

April – June 2008

Upcoming Events
and Reminders

EHS/Rad. Safety
Committee Meeting:
June 4th

Annual Mellon Hall
Safety Meeting
May 2008

Household hazardous
waste cleanout collec-
tion
April 26 at Settlers
Cabin Park Wave Pool

| Inside this issue: | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Work Related Injuries and Illnesses | 2 |
| Paula's Tips: Accident Prevention | 2 |
| Accident Reporting and Investigation | 3 |
| 7 Habits of Safety-Minded People | 3 |
| Accident Prevention at Home | 4 |

Questions or concerns regarding this newsletter or safety in general may be directed to:
safety@duq.edu

The Safety Chronicle

Accident Prevention and the Safety Conscious Campus

Vanessa Fowler

Accident prevention is a proactive approach to safety that searches for the signs and indicators of unsafe situations before injuries or damages occur. The Environmental Health and Safety Department takes an active role in helping to prevent accidents and ensure a safe work environment, but the responsibility of reporting safety issues, being the “eyes and ears” of EH&S, is everyone’s concern.

This process of accident prevention begins with hazard recognition, and continues with proper reporting in order for corrective action and resolution to take place. A key component of this approach is hazard recognition, which begs the question: “What is a hazard?” Most hazards fit into a few common categories:

- Slip/trip/fall hazards– loose bricks/concrete/ flooring and surface impediments such as cords or rolled up carpets.

- Fire hazards– blocked exits, blocked or missing fire extinguishers and overloaded circuits.
- Storage hazards– high storage, storage of flammables/ combustibles near electrical equipment and improper mixed storage of incompatible chemicals.

Once a hazard is identified, proper reporting can start the process of correction: knowledge is power, but only in the right hands. There are a number of programs and policies at Duquesne for the purpose of identifying and compiling these safety concerns.


One very important way EH&S gathers information regarding safety hazards is through feedback from the broader campus community. The “Safe ‘D’ Suggestion” form provides a link between the entire campus community and EH&S for the reporting of safety concerns. Upon receipt, these forms/concerns are directed to the appropriate supervisor or

department or entered as a Facilities Management Work Order for immediate resolution.

To encourage the use of “Safe ‘D’ Suggestion” forms and the reporting of safety concerns in general, the Safety Recognition Program awards quarterly prizes to the “top 4” suggestions; the LMSC votes for the four suggestions that contribute the most to campus safety. First place winners receive a “Safe ‘D’ First” monogrammed, 2-layer winter coat and second through fourth place winners receive a “Safe ‘D’ First” polo shirt.

While EH&S takes on the responsibility of implementing programs or taking actions that will prevent accidents, our role is really a partnership with each individual and department, helping you to create a safe campus. Learn to recognize the hazards in your area and use the avenues of communication established to resolve those issues.

| CAMPUS SAFETY SUGGESTION FORM | | Safe D First | | No: <input type="text"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--|--|--------------------------|
| Suggested by: _____ | | INSTRUCTIONS: Please type or print any suggestions/concerns that may improve campus safety and prevent illnesses or injuries from occurring. This form is for non-emergency issues and should be given to your Safety Committee Representative, Supervisor, or Physical Plant. The safety Committee will review and respond accordingly. | | |
| Signature: _____ | | Date: _____ Department: _____ | | |
| Date: _____ | | *Name not mandatory unless direct response is requested. | | |
| DESCRIPTION OF SAFETY ISSUE: | YOUR SUGGESTED SOLUTION: | Written Response from safety Committee Requested? Yes No | | |
| | | ACTION TAKEN | | |
| Initially Received by: _____ Date: _____ | | | | |
| Safety Committee Review Date: _____ | | | | |

Safe "D" Suggestion forms are available on the EH&S website under "Safety Suggestions and Incident Reporting."


Work Related Injuries and Illnesses versus the Duquesne Standard

George Bender

Though Duquesne ranks well below the national average among Universities for injuries and illnesses, it is our intent to reduce our incident rate to zero. Zero may seem impossible, so let us follow the advice of St. Francis of Assisi: "Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly, you are doing the impossible."

OSHA requires that an employer record the number of injuries and illnesses that occur each year in their workplace and report those results by February 1 of the following year. This information is reported by using what is called the OSHA 300 form, which is used to classify work-related injuries and illnesses and to note the severity of each case. Duquesne University requires that an Accident/Incident Report be filed for each injury/illness that occurs on campus in an effort to honor this obligation.

An incident rate, the number of recordable injuries and illnesses occurring among a given number of full-time workers over a given period of time, is calculated and included as part of this annual report. See the table at the right

for Duquesne's incident rates for the past 5 years and compare those to the national average.

Duquesne, through the EH&S Department, compares the incident rate against the average of the education sector nationwide to evaluate our injury and illness experience. This permits the identification of problems in the workplace and/or the progress that has been made toward preventing work-related injuries and illness on campus.

Through this process of identifying the causes of accidents, coordinating with affected groups to provide training or necessary materials to prevent injury or illness and on-going assessment, we are able to chip away at the necessary and possible and approach the "impossible:" an incident-free workplace.

| Year | Duquesne Case Rate | National Average-Colleges |
|------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 2007 | 1.69 | TBA |
| 2006 | 1.73 | 2.3 |
| 2005 | 1.50 | 2.7 |
| 2004 | 1.64 | 2.8 |
| 2003 | 1.66 | 2.7 |

Definitions at a Glance

An injury or illness is considered work-related if an event or exposure in the workplace caused or contributed to the condition or significantly aggravated a pre-existing condition.

Workplace: the "establishment and other locations where one or more employees are working or are present as a condition of their employment. "

Injury: Any wound or damage to the body resulting from an event in the workplace.

Paula's Tips...

Accident Prevention in the Lab and on the Job

Personal conduct and the basic elements of how we do our jobs are major factors in an individual's accident record. We often forget, overlook or simply ignore the basic practices that will prevent an incident or protect in the event of an accident. Whatever the reason, it is important to periodically assess our personal performance and practices to ensure we are doing everything possible to stay safe on the job.

- Know what you are working with- MSDSs and labels contain a lot of important information regarding chemical safety. Know where to find your MSDSs and become familiar with how to read and understand them.
- Know what you are doing- The university environment is the perfect place to expand your knowledge: get the proper training and ask questions so that you fully understand what you are doing and the dangers involved.
- Incorporate appropriate engineering controls- Work in a fume hood/with proper ventilation, schedule work so that time spent on a single task or with a single chemical is broken up by other tasks and follow directions for intended use.
- Wear appropriate PPE- Lab coats, gloves, goggles, shoes and respirators will protect you when engineering controls are not effective. Take the time to select the level of PPE that will protect in the style that will allow you to complete your tasks comfortably.
- Pay attention- Accidents often happen when our minds wander. Pay attention to your surroundings, watch where you are walking, avoid distractions and horseplay and don't overwork yourself: an alert person is a safe person.
- Maintain good housekeeping- Reduce clutter on benches, remove all possible trip hazards in walkways and keep chemicals stored in appropriate cabinets. A neat work area reduces confusion and helps prevent spills or mixing the wrong chemicals.
- Use good chemical handling techniques- Use two hands when handling any chemical (one around the neck and one underneath) and use carts, trays, or racks to transport chemicals through hallways and on the elevator.

Go to “Safety Suggestions and Incident Reporting” on the [EH&S website](#) to find... Incident/Accident Report Forms

Accident Reporting & Investigation

Paula Sweitzer

Working in a building such as Mellon Hall requires individuals to use safe practices to avoid accidents from happening. Accidents can happen, but they can be prevented! It is the hope of EH&S that everybody is doing their best to prevent an accident from happening, but when there is an incident, it is essential that it be reported to EHS.

Incident/accident reporting is an important task that is sometimes overlooked. Accident reporting allows EH&S to become involved with problems that are occurring in the labs; if

we don't know what problems there are, we can't help to resolve them.

The process is initiated by the completion of an Incident/Accident Report Form. It is *very* important to fill out the form clearly and thoroughly. For example, when asked “Exact Location of Accident,” do not write simply “Mellon Hall.” Exact location would mean exactly where that accident occurred; an appropriate answer would include a room number.

Once the report form is received, EH&S initially reviews the report and develops

questions in terms of clarification or corrective actions. A call will then be made to the individual involved to discuss the accident and to gain more information.

In cases of serious physical or monetary damage, a thorough investigation is conducted. Such an investigation would involve a committee of individuals who conduct interviews and write a report.

The accident report is then presented to the appropriate safety committee, such as the Labor/Management Safety Committee or EHS/Radiation Safety Committee. In such situations, individuals' names are never

5 Habits of Safety-Minded People

Vanessa Fowler

Safety policies and programs have their uses. They create guidelines that answer the question, “what is the safe thing to do in this situation?” They harmonize activities and priorities across an expansive organization. But their effectiveness can be largely limited by the mind-set of those to whom it applies. No amount of policy-making or programming will protect you if personal safety is not a priority in your day-to-day tasks.

For some people, safety seems to come naturally, instinctively, and to them, safety policies are more commonsensical and less burdensome. What shapes this frame of mind? What are the values or habits that drive these safety-minded people?

The safety-minded person is aware; they are aware of their surroundings and what they are doing and aren't afraid of the dirty “I” word: inspecting. We are inspecting things all the time: produce at the store, our kids

hands for dirt, our slacks for stray animal hairs. Why wouldn't you “inspect” your work area for safety hazards? Be aware: double check labels and settings, inspect ladders for weakness, watch where you are going and be conscious of others around you.

The safety-minded person is invested in what they are doing. They have undergone the proper training, done the research and care about the process and the outcome. Ownership of their work, whether it be a lab experiment or renovation project, translates into pride in a safe and successful outcome.

In that same vein, the safety conscious individual asks questions. Don't blindly accept the anecdotal evidence or off-hand assurances of a co-worker or other party. Take the time to ask

questions and understand the situation. It is your right and responsibility to understand the risks associated with your work tasks and how to mitigate those risks. Seek out the people who can provide the best information and protect yourself with answers you can trust.

While some may see it as going beyond one's job description, the safety-minded person is

engaged in the safety process.

This person participates in the decision-making processes in which safety programs and policies are formed and provides feedback and

insight into safety issues with appropriate persons. One doesn't need to be a supervisor, director or a part of a committee to be involved: *your* safety is *your* business too and should be inherent in every job description.

Whether we are talking about safety in the workplace, in the home or on the road, the

safety-minded has a reason for being safe. In the most basic sense, a reason to live. We all have things we live for: the weekend, the trip of a lifetime, graduation, our kids or all the things you have left to accomplish. I challenge you to make a list and then think about those things is less black-and-white terms of “dead or alive.” How will respiratory damage affect that marathon dream? How will blindness affect the satisfaction of watching your child receive his or her diploma? If something as simple as a respirator or safety glasses now could make those moments possible, why wouldn't you wear them?

This quarter's safety quote is “Safety first...because accidents last.” Take the time every day to be aware, be invested in your work, ask questions, participate in your own safety and contemplate those things that drive you to go home safely each night so that the burden of a life-long injury or ailment doesn't come between you and your goals.

The Safety-Minded Person...

- Is aware of their surroundings
- Is invested in their work
- Asks questions
- Is engaged in the safety process
- Has a reason for being safe

What is your reason for being safe?



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY

Main Phone: 412-396-4895

Fax: 412-369-5363

E-mail: safety@duq.edu

Website: ehs.duq.edu

Blackboard path: www.blackboard.duq.edu

→My Communities

→University Training

→Environmental Health and Safety

**Check out our
newly renovated
website! Visit
www.ehs.duq.edu**

EH&S Publications and Communications

- ↳ EH&S invites you to peruse our recently renovated website, where you will find a multitude of information regarding safety programs, policies, training, emergency planning/response, insurance and worker's compensation issues.



“Safety first ... because accidents last.”

∞ The Naval Safety Center

Accident Prevention at Home

Nicole Rodrigues

With spring just around the corner, its time to think green thoughts once again. However, lawn and garden maintenance can pose a variety of hazards to both those performing the tasks and others in the area. Extra caution should be used when operating lawnmowers, weed whackers and other gas or electric powered devices, as well as in application of chemicals such as pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers.

The US Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that over 400,000 individuals are injured by lawn and garden tools each year; many accidents involve children under the age of 18 who cut grass and perform maintenance to earn extra money or as chores. Most of these injuries can be prevented with a little extra time and care.

To stay safe:

- Dress properly; wear sturdy shoes that completely cover feet when working with power tools. Never operate a mower with bare feet, sandals, or tennis shoes. Always wear long pants and long sleeves when applying chemicals.
- Pick up all trash, toys and other lawn debris and remove other people and pets from the area; debris can be picked up by the mower blade and propelled at forces strong enough to be deadly to people nearby.
- Mow across the slope with a hand mower, or if using a riding mower, cut up and down the slope to prevent tipping; riding mowers should never be used on steep slopes.
 - **NEVER permit passengers on a riding mower.** Extra riders can cause the mower to tip over, they can be thrown or run over.
 - Keep all extension cords out of reach of sharp objects such



as hedge clippers, weed whackers, and lawnmowers; never work with electric tools in wet or damp conditions, and make sure all tools have a ground fault circuit.



- Wear safety glasses and hearing protection when cutting grass, or operating a weed whacker or blower; sight and hearing can easily be damaged by flying objects and loud noises.
- Handle chemicals carefully! Pesticides and herbicides are not just hazardous to insects and plants; they are also very hazardous to humans. Always read chemical labels before use and follow instructions for application and disposal.
- Apply only as much fertilizer as necessary; using excess fertilizer does not increase effects. The remaining chemical simply runs off crops or lawns polluting waterways.
- Secure all chemicals, including gasoline, pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers and other dangerous mixtures, in small quantities, in a well ventilated area away from the reach of children.