

SAFETY WAVE

Use of Electric Space Heaters at Tulane

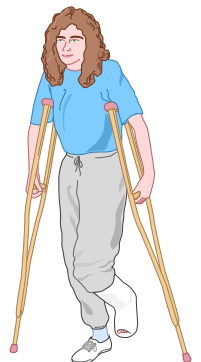
Now that the cold weather is here, University faculty, staff, and students may be considering and/or using electric space heaters. These are appliances which can be purchased at building supply stores, department stores, hardware stores, etc. which have an electric heating element or other system capable of providing heat to a small area. Space heaters can become a fire hazard if the wattage is too high for the electrical circuit or if combustible materials come in contact with the heating element. OEHS has responded to a number of concerns where these units were in use. Oftentimes, these space heaters trip the electrical circuit breakers in the area and the users are asked to discontinue their use. The policy at Tulane University is to contact Facilities Services if you are experiencing a heating problem in your work area for their response and assistance.

Reminder: Asbestos Management Plans Available

Many of Tulane's buildings have asbestos-containing materials (ACM) present. Because of this mineral's unique properties and useful characteristics (fireproofing capabilities, thermal and chemical resistance, electrical insulation, and flexibility), it was used in thousands of building materials in many different forms. Current state and federal laws allow for the presence of asbestos in buildings as long as it is properly maintained. OEHS has an asbestos management program which balances in-place management, operations and maintenance, removal of ACM where appropriate, and training of personnel who work with the material. Routine inspections are performed to assess the condition of all ACM, and routine sampling is conducted whenever new or suspect materials are encountered. Demolition and renovation activities that may disturb asbestos are coordinated by OEHS along with Facilities Services and/or abatement contractors, and pre- and post-surveys and monitoring are conducted to ensure a safe environment. Asbestos Management Plans are kept in OEHS in Tidewater, Suite 1156 as well as in Facilities Services Departments on the downtown, uptown, and Primate Center campuses.

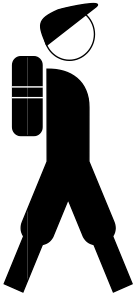
Prompt Reporting of Injuries

Accurate and prompt reporting of injuries/illnesses helps to ensure that the injured/ill person receives the proper medical care required under Louisiana's worker's compensation program and that all medical expenses are paid by Tulane and not by the involved worker. It also provides the University with statistical information needed to identify and isolate patterns of injury/illness. Investigation and evaluation of such problems help determine the corrective measures needed to prevent or reduce the possibility of injury/illness. All occupational injuries/illnesses, serious or minor, must be reported on the First Report of Occupational Injury/Illness form, available on the OEHS website <http://www2.som.tulane.edu/oehs/safety/18F-oehss04.pdf>. This form must be signed by the employee's supervisor and submitted **within 24 hours** of injury/illness to OEHS. If there is a work-related death or serious injury, the supervisor must notify OEHS immediately. If possible, a copy of the completed form should accompany the injured/ill employee to the facility where they seek medical care. If not, then the form should be hand delivered or sent to the health care provider as soon as possible, either during treatment or just after treatment. Failure to file the proper form in a timely manner may cause you to be billed for medical services rendered.



2006 OSHA Recordkeeping Summary

It is required by Federal Law that OSHA's Form 300A "Summary of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses" be posted annually from February 1 through April 30. Tulane University's campus-wide OSHA Summary for 2006 was mailed campus-wide for posting in January 2007. To view individual campus summaries, please visit our website at www.som.tulane.edu/oehs/posters.



Safety in Using Backpacks

The National Safety Council offers advice in response to injuries resulting from backpack usage. (See <http://www.nsc.org/library/facts/backpack.htm>) Throughout the nation in 2003, there were 21,000 backpack related injuries treated at hospital emergency rooms, clinics, and doctors' offices. Nationwide, orthopedic surgeons have seen an increase in back and shoulder pain in children. Injuries ranged from contusions to sprains, strains, and fractures to the back and shoulder.

What are some warning signs that your child may be at risk? The National Safety Council tells us to look for the following:

- * A change in the child's posture when wearing a backpack
- * Struggling to put on or take off the backpack
- * Pain when wearing the backpack
- * Numbness or tingling
- * Red marks left on the skin

Although some experts disagree on whether backpacks are a source of back pain in children, most agree that parents should use caution and good judgment in allowing their children to wear backpacks. As a rule, backpacks should weigh no more than 15 to 20% of a child's weight, depending on the strength and fitness level of the child. The child should not have to bend forward when wearing the backpack. Unnecessary articles should be removed daily and heavier items placed in the backpack closest to the body to afford the best mechanical advantage.

Parents should supervise their children in selecting and wearing a backpack safely. Two straps should always be worn in order to better distribute the weight and maintain a symmetrical posture. The use of only one strap can cause lower back pain and muscle spasms.

The National Safety Council also advises that backpacks should be chosen to fit the size of the child. Pay close attention to the way the backpack is positioned. It should rest evenly in the middle of the back and the straps should be adjusted so that arm movement is free and easy. The backpack should not extend below the lower back.

Some advantageous features that may be selected when choosing a backpack include a padded back to reduce pressure on the back, shoulders, and under the arms; hip and chest belts to help transfer some weight to the hips and torso; multiple backpack compartments to help distribute the weight of items in the bag; and reflective materials to help visibility of backpack users to drivers at night.

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Don't Do The Twist...

Bending and twisting in your chair can result in neck, shoulder or back pain. Prevent awkward positions by placing work tools -- the telephone, a printer or other items you use regularly -- close at hand. Avoid twisting your torso, reaching up or bending while reaching. Use organizational worktools to help keep regularly used work items easy to reach and easy to find.

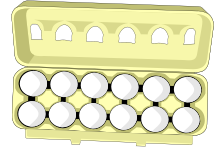


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Egg Safety

Salmonella enteritidis (SE), a type of bacteria sometimes found in eggs, causes an estimated 118,000 illnesses each year. Young children and people with weakened immune systems are the most vulnerable. Many favorite foods such as cookie dough, homemade eggnog, and some types of stuffing may contain eggs that are raw or undercooked. A 2006 FDA survey of consumer food safety practices found that cookie dough is one of the major sources of raw egg in the American diet and that only 3% of respondents always use a food thermometer when cooking baked egg dishes such as stuffing. To avoid egg-related illnesses:



- * Do not eat unbaked cookie dough.
- * Cook baked egg-containing dishes to 160°F.
- * Make recipes that call for raw or undercooked eggs, like eggnog, with eggs that have been treated to destroy *Salmonella* or with pasteurized egg products.

FDA requires the following statement on packages of fresh eggs that have not been treated to destroy *Salmonella*: “Safe Handling Instructions: To prevent illness from bacteria, keep eggs refrigerated, cook eggs until yolks are firm, and cook foods containing eggs thoroughly.”

Source: “FDA and You,” U.S. Food and Drug Administration - Winter 2007, <http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/fdaandyou/issue12.html#5>

Know Your Home Medicines for Colds, Fever, and Pain



When using over-the-counter (OTC) medicines to treat colds and flu, you should know your medications. The name of a medicine may not tell you what the medicine treats or if it is right for you and your problem. Companies that make medicines often sell a whole group under the same brand name. For example, the same brand name may be used for a medicine for fever, for pain, for a cold, for a cold and cough, and for allergies. To choose the correct medicine for your problem, read the Drug Facts label on the medicine package. The Drug Facts label tells you:

- * The active ingredients (the parts that make it work)
- * What the medicine does (purpose)
- * Problems the medicine treats (uses)
- * Warnings (who should not use the medicine, who should ask a doctor or pharmacist before using the medicine, reasons to stop using the medicine, and ways to avoid harm)
- * How to use the medicine safely (directions)

Choose a medicine that treats only the problems you have. Some OTC medicines are made to treat more than one problem and have more than one active ingredient, such as cold and flu medicines, allergy medicines, or cold and cough medicines. Since all medicines can cause unwanted side effects, it’s important to choose a medicine that treats only the problems you have. Don’t choose a medicine that includes extra active ingredients for problems you don’t have.

There are two kinds of OTC medicines that treat pain and fever: acetaminophen and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). The NSAIDs include ibuprofen, naproxen, ketoprofen, and aspirin. Children and teens should not use aspirin for fever or flu because it may cause Reye’s Syndrome, a severe illness that can affect the blood, liver, and brain. Pain or fever medicines like acetaminophen or ibuprofen are often added to other active ingredients that treat cough, sinus congestion (stuffy nose), or allergies. These medicines, if used only when needed and as directed on the label, are safe and effective. But using too much of them, using them too often, or for too long can be dangerous. Taking more acetaminophen than directed on the label can cause serious liver damage. Taking more NSAID than directed can damage kidneys and can cause stomach bleeding. There are many OTC medicines that contain the same active ingredient. If you use a pain medicine for your headache and a cough-cold-fever medicine for your cold symptoms, you may be taking twice the recommended dose of acetaminophen or NSAID and not know it. To make sure that you don’t accidentally take too much of a medicine, read the label, check the active ingredients, don’t use two medicines together if they have the same active ingredient, and consult with your pharmacist or healthcare professional.

Source: “FDA and You,” U.S. Food and Drug Administration - Winter 2007, <http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/fdaandyou/issue12.html#2>

Carbon Monoxide - The Invisible Killer

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, practically odorless, tasteless, and TOXIC gas that is produced during incomplete combustion of fuels such as wood, natural gas, diesel, and gasoline. Sources of CO include unvented kerosene and gas space heaters, leaking chimneys and furnaces, gas water heaters, wood stoves, fireplaces, gas ranges, vehicle exhaust, and generators. Emissions are increased when equipment is poorly maintained or not properly adjusted.

Every year, especially during the winter when more fuel burning equipment is used and doors and windows are closed, people are sickened or killed as a result of CO exposure. Symptoms of low level CO exposure include flu-like symptoms such as headache, fatigue, nausea, dizziness. At higher concentrations, CO can cause impaired vision, chest pain, loss of consciousness, and death.

Good ventilation is very important in preventing CO poisoning. Other steps to prevent CO poisoning include:

- * Keep fuel burning equipment properly adjusted (and vented if applicable).
- * Never use a gas range or oven to heat a home.
- * Never use gasoline-powered equipment such as generators indoors or in enclosed areas.
- * Never leave the motor running in a vehicle parked in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, such as a garage.
- * Never use a charcoal grill or portable camp stove inside a home, tent, or camper.
- * Know the symptoms of CO poisoning.
- * If CO poisoning is suspected, leave the area immediately and consult a healthcare professional right away.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recommends that every home should have a CO alarm and urges consumers to have a professional inspection of all fuel-burning appliances to detect carbon monoxide levels. For additional information, contact OEHS or check the following websites: <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/co.html>, <http://www.cdc.gov/co/faqs.htm>, <http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSC/PUBS/PUBS/464.pdf>.

Fire Safety Alert Re: Lamps



The Office of Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS) is alerting all university personnel of a possible fire safety issue. We have received information from other universities that have had problems with certain types of lamps they found in their housing units on campus. Even though the lamp fire safety issue has been associated with on-campus, student housing, we feel that dissemination of this information may be appropriate for everyone. Whereas there has been no determination by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission as of yet, we thought that we should still issue this alert.

The New York State Department of State, Office of Fire Prevention and Control recently issued a bulletin (see www.dos.state.ny.us/fire/CFSBArchive/CFSBulletinfloorlight.pdf) relative to the use of a lamp(s) with colored plastic shades. "Close calls" occurred when the shades melted, in one case when the lamp was on for only 15 minutes. The incidents apparently occurred inside a residence hall at a major university in the northeast.

We do not have information as to the manufacturer or distributor of the product. From the pictures in the bulletin, it appears that the lamp(s) are floor lamps. Also, we do not know if the cause of the "close calls" was due to using an improper light bulb - one which may be too large for the lamp or too high a wattage or for other reasons.

We suggest that everyone check to see if any of these lamps are in use and if there are any obvious signs of overheating. If any of these types of lamps are found in Tulane campus facilities, please contact OEHS.

Environmental Health & Safety

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