The Safety Chronicle

City of Pittsburgh Inspections
By: Paula Sweitzer

Since Fall 2016, EHS and Facilities Management have been working with the Bureau of Fire to schedule and conduct building inspections. Every building on campus must be inspected under the Pittsburgh Bureau of Fire, Company Inspection Program.

The goal of the inspections is to maintain occupant safety and fire prevention.

The inspections include a review of documentation regarding the building's fire alarm and fire suppression systems, and a physical tour. The inspectors will not interrupt classes, but they do look into all rooms. The focus of inspections is on department storage rooms and mechanical/electrical rooms.

Items to be inspected include:

- Electrical - electrical panel access, extension cords, open junction boxes
- Exits and Aisles - exit signs, lighting, and egress
- Fire Extinguishers - mounted and serviced
- Fire Doors - no wedges/stoppers (no obstructions)
- Fire Protection - Pittsburgh thread and caps, fire department connections
- Fireworks - storage, display or discharge without approval
- Flammable Liquids - storage, amounts, containers

Recent/current inspections include:

- Koren (9/9/16)
- Tribone (9/9/16)
- Canevin (11/2/16)
- Bayer (2/20/17)
- Law School (3/13/17)
- Rangos (4/10/17)
- Libermann (4/24/17)
- Energy Center (5/23/17)
- Des Place (6/27/17)
- Vickroy Hall (6/27/17)
- St. Martin Hall (6/27/17)
- Towers (7/11/17)
- Palumbo (8/8/17)
- Music/Genesius (8/29/17)
- Power Center (9/27/17)
It’s Slippy Out!

By: Ryan Reilly

It is that time of year for cold November rain, snow, and wet leaves. In 2015 the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported 223,000 persons fell and the majority, (149,180) were falls on the same level. We must be more aware of our environment and surroundings. Slips, trips, and falls (STFs) are the #2 cause of non-fatal disabling work injury. These incidents occur in doorways, on ramps, in cluttered hallways, on uneven surfaces, and in cafeteria areas. The natural properties of the flooring material can change substantially when mud, snow, dirt, and moisture accumulate on the surface. A slip occurs when there is little to no traction between the shoe and walking surface. A trip occurs when the foot contacts a protruding object and balance is disrupted. A fall occurs when your balance is impaired. Factors contributing to STFs are wet/slippery surfaces, environmental conditions, insufficient/inadequate lighting, elevation differential, ascending and descending stairs, and cluttered egress paths.

The majority of trips and falls are attributed to changes in elevation and distractions. A curb, crack in a sidewalk, ramp, poor shoe condition, uneven step, and balance impairment can all result in falls. Other factors include age, illness, emotional wellbeing, fatigue, lack of familiarity with the environment, impaired vision, and physical condition. The combination of these elements and distractions (i.e. cell phone texting) make STF risks higher.

To reduce STFs, when purchasing flooring and mats; consider products with a high coefficient of friction, anchoring ability, and non-glare, contrasting features. The application of anti-skid material to walking surfaces, anchored and heavy duty absorbent mats, proper signage, and procedure to clean up spills can reduce STF incidents. The simplest and most cost effective methods to prevent incidents are paying attention to the walking surface, ensuring a clear travel path (42” or greater), using handrails, being aware of the environment, wearing appropriate foot attire, and not walking while using a phone. If you do find a slippery area please use your best judgement to clean it up or report it to Facilities at x6011. Forms for reasonable safety suggestions regarding STFs can be located at www.duq.edu/ehs.

Hands-On Fire Extinguisher Training

By: Ryan Reilly

On Friday, September 8, 2017 the EHS department welcomed 136 participants for an educational experience regarding proper emergency action during a fire and the use of a portable fire extinguisher. Pharmacy and Chemistry departments require this training for graduate students, faculty, and staff, and they were the bulk of the participants. With this valuable hands-on training the individuals feel more apt to use a fire extinguisher in a real life situation and not to let a minor fire become a devastating loss. This was a fun learning experience and valuable safety lesson gained by all participants.
Driving
By: Paula Sweitzer

Duquesne University has a vehicle Safety Program to ensure the safety of employees driving Duquesne vehicles. Driver’s safety impacts more than just employees who drive Duquesne vehicles. Anyone who drives on campus—students, staff, and visitors, should review drivers safety, including driver awareness and ability.

Driver Awareness
An aware driver uses the senses to remain focused on driving and road conditions. The senses of sight, hearing and feeling are especially important.

Sight
Active seeing is the clear perception and understanding of what falls directly in front of the driver. The information gathered by the use of this central vision is what drivers use to make decisions. Peripheral vision also plays a part by alerting the driver to lights and movement coming from the sides of the vehicle.

A fixed stare, or focusing on a single part or area of the road, can be dangerous because a driver may see an obstacle, but not necessarily perceive it.

A blank stare is similarly dangerous. Daydreaming can be caused by preoccupation or physical/mental fatigue.

Scanning helps to maintain active seeing and avoid staring. To scan, check mirrors every 5-10 seconds and shift attention every 2 seconds. Shifting attention, or scanning, between mirrors, the road and peripheral vision keeps drivers aware of approaching dangers and keeps him or her focused on the task at hand.

Hearing - even if a danger is out of sight, it may be within earshot. Some warning sounds that may require defensive action include: screeching tires, sirens, horns, whistles, and other unusual noises. To ensure this sense is an ally while driving, radio volume should be kept low enough to enable the driver to hear external noises. For that reason, earphones should not be worn while driving.

Feeling - what a driver feels through the steering wheel, pedals and even their seat can inform a driver about the condition of the car and road. Shaking, sliding or a sluggish/absent response may indicate: brake detection, skidding action, unstable steering, slick/frozen roadway, low/flat tire, and unstable surface. Skidding on hazardous road conditions is a common precursor to collisions, and sensing the feel of a skid and braking appropriately are important to ensure a safe outcome.

Driver Ability
An able driver has the physical capacity to respond to a situation. Hurdles to the execution of good driving techniques include some common distractions: drinking, reading, navigation, tools, eating, grooming/applying makeup, and using a cell phone.

These distractions should be avoided whenever possible. Momentary distractions can have real and lasting consequences. Distracted driving is a factor in 80% of crashes and 65% of near crashes, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Distracted driving is something we should all take seriously. Have you taken the pledge through the National Safety Council to be an attentive driver? Visit “Just Drive” and take the pledge now nsc.org/pledge!
The Flu Season
By: Robert Haushalter

The government and medical experts are already warning of a severe flu season for the 2017 – 2018 year.

So, it might be a good time to review what the flu is and how to prevent it.

What is the flu?

Influenza (also known as the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by flu viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death.

The flu is different from a cold. The flu usually comes on suddenly.

People at high risk of flu complications include young children, adults 65 years of age and older, pregnant women, and people with certain medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease.

Symptoms?

People who have the flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever* or feeling feverish/chills
  - * It’s important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.
- Cough, Sore throat, Runny, and/or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

People with flu can spread it to others up to about 6 feet away

Most experts believe that flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with the flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might also get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, eyes or possibly their nose.

So Pay Attention!!

I’m sick with the flu – now what?

Stay away from others as much as possible to keep from infecting them. If you must leave home, for example to get medical care, wear a facemask if you have one, or cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Wash your hands often to keep from spreading flu to others.

How do I Prevent the Flu?

You should get a flu vaccine before flu begins spreading in your community. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body that protect against flu, so make plans to get vaccinated early in fall, before flu season begins.
The Flu Season cont.

What's new this flu season?

The recommendation not to use the nasal spray flu vaccine (LAIV) was renewed for the 2017-2018 season. Only injectable flu shots are recommended for use again this season. Pregnant women may receive any licensed, recommended, and age-appropriate flu vaccine. The age recommendation for “Flulaval Quadrivalent” has been changed from 3 years old and older to 6 months and older to be consistent with FDA-approved labeling. The trivalent formulation of Afluria is recommended for people 5 years and older (from 9 years and older) in order to match the Food and Drug Administration package insert.

Fall Evacuation Drill Results

By: Ryan Reilly

The EHS department began evacuation drills on Tuesday, September 5, 2017 at three of the Living Learning Centers. During the four days of evacuation drills the weather was favorable with no rain and temperatures ranging from 52°F - 74°F. Occupants are excelling in the meeting timeliness of evacuation largely due to the Floor Marshals’ dedication to life safety and occupant guidance towards proper exit paths throughout Duquesne University campus buildings. Distractions have become a less common occurrence, but occasionally individuals on a phone will ask to enter the buildings even while the strobes and alarms are notifying occupants to exit. There were minor glitches with alarm panel functions and the alarm initiating devices but they were reported and are being resolved. Please see the Emergency Management section “Emergency Evacuation Guidelines” on our website at www.duq.edu/ehs for more information or contact one of the EHS staff.

The Safety Chronicle
Program Review – Fume Hoods

By: Paula Sweitzer

A laboratory fume hood is a partially enclosed workspace that is designed to contain hazardous vapors and gases and exhaust them outside the building. When used properly, hazardous gases and vapors generated inside the hood are captured before they enter the breathing zone. This serves to minimize your exposure to airborne contaminants. The fume hood is often the primary control device when using flammable and toxic chemicals in the laboratory. It is important for lab personnel to understand how the fume hoods work so they can use them properly and avoid exposure to hazardous chemicals. While it is appropriate to keep chemicals that are being used during a particular experiment inside the fume hood, hoods are not designed for permanent chemical storage. Each item placed on the work surface interferes with the directional airflow, causing turbulence and eddy currents that allow contaminants to be drawn out of the hood. Even with highly volatile materials, as long as a container is properly capped evaporation will not add significant exposures to workers. Unlike a fume hood, flammable materials storage cabinets provide additional protection in the event of a fire.

Proper Hood Operation

- Confirm that the hood is operational. If fitted with a local on/off switch, make sure the switch is in the "on" position; check the airflow gauge if so equipped. In the absence of a gauge, airflow can be visually assessed by noting if a ribbon or tissue is pulled gently into the hood. The most recent hood test data is indicated on the inspection label on the fume hood. Never work with a malfunctioning hood; report problem hoods to Facilities Management (x6011). Advise the EHS office (x4763) of fume hoods that malfunction repeatedly.
- Maintain operations at least 6” inside the hood face. Vinyl tape can be attached to the work surface to serve as a visual reminder.
- Lower sash to optimum height. Optimum height is the sash height at which airflow is maximized without creating turbulence. A recommended sash height of 6-8 inches will provide optimum operation. With unattended or potentially explosive processes, conduct the operation behind a lowered sash or safety shield.
- Keep head out of hood except when installing and dismantling equipment.
- Keep hood storage to an absolute minimum. Keep only items needed for the ongoing operation inside the hood. Keep the back bottom slot clear at all times as it serves as an exhaust port for chemicals generated near the work surface. Raise large objects at least two inches off the hood surface to minimize air flow disruption.
- Minimize foot traffic around the fume hood. A person walking past a chemical hood can create competing currents at the hood face, causing vapors to flow out. Other sources of competing air currents such as open windows and fans must also be avoided while using a chemical hood.
- Use extreme caution with ignition sources inside a fume hood. Ignition sources such as electrical connections, controllers and open flames can be used inside a fume hood as long as there are no operations involving flammable or explosive vapors. If possible, ignition sources should remain outside the hood at all times.
- Replace hood components prior to use. Every component of a fume hood, whether airfoil, baffle, or sash, plays a vital role in preventing the escape of hazardous materials from the hood. Any hood components removed to conduct maintenance or repair activities, or to set up experimental apparatus, must be replaced prior to using the hood for contaminant control.
- Chemical handling. All chemicals should be handled inside the fume hoods, to prevent inhalation. Our fume hoods are the main engineering control of this building.
- Maintain negative pressure in the laboratory by keeping the entrance doorways closed at all times.
OSHA’s Top 10 Violations in 2016

1. Fall Protection – General Requirements (1926.501): 6,072 violations
5. Lockout/Tagout (1910.147): 2,877
7. Powered Industrial Trucks (1910.178): 2,162
9. Fall Protection – Training Requirements: 1,523

Do you have a Campus Safety Suggestion???

Go to www.duq.edu/ehs and click the upper right hand box to submit a suggestion.

Suggestions are voted on a quarterly basis at the Labor Management Safety Committee and the top 3 winners receive Giant Eagle gift cards for $100.00, $75.00, and $50.00.