



# THE EHS CONNECTION

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY NEWSLETTER-APRIL 2016

## FIRE FACTS

### **Fire is FAST!**

#### **There is little time!**

In less than 30 seconds a small flame can get completely out of control and turn into a major fire. It only takes minutes for thick black smoke to fill a house. In minutes, a house can be engulfed in flames. If you wake up to a fire, you won't have time to grab valuables because fire spreads too quickly and the smoke is too thick. There is only time to escape.

### **Fire is HOT!**

#### **Heat is more threatening than flames.**

A fire's heat alone can kill. Room temperatures in a fire can be 100 degrees at floor level and rise to 600 degrees at eye level. Inhaling this super-hot air will scorch your lungs. This heat can melt clothes to your skin. In five minutes a room can get so hot that everything in it ignites at once: this is called flashover.

### **Fire is DARK!**

#### **Fire isn't bright, it's pitch black.**

Fire starts bright, but quickly produces black smoke and complete darkness. If you wake up to a fire you may be blinded, disoriented and unable to find your way around the home you've lived in for years.

### **Fire is DEADLY!**

#### **Smoke and toxic gases kill more people than flames do.**

Fire uses up the oxygen you need and produces smoke and poisonous gases that kill. Breathing even small amounts of smoke and toxic gases can make you drowsy, disoriented and short of breath. The odorless, colorless fumes can lull you into a deep sleep before the flames reach your door. You may not wake up in time to escape.

**SMOKE ALARMS ARE A KEY PART OF A HOME FIRE ESCAPE PLAN. WHEN THERE IS A FIRE, SMOKE SPREADS FAST. WORKING SMOKE ALARMS GIVE YOU EARLY WARNING SO YOU CAN GET OUTSIDE QUICKLY.**

### **SAFETY TIPS**

- Install smoke alarms inside and outside each bedroom and sleeping area. Install alarms on every level of the home. Install alarms in the basement.
- Large homes may need extra smoke alarms.
- It is best to use interconnected smoke alarms. When one smoke alarm sounds they all sound.
- Test all smoke alarms at least once a month. Press the test button to be sure the alarm is working.
- There are two kinds of alarms. Ionization smoke alarms are quicker to warn about flaming fires. Photoelectric alarms are quicker to warn about smoldering fires. It is best to use of both types of alarms in the home.
- A smoke alarm should be on the ceiling or high on a wall. Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen to reduce false alarms. They should be at least 10 feet (3 meters) from the stove.
- People who are hard-of-hearing or deaf can use special alarms. These alarms have strobe lights and bed shakers.
- Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old.

**TIM GANEY AND JORDAN DAVIE WOULD LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE FOR THEIR COOPERATION DURING OUR ANNUAL OFPC CAMPUS INSPECTION!**

## WHAT IS DISTRACTED DRIVING?

Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. All distractions endanger driver, passenger, and bystander safety. These types of distractions include:

TEXTING

USING A CELL PHONE OR SMARTPHONE

EATING AND DRINKING

TALKING TO PASSENGERS

GROOMING

READING, INCLUDING MAPS

USING A NAVIGATION SYSTEM

WATCHING A VIDEO

ADJUSTING A RADIO, CD PLAYER, OR MP3 PLAYER

But, because text messaging requires visual, manual, and cognitive attention from the driver, it is by far the most alarming distraction.



## WORK FRIDGE SAFETY

Is your shared office refrigerator filled with mystery items, funky smells and 5-month-old yogurt? It's time to take action.

### PROPER TEMPERATURE

- Refrigerators should be kept at 40° F or below to best slow bacterial growth in foods. Avoid storing food in temperatures between 40° F and 140° F - this range is considered the "danger zone" where bacteria growth can double in just 20 minutes, according to <http://www.foodsafety.gov/>
- Set freezers at 0° F. Regularly check refrigerator and freezer temps with kitchen thermometers.
- If perishable food has been left in your office's refrigerator for more than a week, throw it out, Foodsafety.gov advises. Clean up spills immediately using hot soapy water.

### FOOD STORAGE TIPS

Regarding food storage, Foodsafety.gov recommends following these four tips:

- Read food labels for storage recommendations. Items such as mayonnaise, ketchup and other condiments should be refrigerated after opening. If an item hasn't been properly refrigerated, don't risk it. It's best to toss it.
- Be mindful of expiration dates. If a food item is past its use-by date or the food looks questionable, throw it out.
- If food looks or smells funny, or you can see mold forming, discard the item.
- Make cleaning the refrigerator a shared responsibility at your office. Circulate these safety tips among your co-workers, who may be unaware of the importance of maintaining a clean fridge.

## 6 WAYS YOU CAN HELP KEEP OUR WATER CLEAN



SIMPLY BY GOING ABOUT YOUR DAILY ROUTINES—USING CLEANING PRODUCTS, WALKING THE DOG—YOU MIGHT BE UNKNOWINGLY CONTRIBUTING TO THE POLLUTION OF OUR ALREADY STRUGGLING WATERWAYS. LUCKILY, THERE ARE A FEW INCREDIBLY EASY WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR IMPACT.

### 1. TAKE A HARD LOOK AT YOUR OUTDOOR SURFACES.

Stormwater flows across hard materials, like concrete or asphalt, and into storm drains—bringing all the dirty stuff it picked up along the way. Stop these pollution streams on your own property by using gravel, paver stones, wood, or other porous materials whenever possible. If a hard surface is unavoidable (say, in the case of a driveway), dig a shallow trench along the border and add plants or gravel to catch the runoff before it travels too far.

### 2. REMEMBER, YOUR TOILET IS NOT A TRASH CAN.

Never flush non-degradable products, like baby wipes or plastic tampon applicators. They can throw a huge wrench into the sewage treatment process and wind up littering beaches and water. (Who wants to walk along a beach and step in their own garbage?) And never dump old pills in the toilet, either. Instead, bring them to a local pharmacy that has a take-back program \*\*\*

### 3. AND NEITHER IS YOUR SINK.

Don't let paint, used oil, chemical cleaners, or other questionable household products go down the drain. These items contain toxic ingredients (think sodium hypochlorite, ammonia, formaldehyde) we don't want in our water supply. To find out about hazardous-waste collection days and facilities, search by product on <http://www.earth911.com/> or contact your local sanitation, public works, or environmental health department.

### 4. PICK UP AFTER FIDO.

You're not just being a good neighbor. Scooping up pet waste keeps that bacteria-laden crap (literally) from running into storm drains and water supplies. The most practical of the planet-friendly disposal methods is to tie it in a recycled-plastic pet-waste bag and throw it in the trash, but check your local ordinances.

### 5. BE A MORE CAREFUL CAR OWNER.

Good maintenance can reduce the leaking of oil, coolant, antifreeze, and other nasty liquids that are carried by rainwater down driveways or through parking lots and then seep into groundwater supplies. Go a step further by always choosing a car wash over hosing down your ride yourself. The pros are required to drain their wastewater into sewer systems, where the water is treated for all the bad stuff before being discharged. Many even recycle that water.

### \*\*\*DISPOSAL OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS IN HOUSEHOLD TRASH

If no medicine take-back programs or DEA-authorized collectors are available in your area, you can also follow these simple steps to dispose of most medicines in the household trash:

1. Mix medicines (do not crush tablets or capsules) with an unpalatable substance such as dirt, kitty litter, or used coffee grounds;
2. Place the mixture in a container such as a sealed plastic bag;
3. Throw the container in your household trash;
4. Scratch out all personal information on the prescription label of your empty pill bottle or empty medicine packaging to make it unreadable, then dispose of the container.

# STOP USING DISPOSABLE PLASTIC: PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Currently about 300 million tons of plastic are produced each year to make bags, bottles, packages, and other commodities for people all over the world. Unfortunately, only about ten percent of this plastic is properly recycled and reused. The rest ends up as waste in landfills or as litter in our natural environment, where it leaches dangerous chemicals into the nearby soil and water, endangering humans and wildlife alike.

## START COMPOSTING: TURN YOUR SPOILS INTO SOIL!

Each year billions of pounds of food are needlessly thrown away, ending up in landfills. In fact, more than one third of all food produced around the world for human consumption is wasted every year. One way to reduce this waste is by composting!

Composting is a biological process during which naturally occurring microorganisms, bacteria and insects, break down organic materials such as leaves, grass clippings and certain kitchen scraps into a soil-like product called compost. It is a form of recycling—a natural way of returning needed nutrients to the soil. Visit <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home> for great in-

*Come celebrate* **EARTH DAY** *early by visiting*

### **RICE CREEK FIELD STATION**

- *CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES*
- *FITNESS & OUTDOORS SESSION* 2:45PM
- *RCA REFLECTIONS* 3:00PM TALK ON WILDFLOWERS
- *REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED*

**Saturday, April 16, 2016 2:00PM to 5:00PM**

NOTE OFFICIAL EARTH DAY IS APRIL 22, 2016

Free and open to the public!

Join RCA at the field station: 193 Thompson Road  
Oswego, NY 13126  
315-312-6677

**ERGONOMIC ASSESSMENT:** CHRISTINE BODY HAS BEEN DOING ERGONOMIC ASSESSMENTS SINCE 1996 AND IS AVAILABLE TO DO THEM HERE ON CAMPUS. SHE CAN BE REACHED AT 312-2770 AND WOULD BE HAPPY TO ASSIST YOU WITH ANY QUESTIONS OR ISSUES.



## APRIL WORD SEARCH

For a chance to win a great prize (more like an OK prize, but-hey, it's a PRIZE!), complete the Word Search and send it via e-mail to [lisa.drake@oswego.edu](mailto:lisa.drake@oswego.edu) OR through Campus Mail: Lisa Drake, 110 Lee Hall. Make sure to put your name on it! The winner for March was Bill Schaffer. Look for: Fast, Major Fire, Thick Black Smoke, Hot, Heat, Flames, Flashover, Dark, Deadly, Toxic Gases, Oxygen, Poisonous, Drowsy, Disoriented, Smoke Alarm, Interconnected, Test Button, Replace, Distracted Driving, Visual, Manual, Congitive, Refrigerator, Temperature, Storage, Pollution, Storm Water, Waste, Prescription Drugs, Earth Day, Environment, and Composting.

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**TICKS!!!** DON'T FORGET TO USE TICK PREVENTION. TICKS

ARE TOUGH LITTLE CRITTERS! IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE WARM  
OUTSIDE FOR THEM TO BE ACTIVE AND READY TO FIND WARM

BLOODED DOGS AND THEIR HUMANS. I FOUND TICKS ON CALVIN AFTER WALKING IN  
THE WOODS THROUGHOUT THE WINTER MONTHS. SO, IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE SO AL-  
READY, GET YOUR DOG SOME PROTECTION FROM TICKS AND USE IT! AND MAKE SURE TO  
CHECK YOUR DOG AND YOURSELF FOR TICKS AFTER WALKS.