehs@admin.fsu.edu

*GUARDIAN*, is published periodically by The Florida State University Department of Environmental Health and Safety

1200 Carothers Hall  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4481

Director  
Tom Jacobson  
tjacobson@admin.fsu.edu

Editor  
Laymon Gray  
lgray@admin.fsu.edu

Contributors:  
*Dave Bujak  
Tom Deckert  
Richard Le  
Gerred Pogge*

The *GUARDIAN* is available in alternative format upon request and on the web at  
[www.safety.fsu.edu/guardian.html](http://www.safety.fsu.edu/guardian.html)

Please recycle this newsletter when finished.



## The “Guardian” is Back!

The periodic publication of the Guardian ranged from 1995-2004. As part of our campus outreach program the EH&S department would like to officially reintroduce the Guardian. The EH&S staff look forward to providing you with future publications and would like to invite you to suggest topics of interest about environmental health and safety. Send suggested topics to [lgray@admin.fsu.edu](mailto:lgray@admin.fsu.edu).

## Summer Safety Tips From “The Building Department”

As summer approaches, the Florida State University Building Code Administration section is urging the University community to take the time to check outdoor areas for potential safety hazards. Proper inspections now can help to keep you, your family, and friends safe in the future. “Building and Fire Codes are in place for a reason,” said University Building Official Tom Deckert. “They are added safety measures to protect you and your guests from outdoor accidents.”

### **Porches, Decks and Balconies**

Porches can be at risk of collapsing if they are not properly constructed or if they are old. A common safety hazard occurs when porches are nailed to buildings rather than being attached with the proper anchors or bolts. Nails are a poor method for attaching porches to buildings because they work their way loose over time. Other safety hazards to look for include:

- split or rotting wood,
- wobbly handrails or guardrails,

- loose, missing or rusting anchors, nails or screws,
- missing, damaged or loose support beams and planking,
- poor end support of the porch deck, joists or girders,
- excessive movement of the porch when walked on, and
- swaying or unstable porches.

The State of Florida has building codes in place that homeowners must follow when building or repairing porches. Building or repairing to the Florida Building Codes, which requires a building permit and an inspection, will help ensure that the porch is safe.

### **Grills**

Grilling on or near combustible areas can be a fire hazard. It not only puts your family and visitors at risk, but, especially in condos and apartment buildings, can put your neighbors in danger as well. The most common grilling hazards are open flames and heat generated

Continued on page 2

## Cell Phones, MP3 Players, and Portable Gaming Devices ...Are You at Risk?

Cell phones, MP3 players, and portable gaming devices have become commonplace on our campus as well as in our everyday lives. During a typical day one will observe dozens of people walking around with cords hanging down connected to an iPod, a Bluetooth device wirelessly connected to a cell phone, or someone aimlessly wandering while playing his/her favorite game. These devices have allowed us to take a brief moment out of our busy day to enjoy music, play a game or catch up with others as we roam across campus.



This apparent benign behavior may potentially result in an in-

creased risk of injury and/or accident. In order to avoid injuries and accidents while using these portable devices you should avoid combining their use with the following activities:

- riding a bicycle, skateboard or moped,
- driving a golf cart, car or motorcycle,
- traversing busy intersections and crosswalks, and
- operating loud equipment such as mowers, blowers, etc.

By taking a common sense approach while operating these portable devices you will reduce the risk of injury to yourself and others and be able to safely enjoy your moment of solitude or catching up with others as you roam the campus.

## A Reminder About State Vehicle Use

Licensed state vehicles are only to be used by authorized drivers performing approved work tasks. Authorized drivers must possess a valid driver's license, be an employee, and comply with all rules of the road. These rules are mandated by Florida statute to ensure that vehicles and drivers are covered by state insurance. If the driver of a state vehicle fails to comply with these rules, he/she may be held responsible for any damages due to an accident including medical bills and/or vehicle repairs.



### Safety tips, from page 1

in the grill base that can be transferred to the wood of a porch, deck or siding, causing a fire. When grilling, follow these safety tips:

- place the grill away from siding, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches,
- periodically remove grease or fat buildup,
- use only proper starter fluid and store the can away from heat sources,
- check propane cylinder hoses for leaks before use,
- do not move hot grills, and
- dispose of charcoal properly, keeping ash containers outside and away from combustible materials.

State Building and Fire Codes prohibit the use of charcoal and

gas grills and other open burning devices on combustible porches or within 10 feet of combustible construction. There are exceptions for one- and two-family homes and where buildings and porches are protected by an automatic sprinkler system.

### Swimming Pools

Because they can be attractive – and dangerous – to young children, in-ground and above-ground pools must be surrounded by a fence or other barrier. Small inflatable pools must also be protected. State Law says that any pool with more than 24 inches of water has to have a four-foot fence or other barrier around it. Any gates in the fence must be self-closing and self-latching. Other things to consider when installing a pool include:

- building permit requirements,
- zoning requirements,

- electrical clearances and utility easements, and
- insurance policies.

Mr. Deckert said “Taking some time now to make sure the outside of your home is safe will make a more enjoyable summer for everyone.”

### Attention Laboratory Workers

Are you producing Medical or Biohazardous Waste? Do you know what goes in the “Red Bags” or “Red Boxes”? If you're not sure, please contact EH&S Biological Safety Office at 644-5374 and let us know. We can answer any questions you may have and review the programs that we have in place.



## FSU and the Push for Sustainability on Campus

A few years ago some friends of mine from Europe visited me here in Tallahassee. They were so impressed with all of the stately trees and green spaces that grace our city. They thought that we lived in a state park. Until then, I never really thought about how lucky we are to live in an area that has so many beautiful natural areas in and around it. Whenever we have guests from out of town we always try to take them to Wakulla Springs or St. George Island to show them the places we love.

Recently these places have started to change from the isolated areas that they used to be to highly developed areas that attract tourists and people interested in recreational activities and vacations. Many people in this area have realized the need to minimize the impact of development and increased congestion in the area we live. Development that outpaces the ability to sustain the people living in the area can have dire consequences. Florida State University has taken steps to lessen the impact that university activities have on the envi-

ronment. New programs have been started to encourage students and faculty to become involved in preserving our beautiful campus and environment. There is also a growing movement on campus for sustainable development.

There is a plan for a demonstration building to be designed and constructed by Engineering students to showcase power saving technology. *Garnet and Gold goes Green* is a program to encourage fans to recycle at sporting events. Other initiatives involve concepts for green buildings on campus and green chemistry in our labs and research. Currently there is a campus wide Sustainability Committee that encourages different departments to develop new ideas to make FSU more environmentally friendly. There has been a recycling program on campus for many years now and many items can be recycled by FSU Solid Waste Management. These items include many plastics, paper products, glass, aluminum, computer equipment and electronics, cell phone batteries, and scrap metal. Last

year FSU recycled 189 tons of cardboard, 39 tons of shredded paper, 189 tons of office paper, 77 tons of scrap metal, 1.5 tons of aluminum cans, and 9.6 tons of plastic bottles (FSU Solid Waste and Recycling). As you walk through our beautiful campus you will see the receptacles located in areas where these items are commonly discarded. Many departments on campus are interested in the campus sustainability program and are finding ways to reduce, reuse, and recycle the materials they use. FSU also wants to minimize energy usage in our buildings and encourages all faculty and staff to minimize use of electricity.

FSU would like to be a role model for other colleges and universities. FSU Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) encourages proper waste disposal in order to be good environmental stewards. EH&S collects, sorts, and removes chemicals and other hazardous waste from research facilities across campus in order to make sure these materials are dis-

Continued on page 4

### Tips for Prevention of Slips, Trips and Falls at Work (Source: National Safety Council)

- First and foremost, watch where you're going.
- Keep all aisles, stairs and walkways free of clutter, and keep cabinet doors and drawers closed when not in use.
- Report broken stairs or loose stair coverings.
- Immediately pick up and clean up any dropped items or spills.
- Use caution on stairways: use handrails and take one step at a time.
- When walking on a wet or slippery surface, slow down, take small steps, and keep a hand free for balance.
- If your work area tends to be wet, dirty, or oily, wear slip-resistant footwear, and keep the soles clean for better traction. Request nonskid floor coatings and slip-resistant mats in slippery or heavy traffic areas.
- Place chains, guardrails, or warning tapes around elevated areas.
- Keep all harnesses and other fall protection equipment in working order, and use them correctly.
- When using a ladder, start with a firm, solid surface. Inspect the ladder before and after every job. And follow the safety rules and warnings posted on the ladder.
- Report even a minor fall. It could prevent someone from experiencing a more serious injury down the line.

## Sustainability, from page 3

posed of properly. We collect and dispose of fluorescent light bulbs as hazardous waste to keep mercury out of the environment. EH&S has started a program to monitor the storm water system on campus to prevent environmentally harmful substances like oil based paints and harmful materials from entering the aquifer. We would like to encourage students and faculty to be aware of the impact their activities have on the environment.

We can all make choices that reduce our use of natural resources and shift to renewable resources. We can select environmentally friendly products and reduce our energy usage in order to minimize our impact on the environment.

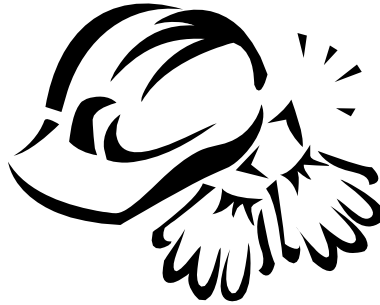
If you are interested in learning more about recycling on campus check out the Florida State University Collection and Recycling Web Site at [www.servicelearning.fsu.edu/recycling/recycling.html](http://www.servicelearning.fsu.edu/recycling/recycling.html)

The Center for Civic Education's Campus Sustainability project web site can be found at [www.fsu.edu/~service/sl/recycling.htm](http://www.fsu.edu/~service/sl/recycling.htm) (Article written by Gerred Pogge)

### Personal Protective Equipment

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is used whenever engineering or administrative controls are not feasible or do not adequately protect workers from hazards. PPE includes, but is not limited to safety glasses, chemical splash goggles, gloves, lab coats, hard hats, safety shoes, respirators, disposable or cloth overalls, and other protective gear. PPE is routinely used at FSU. Laboratory workers

typically wear safety goggles, appropriate gloves, and lab coats. Maintenance workers may wear safety glasses, work gloves, hearing protection and safety shoes. Each job task must be evaluated and the appropriate PPE selected.



OSHA requires written workplace hazard assessments be completed to determine the necessary PPE. Material Safety Data Sheets, glove selection guides, and other resources should be used to select the appropriate PPE for a task. FSU EH&S is available to help you in:

- conducting hazard assessments,
- choosing appropriate PPE, and
- providing training for use and maintenance of PPE.

It is essential to choose PPE that is specific to the hazard and type of work to be performed. PPE must be compatible with chemical hazards, provide proper dexterity, limit eyesight interference, fit properly and be comfortable. If

these factors are not considered, employees are less likely to wear their required PPE. The use of a respirator requires a medical exam and fit test prior to use. Please refer to EH&S's web site for further information.

### “Seek Shelter Now!”

The University is in the process of installing an outdoor warning system on the main campus. The system consists of three strategically placed sirens used to alert the University community in the event of an emergency. Two of the systems three sirens are installed and the third will be installed adjacent to Landis Green. An educational campaign and testing is slated to begin in May.



FLORIDA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

Environmental Health and Safety  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4481

First Class  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Tallahassee, FL  
Permit 55