



THE EHS CONNECTION

MAY 2018

FIRE MARSHAL SAFETY GUIDELINES

You can help by noticing the following common fire risks and bringing them to your co-workers' attention or to the attention of the Environmental Health & Safety Office. We've included explanations for why these seemingly innocuous practices can be a fire risk.

1. **Fire Extinguishers:** They need to be inspected monthly. I will take care of this, but if you notice a fire extinguisher on your floor that is damaged, is missing the pin that locks it while not in use, or has a gauge needle pointing to red rather than green, let me know. When a fire strikes, we want these tools to be effective!
2. **Extension Cords:** If you see one in use, please have it removed or call me. Extension cords are not a safe substitute for a surge protector or an additional electrical outlet. If we need more outlets, we need to put in work orders to have them installed. Extension cords cannot tolerate numerous electronic devices and the brown and white ones are essentially useless for this. They get overloaded and fry, starting fires. Extension Cords must be replaced with surge protectors. Extension Cords will be confiscated and not given back to the person.
3. **Misuse of Surge Protectors and Power Strips:** If you are using a power strip or surge protector, the device must be plugged directly into an outlet and the electronic device must be plugged directly into the power strip/surge protector. Do not use two power strips OR an extension cord and a power strip to make up the distance to an outlet on the other side of your office. Put in a work order for a new outlet. Again, these devices get overloaded by the electrical current and start smoking, leading to a fire. A power strip will not protect your equipment if a surge occurs in the electrical line, but a surge protector will. Get a surge protector.
4. **Storing Things up to the Ceiling:** Don't do it. Fire code requires a 24-inch clearance for all rooms. If there are sprinklers in your workspace, then you must leave 18 inches from the bottom of the sprinkler head. This allows the sprinklers to do their jobs by wetting down the stored material so that it does not catch fire. If the sprinkler head is blocked, it cannot spray the room effectively with water. Anything above the sprinkler head, will be at risk. The sprinklers help keep fire from eating into the ceiling to the floor above.
5. **Blocked Emergency Exits and Corridors:** Keep all emergency exits and corridors free of chairs, filing cabinets, small tables and rugs that could cause people to trip. In the event of fire, this is your way to safety. Fires can kill power to the building. During a blaze, the corridor could be smoky and dark. Anything in your way, could cause injury and slow the evacuation of the building and your path to safety!
6. **Electrical Panels:** Most of these will be located in mechanical or custodial closets that the majority of you won't have access to, however, if you do, electrical panels need three feet of clearance on all sides and in front so that they can be easily accessed in case of a fire and electricity can be shut off to various parts of the floor or building.
7. **Door Stops:** No wooden door chocks allowed. The door serves to protect you in a fire. Some offer more protection than others. Doors with a fire rating will indicate how long they are expected to hold up in a fire. If the door is open, it has a fire rating of zero minutes and offers no protection! Wooden door chocks damage doors as well. If you need to have a door open for air circulation and to stay cool, then use a rubber chock. But remove the chock any time you leave the room.
8. **Malfunctioning Exit Lights, Missing Switch Plates and Outlet Covers:** If you notice any of these problems, please put in a work order and notify me. Each of these devices help reduce the risk of fire and injury.

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SMOKE ALARMS



If you have a fire, smoke alarms can cut nearly in half your risk of dying in a fire. Smoke alarms sense abnormal amounts of smoke or invisible combustion gases in the air. They can detect both smoldering and flaming fires.

In new homes: The National Fire Alarm Code (NFPA 72) requires hard-wired, interconnected smoke alarms with battery back-up on every level of the home, outside each sleeping area, and inside each bedroom. Alarms must be wired together so that if one sounds, they all sound.

In existing homes: If smoke alarms are not already in place, at a minimum install them on every level of the home and outside each sleeping area. If a fire occurs inside a bedroom, dangerous gases can cause heavier sleep. For the best protection, install interconnected smoke alarms in each bedroom and throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.

To prevent nuisance alarms, vacuum cobwebs and dust from your smoke alarms monthly. Never disable a smoke alarm, even if you experience nuisance alarms while cooking or showering. Instead, use the alarm's "hush" button. If nuisance alarms are a persistent problem, look for a different type of smoke alarm and ensure they are installed in correct areas in the home.

Use the test button to test your smoke alarms at least monthly. The test feature tests all electronic functions and is safer than testing with a controlled fire (matches, lighters, cigarettes).

If the manufacturer's instructions permit the use of an aerosol smoke product for testing the smoke alarm, choose one that has been examined and tested by a third-party product testing laboratory, and use it in accordance with the product instructions.

If you have battery-powered smoke alarms, replace the batteries at least once a year. Some agencies recommend that you replace batteries when the time changes from standard to daylight savings each spring and then back again in the fall. "Change your clock, change your batteries." Replacing batteries this often will not hurt, but fresh batteries typically last at least a year, so more frequent replacement is not necessary unless the smoke alarm begins to chirp.

Replace the batteries in your carbon monoxide (CO) alarms at the same time you replace your smoke alarm batteries.

Replace your smoke alarms every 10 years. This is the recommendation of the National Fire Protection Association and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Smoke alarms become less sensitive over time.

Be sure to install smoke alarms in areas where pets are and in other buildings that house animals where humans can hear them.

WAYS TO TRIM FOOD WASTE

GREEN UP THE MENU

Literally and figuratively.

Eating more fruits and vegetables, especially locally grown ones, can help reduce your family's environmental impact in a big way. Look for local farmers who use sustainable practices at your local grocer or farmers markets. If your family eats meat, choose less beef. Opt instead for locally raised and harvested animals, and use all cuts of the animal. Your local butcher can help with sourcing and even give you cooking tips.

PLAN, PLAN AND THEN PLAN SOME MORE

A little bit of prep can go a long way. Plan your meals for the week and then shop appropriately, purchasing only what you need. Buy in bulk, but also keep a list of what you have on hand so you don't accidentally buy too much. And make sure you use it before it expires.

STORE APPROPRIATELY

A lot of the food that ends up in the garbage spoiled due to poor storage. Keep fruits and vegetables in the right conditions so they stay fresh longer; ask your local grocer if you're unsure of how to store something. Before unused fruits and veggies spoil, freeze, preserve or can the leftovers, especially when in season and less expensive.

You also can freeze bread, some shredded cheese, meats and other foods you don't eat before they spoil. For even more convenience, cook and freeze whole dishes for a quick and easy dinner later.

EATING OUT

Remember not to use straws and request just the paper goods you'll use during your meal. When ordering or serving from a buffet, take only what you'll eat, and if you have leftovers, bring them with you for another meal.

PUT IT IN THE (COMPOST) BIN

Any fruits or veggies that do spoil can be put into the compost along with fruit and vegetable scraps from your meals.

You must never compost dairy products, fats or oils, meat scraps or bones, pet wastes, or anything treated with chemical pesticides that can harm the good bacteria in your compost.

NUTRIENT POLLUTION is one of America's most widespread, costly and challenging environmental problems, and is caused by excess nitrogen and phosphorus in the air and water. Nitrogen and phosphorus are nutrients that are natural parts of aquatic ecosystems. Nitrogen is also the most abundant element in the air we breathe. Nitrogen and phosphorus support the growth of algae and aquatic plants, which provide food and habitat for fish, shellfish and smaller organisms that live in water.

But when too much nitrogen and phosphorus enter the environment - usually from a wide range of human activities - the air and water can become polluted. Nutrient pollution has impacted many streams, rivers, lakes, bays and coastal waters for the past several decades, resulting in serious environmental and human health issues, and impacting the economy.

Too much nitrogen and phosphorus in the water causes algae to grow faster than ecosystems can handle. Significant increases in algae harm water quality, food resources and habitats, and decrease the oxygen that fish and other aquatic life need to survive. Large growths of algae are called algal blooms and they can severely reduce or eliminate oxygen in the water, leading to illnesses in fish and the death of large numbers of fish. Some algal blooms are harmful to humans because they produce elevated toxins and bacterial growth that can make people sick if they come into contact with polluted water, consume tainted fish or shellfish, or drink contaminated water.

Nutrient pollution in ground water - which millions of people in the United States use as their drinking water source - can be harmful, even at low levels. Infants are vulnerable to a nitrogen-based compound called nitrates in drinking water. Excess nitrogen in the atmosphere can produce pollutants such as ammonia and ozone, which can impair our ability to breathe, limit visibility and alter plant growth. When excess nitrogen comes back to earth from the atmosphere, it can harm the health of forests, soils and waterways.

Excessive nitrogen and phosphorus that washes into water bodies and is released into the air are often the direct result of human activities. The primary sources of nutrient pollution are:

AGRICULTURE: Animal manure, excess fertilizer applied to crops and fields, and soil erosion make agriculture one of the largest sources of nitrogen and phosphorus pollution in the country.

STORMWATER: When precipitation falls on our cities and towns, it runs across hard surfaces - like rooftops, sidewalks and roads - and carries pollutants, including nitrogen and phosphorus, into local waterways.

WASTEWATER: Our sewer and septic systems are responsible for treating large quantities of waste, and these systems do not always operate properly or remove enough nitrogen and phosphorus before discharging into waterways.

FOSSIL FUELS: Electric power generation, industry, transportation and agriculture have increased the amount of nitrogen in the air through use of fossil fuels.

IN AND AROUND THE HOME: Fertilizers, yard and pet waste, and certain soaps and detergents contain nitrogen and phosphorus, and can contribute to nutrient pollution if not properly used or disposed of. The amount of hard surfaces and type of landscaping can also increase the runoff of nitrogen and phosphorus during wet weather.



RESPONSIBLE PET CARE



Stepping in dog waste can be a nasty experience, but even worse is the knowledge that it may be polluting your drinking water, family swimming area, or favorite fishing spot. When dog waste is left on the ground, rain or melting snow transports it to local lakes and streams where it can negatively affect water quality. The waste contains fecal coliform bacteria and parasites that can cause human diseases and health problems. Dog waste also contains nitrogen and phosphorus that promote the growth of unwanted algae and rooted aquatic plants in lakes and streams. In fact, dog waste has a higher phosphorus concentration than cow and swine manure and is considered to be a major contributor of pollution in urban watersheds.

Scooping your dog's waste isn't just a courtesy for those walking behind you; it also keeps our water resources safe. So please help to keep our local lakes and streams clean (and your neighbors happy) by picking up after your dog.

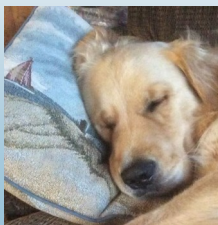
MAY WORD SEARCH

For a chance to win a cool prize, complete the Word Search and send it via e-mail to lisa.drake@oswego.edu OR through Campus Mail: Lisa Drake, 110 Lee Hall. Make sure to put your name on it! The winner for April was David Ferlito. Look for: Fire Risks, Pin, Gauge, Needle, Extinguisher, Extension Cords, Surge Protector, Outlet, Overload, Power Strip, Sprinkler, Smoky, Dark, Door Chock, Smoke Alarms, Combustion, Test Button, Laboratory, Batteries, Locally Grown, Plan, Store, Freeze, Compost, Nutrient, Pollution, Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Algae, Oxygen, Toxins, Bacteria, Agriculture, Storm Water, Waste, Fossil, Fuel, Dog Waste

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CALVIN'S TIP OF THE MONTH:

The weather is getting better finally so get out there and take your dog for a nice long walk. It's good for you both! Don't forget to bring along bags to clean up dog poo, and water in case he or she gets thirsty!



DUTCHISM FOR MAY

The Counter Running Stream

Your forward is my reverse
 We form a whirlpool of dissatisfaction
 Let's live together with kind attraction
 To form a pleasant universe