

SAFETY WAVE

Inspection for Hazardous Waste Compliance

Recently, Tulane University received a hazardous waste enforcement inspection by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LADEQ). Because the university generates hazardous waste, it is subject to these periodic compliance inspections. The DEQ Compliance Officer inspected the hazardous waste storage room located at the Health Sciences Center as well as several laboratories. His compliance checklist included the following:

- Proper labeling of hazardous waste
- Proper storage of hazardous waste in the labs
- Properly closed/containerized hazardous waste

Each container of hazardous waste (chemicals) had to be labeled with the words “hazardous waste” as well as the full name of the contents and any associated hazards. Containers needed to be closed (caps on bottles) unless waste was being poured into the container at the time. Also disposal of the waste from the labs had to take place in a timely manner (no evidence of waste sitting in a lab for a long period of time). Approximately 15 labs at the Health Sciences Center were inspected and found to be in compliance.

OEHS encourages all generators of hazardous waste to ensure compliance with hazardous waste regulations in their work area by following the rules outlined in Tulane University’s Environmental Health and Safety Policies and Procedures Manual. For questions on hazardous waste disposal procedures at Tulane University or to schedule a pickup, please contact Bruce McClue, Hazardous Waste Supervisor, at bmcclue@tulane.edu.

ERGO Tip: Choose the Correct Caster for Your Floor Surface

Choose HARD Wheel Casters for CARPETED surfaces only. Do not use hard wheels on hard surfaces such as wood, tile, linoleum or chair mats. This will cause them to skate and slide – creating muscle strain and potentially harmful accidents to the user, as well as damage to floors.

Choose SOFT Wheel Casters for HARD FLOORS and CHAIR MATS. Soft wheels provide traction on hard floors and prevent sliding. Do not use soft wheels on carpeting. This requires additional exertion for movement which can cause muscle strain and carpet damage.

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A Safety Story to Share – Venting Cylinders in Enclosed Spaces



A lab tech was considering venting a carbon dioxide (CO₂) cylinder that was attached to a -80°C freezer before returning the tank to the vendor. The CO₂ tank had slowly declined in pressure after being connected for some time, but it still had a considerable amount of gas in it. The freezer and CO₂ tank were located in a narrow (enclosed) area and could have posed a suffocation hazard if the CO₂ tank had been vented.

Fortunately the laboratory principle investigator noticed this and advised the lab tech not to vent the tank.

Please be aware of the dangers of releasing gasses in enclosed spaces. Since Hurricane Katrina there is more interest in connecting CO₂ and nitrogen tanks to freezers to maintain cooling during a power outage. When tank pressure drops, people routinely replace the cylinders, but the tanks still contain large quantities of gas and pose a risk if vented. It is standard operating procedure to return partially depleted tanks without venting the contents.

Charles A. Miller III, Ph.D., Professor of Environmental Health Sciences, Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine
(Image found at <http://www.ab.ust.hk/hseo/sm06/ch7.htm>)

Do You Have a Safety Story or Message to Share? Do you want to tell others of a safety concern you may have, or do you have some advice that could possibly prevent others from having an accident? Contact OEHS and we will be glad to review your safety story for possible inclusion in future editions of the Safety Wave newsletter.

Access to Employee Monitoring (Exposure) and Medical Records

As required by OSHA's "Access to Employee Exposure and Medical Records Standard" (29 CFR 1910.1020), employees have a right to access monitoring (exposure) and medical records to learn the extent of their exposure to harmful substances and physical agents they work with and any associated health effects. Monitoring (exposure) records also need to indicate the identity, amount, and nature of the toxic substances or harmful physical agents to which the employee has been exposed. "Toxic substances or harmful physical agents" means any chemical substance, biological agent (bacteria, virus, fungus, etc.), or physical stress (noise, heat, cold, vibration, repetitive motion, ionizing and non-ionizing radiation, hypo- or hyperbaric pressure, etc.) which:

- Is listed in the latest printed edition of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Registry of Toxic Effects of Chemical Substances (RTECS) – a list of over 40,000 chemicals which is incorporated by reference in 29 CFR 1910.6; or
- Has yielded positive evidence of an acute or chronic health hazard in human, animal, or other biological testing conducted by, or known to, the employer; or
- Is the subject of a Material Safety Data Sheet kept by or known to the employer indicating that the material may pose a hazard to human health.

Medical surveillance records need to be preserved and maintained for at least the duration of the employee's employment plus 30 years and monitoring (exposure) records for at least 30 years. Records of employees who have worked less than 1 year need not be retained after employment, but the employee is entitled to these records when he leaves. Although Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) are considered employee exposure records, they do not have to be kept on file as long as some record of the identity of the material, where it was used, and when it was used is retained for at least 30 years. First aid records made on the worksite by a non-physician do not have to be kept. OSHA can also examine the medical records, including the first aid records, providing they have obtained a written medical access order or with the express employee consent. OSHA is free to examine medical surveillance, monitoring, and employee exposure records.

DEET Insect Repellents



DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide) is an effective and versatile insect repellent used to repel mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, biting flies, and chiggers. It will not repel stinging insects such as wasps and bees. It is available in lotions, creams, gels, aerosol and pump sprays, and towelettes. However it must be used properly. Read and follow the instructions on the label and avoid excessive use and over-application. For most situations, 10-25% DEET is adequate. To ensure that you will not react to the repellent, apply the product to a small area of skin on the arm or leg before general use. Use just enough repellent to cover exposed skin or clothing. Do not spray directly on the face and do not apply over cuts, wounds, or irritated skin. DEET-containing products will usually repel mosquitoes for several hours, so it is not

necessary to reapply the repellent more frequently than that. After returning indoors, wash treated skin with soap and water. Wash treated clothing before wearing again.

Using repellents on the skin is not the only way to avoid mosquito bites. Children and adults can wear long pants and long sleeves while outdoors. (This is pretty difficult in hot, humid summers in New Orleans.) Mosquito netting and screens which are in good repair can be used. Avoid places and times (generally just before and after sunset and again just before dawn) when mosquitoes bite. It may be possible to reduce the number of mosquitoes by getting rid of containers with standing water that provide breeding grounds for the mosquitoes. Spraying your backyard with an insecticidal fog or mist is effective only for a short time. Mosquitoes will return when the effect of the spray has ended. Bug zappers, ultrasonic devices, and incense have not been shown to be effective in preventing mosquito bites.

A fact sheet by EPA about DEET and other common insect repellents may be found at the following link: <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/chemicals/deet.htm>. Information for this article was taken from the Illinois Department of Public Health website: <http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/deetfacts.htm>.

Contributors: Pam Fatland, Jay Folse, Mitzi Hithe, Charles Miller III (EHS), Bruce McClue, Susan Welch

Grilling Safety Tips

One sure sign of summer is the wonderful aroma of freshly barbecued hot dogs and burgers. However, for 2003-2006, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reports that United States fire departments responded to an average of 7,900 home fires involving grills, hibachis, or barbecues per year, causing an annual average of 10 deaths, 120 injuries, and \$80 million in direct property damage. The following safety tips should be followed when you fire up the grill:

- Always use propane and charcoal grills outdoors, placing them well away from the home, deck railings, and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Keep children away from the barbecue area.
- Before use, remove grease and fat buildup from the grill and in trays below the grill.
- Never leave the barbecue unattended.
- Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids to a fire.
- Let the coals completely cool before disposing in a metal container.
- Check propane tanks for leaks before using for the first time each year. If you detect a leak, get the unit serviced by a professional.
- Do not move barbecue grill while cooking.



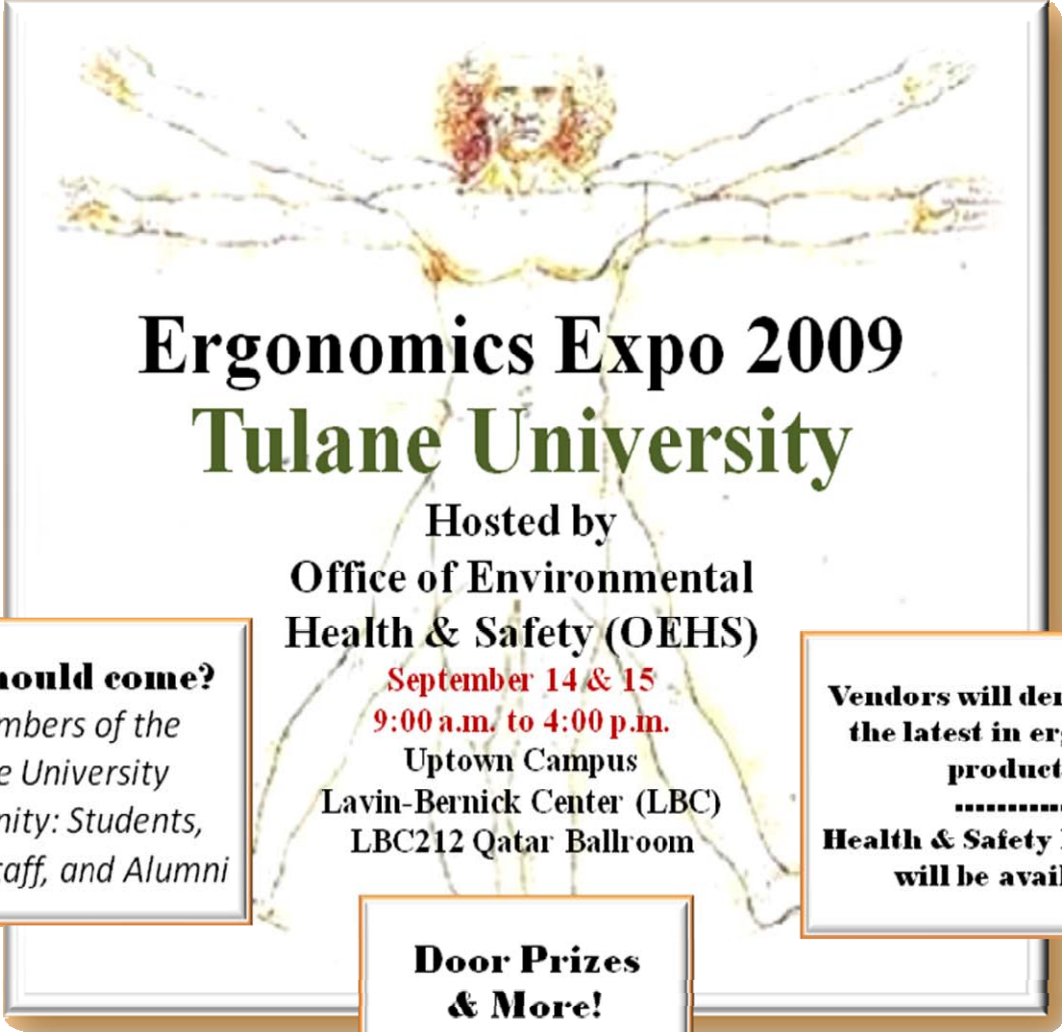
For additional safety tips from the NFPA and a video on proper grilling techniques, see <http://www.nfpa.org>.

Surgeon General Releases Healthy Homes Initiative

Believing that many injuries and illnesses can be prevented if a home is kept free of hazards, Acting Surgeon General Steven K. Galson recently unveiled the [Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Healthy Homes](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/healthyhomes/calltoactiontopromotehealthyhomes.pdf) (2009) found at <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/healthyhomes/calltoactiontopromotehealthyhomes.pdf>. Examples persons can take to make their homes healthier and more environmentally friendly include:

- Install, maintain, and consistently use safety devices (e.g., smoke alarms; carbon monoxide alarms; stair gates; grab bars in bathrooms; adequate outside lighting; locks on cabinets used to store medicines, cleaning solutions, automotive supplies, firearms and ammunition, pool chemicals, and pesticides; fencing around pools).
- Complete a home fall-prevention checklist (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/toolkit/CheckListForSafety.htm>).
- Prepare and practice an emergency fire escape plan (see <http://www.firesafety.gov/citizens/escape/index.shtm>).
- Prepare shelter-in-place and evacuation plans for weather and other disaster situations (see http://www.redcross.org/preparedness/cdc_english/home.asp).
- Set water temperature in your home below 120°F.
- Routinely check electrical appliances and wiring; replace all worn, old, or damaged appliance cords; do not overload extension cords or wall sockets.
- Check gas appliances, fireplaces, chimneys, and furnaces yearly and change furnace and air conditioning filters regularly. Never use the oven, stove, charcoal burner, or any unvented combustible heat source to heat the house.
- Do not smoke; enforce smoke-free rules in the home. If you do smoke, do not smoke indoors or around children.
- Complete a playground safety checklist if you have playground equipment in your yard (see <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/pg1.pdf>).
- Replace balcony railings spaced greater than 4 inches apart.
- Review the EPA listing of safer cleaning products and select the safest products for the job (see <http://www.epa.gov/dfe/pubs/projects/formulat/formpartc.htm#consumerclean>).
- Keep toxic chemicals, including cleaning products and pesticides, away from children. Choose products with poison-prevention packaging. Read product labels and follow directions for use and disposal.
- Consider integrated pest management, including natural, biological, and chemical methods with the least impact on health and the environment.
- Control moisture in the home by sealing cracks, directing downspouts away from the house, installing drains near water heaters and washing machines, and properly installing window air conditioner units.
- Make sure that infants sleep on their backs on firm sleeping surfaces.
- Test houses occupied by children less than 6 years of age for lead and control or eliminate lead hazards.
- Use lead-safe work practices when renovating houses built before 1978. Contact the local or state health department for assistance remediating lead or radon hazards.
- Consider green, environmentally friendly options when selecting home sites, materials, and appliances; when building or renovating; and when using natural resources such as water and energy, like those suggested on the EPA's Green Building Web site (<http://www.epa.gov/greenbuilding/>).

For a detailed Healthy Home Checklist, see: <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/healthyhomes/checklist.pdf>.



Ergonomics Expo 2009
Tulane University

Hosted by
**Office of Environmental
Health & Safety (OEHS)**

Who should come?
All members of the
Tulane University
Community: Students,
Faculty, Staff, and Alumni

September 14 & 15
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Uptown Campus
Lavin-Bernick Center (LBC)
LBC212 Qatar Ballroom

**Vendors will demonstrate
the latest in ergonomic
products.**
.....
**Health & Safety Education
will be available.**

**Door Prizes
& More!**

For more information
contact Mitzi Hithe
OEHS: (504) 988-2866.

Ergonomics Expo Coming Soon to a Campus Near You

The Office of Environmental Health & Safety will be hosting an Ergonomics Expo on the Uptown Campus on September 14 and 15, 2009. Ergonomics is the study of how a workplace and the equipment used there can best be designed for comfort, efficiency, safety, and productivity. The purpose of the Expo is for vendors to display the many types of ergonomic products that are available and on the market today. By designing your workplace to best fit you, and by using equipment designed for your comfort and ease of use, it is hoped that workplace injuries can be avoided. Come on out and see for yourself how to add comfort to your daily routine. Hope to see you there!

Two additional Ergonomics Expos will be held at the TUHSC and TNPRC campuses in the near future. Dates and locations have not yet been established. For more information, contact Mitzi Hithe (504) 988-2866.

Environmental Health & Safety

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