

Put a lid on it!

Flammable liquids

- Best Management Practices

It's not the liquid itself that is flammable, but the vapor that begins to form as soon as the container is opened. Keeping flammable liquids properly contained and handling them correctly will reduce the potential for a fire or hazardous situation.

What are flammable liquids?

A flammable liquid is any liquid that has a flashpoint (the temperature at which vapors can ignite if there is an ignition source) below 100°F. Flammable liquids also easily evaporate. Vapor concentrations between the upper and lower explosive limit (UEL, LEL) are in the most ideal range for ignition. The Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) lists the flashpoint, UEL and LEL. Examples of flammable liquids that are highly volatile include gasoline, acetone, and different alcohols.



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Shared Successes

The following are interesting progress notes from SafetyTeam members' activities:

- Clinical staff in OHS expressed concern over some residents and medical students wearing inappropriate shoes (e.g.: sandals, flip-flops, and other open-toed shoes) in select patient care settings, including the ICUs, and surgical suites. Footwear is considered Personal Protective Equipment by OSHA and must offer protection from body fluids, chemicals, and physical hazards. Graduate Medical Education and the School of Medicine offered to deliver this message to affected individuals.
- A dirty under-cabinet space, in OHS 7CAO, was found to contain clean eating utensils. The stored items were immediately removed, the internal mechanical space (the source of the dirt) was sealed, and the space was cleaned to be put back into use for storage.
- Exposed wires were found at a card access panel where a contractor was previously working. Facilities Management was notified and corrected the problem.

Thanks members... be safe!



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Topic of the Month

This month's focus topic is a discussion of **SLIPS, TRIPS, and FALLS**. This topic is to inform employees about prevention techniques.



Slips, trips and falls happen more than they should at OHSU, and these accidents can create serious injuries, cost money to treat, and take weeks or months to heal. All of this can cheat you out of living the life you want. Most of these accidents can be avoided if you are aware of hazards and adhere to the following:

SLOW DOWN

- Trips and falls occur most often when people are in a hurry. Short cuts are often the culprit! We all have tried to jump over something instead of walking "the long way around" to our destination. Learn to slow down and avoid potentially hazardous short-cuts.

PAY ATTENTION

- Watch where you are walking. Learning to recognize and avoid hazards saves time, money, and injuries. Objects or areas not designed for foot traffic often consist of unstable, shaky, or slippery surfaces.

CLEAN UP SPILLS

- Wet or slippery surfaces sometimes don't appear dangerous until you walk on them, and then it's too late. Clean up all spills, including liquids and solids or powders, as you notice them. If it's not your area, notify someone who can clean it up.

WALK SAFELY

- If you have to walk on slippery or wet surfaces, take slow, short steps. Use handrails when walking on ramps and stairs. Also, take your hands out of your pockets in case you need them quick. Don't try to run, jump or slide across slick surfaces.



WEAR GOOD SHOES

-Walkways and walking surfaces at OHSU vary in slope and surface texture. Shoes with slip-resistant soles and a flat heel will reduce the chances of a fall. Many people choose to wear good walking shoes to work and bring their business shoes to change into, once they get here.

GOOD LIGHTING

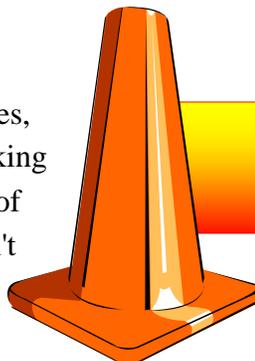
- Good lighting can help you spot hazards long before you get to them. Poor lighting can prevent you from seeing what is in the way. When you enter a dark room, always turn on the light even if you don't need to stay that long. Keep walkways clear of obstructions in areas that have lower light levels. Facilities Management can replace light fixtures or bulbs, as needed.

USE STAIRS SAFELY

- It is easy to lose your footing while climbing stairs, so go slow when walking up or down stairs. Be cautious of worn or broken steps, and of lighting that might make it difficult to see properly. Never run up or down stairs, and avoid skipping steps. If you have to carry a load while climbing stairs, carry it so that your vision is not blocked. Always keep one hand on the hand rail... it is often too late to grab for it when you are falling.

STEP STOOL OR LADDER - NOT CHAIRS!

- When you need to get something from a shelf higher than your shoulders, you should use a step stool or ladder. Chairs are NOT meant for standing on and will almost always move when you do!



Questions?

EHR 503-494-7795

(Flammables - continued from page 1)

Store Them Right

Flammables should be stored in an area designed for storing them, such as a flammable storage cabinet or room when there are large quantities stored together. Make sure flammables are stored in authorized containers and are correctly and clearly labeled for flammability.

Use Them Safely

Whenever possible, use a hood or other ventilation system to keep vapor concentration down. Know what chemicals increase the fire dangers of flammables. Know the location of the nearest fire pull station, evacuation route and fire extinguisher. Keep flammable containers tightly closed, and store flammable-soaked rags and other waste materials in tightly covered, designated containers only. Dispose of used flammables according to OHSU policy.

Emergencies

- Know how to respond

Does your area have an Emergency Management Plan? Ask your supervisor where it is and what to do. Use of flammable liquids should be taken into account when planning for emergencies. Keeping a lid on flammable liquids will mitigate the potential for a fire or explosion.



Q of M Answer!

Last month's Question of the Month was from the Focus Topic, "Safe Winter Driving."

The question was, **"What are 3 things you should bring with you during winter travel?"**

There are many possible answers, but a few that should be high on your list are:

- **A Winter Survival Kit: Bring a winter survival kit with you containing essential items such as: bottled water, candles, matches, warm clothes or a blanket, a whistle, and high energy food.**
- **Winter Weather Essentials: an ice scraper, studded tires, chains, or other traction devices, and jumper cables could help get you out of an unfortunate spot.**
- **A cell phone or CB radio.**

Thank you to everyone who participated! If you answered correctly, you earned 1 SafetyPoint! Contact Ben Richards at 503 494-2586 for answers to your questions or for safe travel advice.

News from Risk Management!

The New Year has brought a very significant change in how Workers' Compensation is handled at OHSU: we have changed our insurance carrier from Liberty Northwest to SAIF Corporation.

This change will not effect how Workers' Compensation claims are filed, but it will make the program easier to manage. All work-related injuries that occur in 2006 will be handled through SAIF.

Risk Management now has a Website to serve as your resource for Workers' Compensation questions and other issues. Check them out at:

www.ohsu.edu/risk



Slow down in Construction Work Zones!

SAFETYNEWS

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January 2006

Question of the Month

The question of the Month is designed to challenge your safety knowledge and give you a chance to earn some cool, free stuff!



QUESTION OF THE MONTH

List 3 things you can do reduce your chance of slips, trips and falls at work.

Write your answer to the question in the appropriate box on your SafetyTeam Member Update form. Correct answers to this month's Question will earn 1 SafetyPoint.

If you are not currently a SafetyTeam member and would like to participate, contact Ben Richards, interim SafetyTeam Coordinator, at 503 494-7795.

OHSU

OHSU includes four schools; two hospitals; numerous primary care and specialty clinics; multiple research institutes; and several public service and outreach units. OHSU is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution.

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