

# THE EHS CONNECTION

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY NEWSLETTER-SEPTEMBER 2015



The Labor Day holiday is interesting because it evolved over a period of years. In 19th century America, there was already a tradition of having parades, picnics and various other celebrations in support of labor issues, such as shorter hours or to rally strikers. But most historians emphasize one specific event in the development of today's modern Labor Day. That pivotal event was the parade of unions and a massive picnic that took place in New York City on Sept. 5, 1882.

At that time, the labor movement was growing stronger. Many of the unions in New York prospered by joining together into one Central Labor Union made up of members from many local unions. On May 14, 1882, a proposal was made at the Central Labor Union meeting that all workers should join together for a "monster labor festival" in early September. A committee of five people was appointed to find a park for the celebration. They chose Wendel's Elm Park at 92nd Street and 9th Avenue, the largest park in New York City at that time; the date was set for Tuesday, September 5. By June, they had sold 20,000 tickets with the proceeds going to each local union selling them. In August, the Central Labor Union passed a resolution "that the 5th of September be proclaimed a general holiday for the workingmen in this city."

At first they were afraid that the celebration was going to be a failure. Many of the workers in the parade had to lose a day's pay in order to participate. When the parade began only a handful of workers were in it, while hundreds of people stood on the sidewalk jeering at them. But then slowly they came - 200 workers and a band from the Jewelers' Union showed up and joined the parade. Then came a group of bricklayers with another band. By the time they reached the park, it was estimated that there were 10,000 marchers in the parade in support of workers.

The park was decorated with flags of many nations. Everyone picnicked, drank beer and listened to speeches from the union leadership. In the evening, even more people came to the park to watch fireworks and dance. The newspapers of the day declared it a huge success and "a day of the people."

After that major event in New York City, other localities began to pick up the idea for a fall festival of parades and picnics celebrating workers.

Labor Day as a national, legal holiday had an interesting evolution. The legalized celebration of Labor Day began as individual state celebrations. In 1887, New York, New Jersey and Colorado were among the first states to approve state legal holidays. Then other states joined in to create their own state Labor Days. Finally, in response to a groundswell of support for a national holiday celebrating the nation's workers, Sen.

James Henderson Kyle of South Dakota introduced S. 730 to the 53rd Congress to make Labor Day a legal holiday on the first Monday of September each year. It was approved on June 28, 1894.

*From former Department of Labor Historian, Linda Stinson*

LABOR DAY

# SMOKE ALARMS



## INSTALLING SMOKE ALARMS

- Choose smoke alarms that have the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Install smoke alarms inside each bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement.
- On levels without bedrooms, install alarms in the living room (or den or family room) or near the stairway to the upper level, or in both locations.
- Smoke alarms installed in the basement should be installed on the ceiling at the bottom of the stairs leading to the next level.
- Smoke alarms should be installed at least 10 feet (3 meters) from a cooking appliance to minimize false alarms when cooking.
- Mount smoke alarms high on walls or ceilings (remember, smoke rises). Wall-mounted alarms should be installed not more than 12 inches away from the ceiling (to the top of the alarm).
- If you have ceilings that are pitched, install the alarm within 3 feet of the peak but not within the apex of the peak (four inches down from the peak).
- Don't install smoke alarms near windows, doors, or ducts where drafts might interfere with their operation.
- Never paint smoke alarms. Paint, stickers, or other decorations could keep the alarms from working.
- For the best protection, interconnect all smoke alarms. When one smoke alarm sounds they all sound. Interconnection can be done using hard-wiring or wireless technology.
- When interconnected smoke alarms are installed, it is important that all of the alarms are from the same manufacturer. If the alarms are not compatible, they may not sound.
- There are two types of smoke alarms - ionization and photoelectric. An ionization smoke alarm is generally more responsive to flaming fires, and a photoelectric smoke alarm is generally more responsive to smoldering fires. For the best protection, both types of alarms or combination ionization-photoelectric alarms, also known as dual sensor smoke alarms, are recommended.
- Keep manufacturer's instructions for reference.

## TESTING SMOKE ALARMS

- Smoke alarms should be maintained according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Test smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button.
- Make sure everyone in the home understands the sound of the smoke alarm and knows how to respond.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions for cleaning to keep smoke alarms working well. The instructions are included in the package or can be found on the internet.
- Smoke alarms with non-replaceable 10-year batteries are designed to remain effective for up to 10 years. If the alarm chirps, warning that the battery is low, replace the entire smoke alarm right away.
- Smoke alarms with any other type of battery need a new battery at least once a year. If that alarm chirps, warning the battery is low, replace the battery right away.
- When replacing a battery, follow manufacturer's list of batteries on the back of the alarm or manufacturer's instructions. Manufacturer's instructions are specific to the batteries (brand and model) that must be used. The smoke alarm may not work properly if a different kind of battery is used.

### GREEN TIP: UNPLUG IT!

LOTS OF ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT WHICH CONTAIN A TRANSFORMER AND/OR CAPACITORS DRAW WHAT IS CALLED "PHANTOM POWER" FROM THE GRID EVEN WHEN NOT BEING USED. MOST TELEVISIONS, SPEAKERS, DESKTOP COMPUTERS, LAPTOP CHARGERS, PRINTERS, EXTERNAL HARD DRIVES, WIRELESS ROUTERS, AND GAMING SYSTEMS DRAW PHANTOM POWER WHEN PLUGGED IN BUT TURNED OFF.

**TO MAKE IT SIMPLE, PLUG ALL OF YOUR DEVICES INTO POWER STRIPS. THEN, WHEN YOU LEAVE FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME, SIMPLY UNPLUG OR TURN OFF THE POWER STRIPS.**



# YOUR BACK

Your back is a column of 24 vertebrae (7 Cervical, 12 Thoracic, and 5 Lumbar) as well as 5 fused vertebrae in the sacrum and the 4 coccygeal bones. Your spine is also comprised of soft tissue structures (ligaments, muscles and tendons) and intervertebral discs. The discs act like cushions to absorb shock. In addition, your back provides movement and stability. To do this, your back must stay healthy through good posture, proper material handling techniques, and healthy habits.



## HOW DO I KEEP MY BACK SAFE AND HEALTHY?

There are many things you can do to avoid back pain. Some healthy habits include:

- Adopt good postural habits. Maintain the natural curves in your back, they provide strength and support for you back. This is especially important when doing anything strenuous (such as lifting) or when sitting/ standing for prolonged periods of time.
- Maintain a healthy body weight. Added pounds can cause added strain on your back.
- Keep your back strong.
- Improve your flexibility. Did you know that having flexible hamstrings can often reduce your lower back discomfort?
- Participate in a regular exercise program (be sure and seek approval from your physician before starting any exercise program)

## WHAT CAUSES BACK PAIN?

While back pain can occur from a single incident such as car accident or a fall, most back pain occurs as a result of:

- Poor Posture
- Poor Physical Health
- Poor Body Mechanics
- Repetitive Strain

These factors can cause wear and tear on your back and may eventually lead to pain and disability.

## WHAT IS GOOD POSTURE?

The general concept of posture refers to "the carriage of the body as a whole, the attitude of the body, or the position of the arms and legs". It is the position in which you hold your body upright against gravity while standing, sitting or lying down. Good posture is the position which is attained when the joints are not bent or twisted and the spine is aligned. Maintaining good posture involves training your body to move and function where the least strain is placed on bones, joints and soft tissues.

## WHAT CAN GOOD POSTURE DO FOR YOU?

- Optimize breathing and circulation
- Maintain the bones and joints in the correct alignment so that muscles are being used properly and efficiently
- Help reduce or prevent the abnormal wearing of joint surfaces that could result in degenerative diseases, such as arthritis
- Decrease the stress on the soft tissues, such as ligaments, muscles, tendons and discs
- Prevent the spine from becoming fixed in abnormal positions
- Prevent fatigue because muscles are being used more efficiently, allowing the body to use less energy
- Prevent postural strain or overuse problems
- Prevent neck or back pain
- Prevent muscle fatigue
- Contributes to a healthy image or appearance

WE ALL WISH **BECKY KEMPNEY** SMOOTH SAILING THROUGH HER DIFFICULT ROAD AHEAD. HER FRIENDS HAVE SET UP A **MEAL TRAIN** PAGE IF ANYONE IS INTERESTED IN DONATING A MEAL OR CASH TO HELP BECKY AND HER FAMILY. THEY HAVE ALSO SET UP A **BRAVELETS BRAVERY FOR BECKY** PAGE WITH \$10 FROM EACH PURCHASE GOING TOWARD BECKY'S MEDICAL EXPENSES.

PLEASE SEE THE LINKS BELOW FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/39q0my>

<https://www.bravelets.com/bravepage/bravery-for-becky>

## Slips, Trips and Falls

Spilled liquids and wet floors are one of the major causes of slips, trips and falls. IF YOU SPILL SOMETHING, CLEAN IT UP IMMEDIATELY. If you discover a spill or wet floor and need assistance, please contact the custodial staff in your building.



### GREEN TIP:

#### **CARRY A REFILLABLE (STAINLESS STEEL OR PLASTIC BPA FREE) WATER BOTTLE**

Almost twice as much water goes into the making of the disposable bottle as the contents of the bottle, so each bottle of water sold equals three disposable water bottles. The plastic that goes into making disposable water bottles is made from nonrenewable fossil fuels, creating waste on both ends - in the creation of the bottle and it's lifetime in a landfill.

## SUSTAINABILITY

Electric-vehicle charging stations available! In the south parking lot of the Shineman Center, 6 electric cars can charge at a time thanks to newly installed charging stations. This is another great step towards reducing our carbon footprint on campus, and it can be a great convenience for electric car owners. The first four hours of charging are also free! After this free period there is a \$3 per hour charge.

On Saturday (9/5) from 1pm to 3pm the Permaculture Living Lab is looking for volunteers to help with various tasks on-site including: filling beds, planting, weeding and sheet mulching. The site is between Shineman and Lee Hall. Any questions, contact [permaculture@oswego.edu](mailto:permaculture@oswego.edu).

**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.



## SEPTEMBER 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 August was James Mulcahey. Look for: Happy Labor Day, Labor Movement, Central Labor Union, September, Parade, Picnic, Workers, Smoke Alarms, Bedroom, Sleeping Area, Basement, Ceiling, Stairs, Interconnect, Ionization, Photoelectric, Flaming, Smoldering, Test Button, Battery, Phantom Power, Vertebrae, Sacrum, Ligaments, Muscles, Tendons, Back Pain, Posture.

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### CALVIN SAYS...

You may think of your dogs or cats as family members, but do you handle their food and feeding utensils the same way you handle your own? You should! You wouldn't eat off the same plate or drink out of the same glass, day after day, without washing them between meals. So it stands to reason you shouldn't neglect to wash your pet's food and water bowls between meals every day.