

SAFETY WAVE

Disposal of Used Batteries and Aerosol Cans



The Office of Environmental Health & Safety (OEHS) frequently receives questions about how the campus community should dispose of batteries and aerosol cans. Please consider these acceptable options:

OEHS manages batteries on campus per federal and state regulations dealing with “universal wastes.” These regulations encourage utilization of available recycling options in lieu of disposal. Batteries, including nickel cadmium, lithium, silver and mercury button, and small, sealed lead-acid batteries must be properly collected by the user and picked up by OEHS. After OEHS accumulates and packages the batteries, they are routed to a permitted recycling facility. Alkaline batteries at one time contained a small amount of mercury, but battery manufacturers have since discontinued use of mercury in these batteries and they are no longer considered a hazardous waste. Therefore, alkaline batteries may be discarded in the normal trash. Lead-acid batteries (e.g., car batteries), although also considered as “universal wastes,” are governed by alternate regulations. These alternate regulations also encourage recycling. At Tulane University, uncracked, non-leaking vehicle batteries are collected and routed to a local battery recycler.

Empty aerosol cans may be disposed in the normal trash. Cans still containing product (paint, propellant, pesticides, etc.) must be collected by OEHS for proper disposal per hazardous waste regulations. OEHS discourages the use of common collection areas for the purpose of consolidating used batteries and aerosol cans, or any other type of unwanted, hazardous materials, and instead prefers to deal with the individual user directly. For specific information regarding procedures for the disposal of unwanted hazardous materials, please visit our webpage: www.som.tulane.edu/oehs or contact Bruce McClue, Hazardous Waste Coordinator, at bmcclue@tulane.edu.

Taking Care in Hot Weather

For those who have grown up with our typical Louisiana weather patterns, hot weather is not particularly extraordinary. However, the Louisiana heat is not what most people consider to be ideal working conditions, and there are risks when you work in such hot, humid environments, especially for non-acclimatized employees. In regards to what constitutes acceptable working temperatures, the law is gloriously vague. For example, OSHA states, “the employer must provide a working environment which as far as is reasonably practicable, is safe and without risks to health.” Although OSHA doesn’t have a specific standard for thermal stress, they do have guidelines which are just as enforceable as standards.

When temperatures start to rise, outdoor workers run major risks of sunburn, sunstroke, and heat exhaustion, and the risks typically increase for those involved in heavy physical work. Recommended precautions include frequent and plentiful drinks (clean water being preferable to other types of drink) with regular breaks in a cool place. Clothing should be worn to protect from the effects of direct radiation but, for obvious reasons, it should be light and loose fitting to allow body heat to escape easily. Hats should also be worn. If exposure to the sun is unavoidable, sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 should be liberally applied to all exposed skin. Sunscreen should be applied when skin is still dry before working outside/sweating so it can be absorbed.

Animal Handler Health Surveillance Program

Do you work with research animals? If so, you are required to participate in Tulane's Animal Handler Health Surveillance program. As part of the program, all employees who will be handling research animals or animal tissue must complete a Risk Assessment and History Form (RAHF) and submit it to OEHS.

In addition, a current tetanus immunization (within past 10 years) is recommended for all individuals with animal contact. The need for other immunizations, screenings, and medical evaluation is based on the type of animal and medical history information provided on the RAHF. Costs for immunizations and screenings are borne by the individual principal investigator or his/her department.

If you work with animals, you should have a RAHF on file with OEHS. This document does not need to be re-submitted annually—it's just a one time thing that should be done before you actually start working with animals. If you would like to verify your participation in the Animal Handler Health Surveillance program, please contact Susan Welch at 988-3996 or swelch@tulane.edu. Further information on the program can be found on the OEHS website: <http://www.som.tulane.edu/oehs/ahhs.htm>.

Office Chair Incident

Recently a Tulane employee was injured when the office chair she was sitting in “broke.” Apparently it had been improperly assembled, since only two of the four bolts which connect the seat to the base were in place. Many chairs are sent unassembled from the manufacturer, for packaging purposes, with the base stand and wheels separated from the seat portion. The chair is then assembled at the store or upon delivery. Some stores sell chair “assembling” as part of the service or as an additional fee. They use trained individuals to do the assembly to ensure it is done correctly. However, there are some stores that sell office furniture and equipment unassembled. You buy it and you put it together.



OEHS would like to stress the need to have a qualified individual do the assembly, either through the vendor or Facilities Services, to prevent injuries such as happened in this situation. In this particular case, the purchase history of the chair could not be identified and we could not determine the condition of the chair when it was received. But if the chair had been assembled properly, this injury could have been prevented.

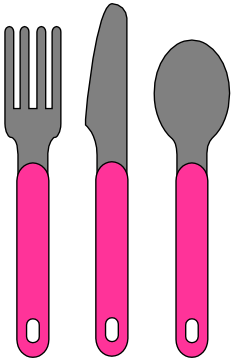
Protective Eyewear

One recent injury report involved an employee who was injured while installing acoustical ceiling tile. The injury occurred when pieces of the ceiling tile fell into his left eye. As a preventative measure, employees who are performing work where there is a risk of eye contact or injury from falling objects or debris should wear the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect their eyes. This may be in the form of safety glasses or goggles. Regular prescription glasses are not acceptable unless they meet brow guard and side shield requirements. All eyewear used as PPE must meet the requirements of the applicable American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standard and should indicate this on the product. In most cases, the symbol “Z87” will be marked on the glasses, spectacle frames, or goggles.

Tulane Alert Line and Emergency Website

Please consult the website <http://emergency.tulane.edu/> or call the Tulane Alert Line at 504-862-8080 or 877-862-8080 (toll free) for updated information on university operations in the event of an emergency. Additionally, circumstances permitting, the university will alert faculty, staff, and students of threats or emergencies via email and phone messages. For more information, visit Tulane's Emergency Communication Systems website at <http://oep.tulane.edu/alert.shtml>.

Food Safety In Your Kitchen



A truly “clean” kitchen relies on more than just looks. It also ensures safe food practices. Food safety concerns revolve around three main functions: food storage, food handling, and cooking. The following are some tips to make your kitchen the safest possible:

Refrigerators should be set at 40°F or less to slow the growth of bacteria. The temperature won't kill the bacteria, but it will keep them from multiplying, and the fewer bacteria there are, the less likely you are to get sick. Freezing at 0°F or less stops bacterial growth, although it won't kill bacteria already present. Hot foods should be refrigerated as soon as possible within two hours after cooking. Date leftovers so they can be used within a safe time. Generally leftovers remain safe when refrigerated for 3-5 days. If in doubt, throw it out.

Never allow raw meat, poultry, and fish to come in contact with other foods. To prevent cross-contamination from a cutting board, use smooth cutting boards made of hard maple or a non-porous material such as plastic and free of cracks and crevices. Wash cutting boards with hot water, soap, and a scrub brush to remove food particles. Then sanitize by putting them through the dishwasher or rinsing them in a solution of 1 teaspoon bleach in 1 quart of water. Consider using one cutting board for foods that will be cooked, such as raw fish, and another for ready-to-eat foods, such as bread or fresh fruit. Keep dish towels clean because, when wet, they can harbor and promote bacterial growth.

Food experts recommend thawing food in the refrigerator or the microwave oven rather than setting food out to defrost at room temperature. Gradual thawing overnight in the refrigerator helps maintain quality. When thawing with a microwave oven, follow package directions. Foods defrosted in the microwave oven should be cooked immediately after thawing.

Cook ground beef to an internal temperature of 160°F. The color of ground meat is not a reliable indicator of ground meat safety. Some ground meat may prematurely brown before a safe internal temperature has been reached. Other recommended temperatures for other foods to reach to be safe include:

- * Beef, lamb, veal, and seafood - 145°F
- * Pork and ground beef - 160°F
- * Whole poultry and thighs - 180°F
- * Poultry breasts - 170°F
- * Ground chicken or ground turkey, stuffed fish - 165°F

Avoid eating foods containing raw eggs such as cake batter, eggnog, and cookie dough as they carry risk of *Salmonella* bacteria. Keep eggs refrigerated until you are ready to cook and serve them. Cook eggs until both the yolk and white are firm, not runny. Cook pasta dishes and stuffings that contain eggs thoroughly.

Diabetes Disaster Survival Guide

Did you know that there is information available to you as to how to prepare a “Diabetes-Specific Disaster Survival Guide?” Personal preparation for disasters is something we should all undertake and one element that should be paramount in our preparation is that which involves our medicines and health. This specific “Survival Guide” was developed here at Tulane School of Medicine by the Section of Endocrinology. To learn more about this guide, contact the ACCORD office at (504) 988-0200.

Staying Neutral...

Keeping your body's joints in a mid-range of motion while working at the computer is known as "neutral posture." When your arms are relaxed at your sides and not reaching they are in neutral posture. Wrists that are kept straight (not bent down, up, or to either side) are also in neutral posture. Maintaining neutral posture will not only keep you safer, it can make you more comfortable and productive!



details

Emergency Action Plans

For emergency response purposes, emergency action plans (EAPs) have been developed which include procedures for the evacuation of Tulane University buildings. Such plans are required by OSHA and must be in writing, kept in the workplace, and available to all employees. Several EAPs are presently under revision. EAPs for Tulane University buildings are in the process of being added to the OEHS website and can be accessed at the following link: <http://www.som.tulane.edu/oehs/eaps.htm>.

There are nine elements associated with each EAP. The most important element includes procedures for reporting emergencies. In the case of an emergency in which immediate response is needed (such as for medical, fire, police, or other emergencies), one must contact the Tulane University Police/Public Safety Department via the designated emergency telephone number (Uptown - X5200, TUHSC - X55555, TNPRC - X6411) unless you are at an off-campus or satellite facility where TU Police/Public Safety personnel would not be readily available. In this case you would call 911 first and then the appropriate TU Police/Public Safety department.

Another element of the EAP is a designated assembly area for the employees after they evacuate their building. At that assembly location, supervisors assisted by their Departmental Safety Representatives (DSRs) are responsible for accounting of the workers after evacuation.

The development of the EAPs was the result of established campus workgroups who assisted OEHS in the writing of these documents. Employee training to include faculty and staff is the responsibility of the DSRs who received training on these documents at the time of the July 2007 DSR meetings. If you have any questions, then please contact your DSR or OEHS.

Fire Safety Tips

- * When the fire alarm sounds, you need to evacuate. Do not call Tulane Police/Public Safety and ask if this is a real fire. Unless it is preceded by an announcement to ignore the alarm, you must evacuate.
- * If you note problems with the audible or visible fire alarms in your area, please report this to OEHS and Facilities Services.
- * Always use stairs, not elevators, to evacuate when a fire alarm sounds.
- * Review and be familiar with the EAP for your area (see article above). For more information on EAPs, contact your DSR who was advised of the availability of EAPs during the July DSR training meetings.
- * Fire Safety information is also included in the Safety Guide available at <http://www.som.tulane.edu/oehs/docs/TUSafetyGuide.pdf> as well as the new employee powerpoint presentation (see <http://www.som.tulane.edu/oehs/onlinetraining.html> and click on "New Employee Orientation").
- * If you smell smoke or gas odors, call Tulane Police/Public Safety at the emergency number for your campus (see article above).

Environmental Health & Safety

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