



SAFETY NEWS

The Monthly Update for the OHSU SafetyTeam

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March 2006



PED XING

Crosswalk Safety at OHSU

Whether you drive, walk, ride your bike or take public transportation to get to work, at some point in the day, you will be a pedestrian at OHSU. Pedestrians at OHSU often must cross busy streets during the course of the day, and as you may have noticed, there are many crosswalks placed in convenient locations to help ensure safety while crossing the street.

Did you know that studies show a pedestrian hit at 40 mph has an 85% chance of dying? As a pedestrian, you have the right of way while crossing the street, however, you must also follow all traffic signals and walk safely. Pedestrians are unprotected and vulnerable, so must always be aware of their surroundings and if possible, make eye contact with a driver before crossing a street to make sure they see you!



What's the Oregon Law say? A crosswalk exists at any pub-

Inside this Issue:

Safety Focus: Near Misses	2
Crosswalk Safety	3
Question of the Month	4

Shared Successes

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

- A member reported that drivers often do not yield to pedestrians in crosswalks. The City of Portland Office of Transportation held a crosswalk enforcement action here at OHSU as a result of the concern. Although only one citation was issued, enforcement activities often remind drivers and pedestrians alike of the importance of crosswalk safety.
- OHSU Food & Nutrition Services revised their departmental procedures so that all managers and employees follow the same protocol for reporting injuries, which makes identifying trends and problems easier, as well as making sure injured employees are provided with proper care!

Please continue to submit your monthly member update forms so that your safety concerns continue to be addressed. Please also report any successes you have as well! Don't forget to answer the Question of the Month, where correct answers will earn you valuable SafetyPoints!

Thanks members... be safe!



Topic of the Month

This month's specialized training topic is a discussion of **Near Misses**.



Near misses are incidents that **do not** involve injury or damage but have the **potential** for injury or damage. Sometimes referred to as "close calls," these incidents are indications that something is not right in the workplace.

It is extremely important that all near misses be reported and corrective action taken. **Why?** After all, nobody was hurt and there was no property damage. **The reason is simple – because you now have a "wake-up call" to take corrective action and make your workplace safer to prevent a future accident.**



Interestingly, employees who report having experienced a near miss are almost twice as likely to experience an accident as those who have not experienced a near miss.

You should consider yourself 'lucky' when a near miss occurs – 'lucky' only from the standpoint that nobody was injured. If the near miss goes unreported, next time you may not be so 'lucky.' Many times, as unfortunate as it may seem, we learn from our mistakes. Usually, it isn't until somebody gets hurt that we correct the situation.



What if you don't report a near miss and the problem is not fixed? Some one may get hurt! Imagine the guilt you would feel if an injury or fatality took place because the victim was unaware of a hazard that you knew of but did not report.



When investigating a near miss, look for possible causes including:

- Poor equipment condition or maintenance.
- Failure to wear personal protective equipment
- Inadequate or missing machine guarding.
- Slip, trip or fall due to poor housekeeping.
- Lack of, or poor, training and supervision.
- Lack of procedure enforcement.



While it is a supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the workplace is safe, each employee must contribute to the process through awareness, reporting, and group effort toward prevention.

When investigating a near miss, it's a good idea to assume that employees were not negligent and to not place blame. This discourages future reporting and prevention opportunities.

You must also hold patients, visitors, and contractors to the same high safety standards that you follow.

Safety has nothing to do with luck. Take the time to fix or report potential problems before they become accidents. It only takes a few minutes to fix or report a problem, and safety is everyone's business!



IF YOU SEE A PROBLEM, REPORT IT!
Environmental Health & Radiation Safety

503 494-7795

(Skin - continued from page 1)

lic street intersection, whether marked with paint or unmarked. Crosswalks only exist between intersections if they are marked with white painted lines.

RULES DRIVERS MUST FOLLOW



At traffic signals, drivers must stop and remain stopped for pedestrians until they have cleared the lane into which the vehicle is turning and at least **6 feet** (safety buffer) of the next lane.



At all other crosswalks, drivers must:

- Stop and remain stopped for pedestrians until they have cleared the lane into which you are traveling and the next lane.
- Stop and remain stopped for students as you are directed by a crossing guard.
- Stop and remain stopped for a blind pedestrian using a white cane or a guide dog until the pedestrian is completely across the roadway.

If a pedestrian is in a safety buffer when a vehicle enters the crosswalk, the driver will be cited for a fine over **\$200!!**



The City of Portland Office of Transportation held a Crosswalk Enforcement Action here at OHSU on Feb. 16th, 2006. The Action was held at the corner of Sam Jackson Park Rd and Veterans Hospital Road. Only one citation was issued! In fact, the drivers were so compliant that day, the police got bored and left early!

<http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TS/>

Q of M Answer!

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

The question was, **"What are some common side effects of medication that can impair you at work?"**

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

1. Limit mobility and/or delay response time
2. Fatigue
3. Lowered alertness

Thank you to everyone who participated! If you answered correctly, you earned 1 SafetyPoint! Contact Kristine Abrahamson at 503 494-0215 for answers to your questions.

THE "VICIOUS RISKY ENEMY"

Otherwise known as VRE (Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococci), VRE is a bacteria that is resistant to the common antibiotic, Vancomycin. VRE may cause infection in susceptible patients, and can be spread by direct contact with contaminated body fluids. It cannot be spread through the air.

The OHSU Unit-Based Practice Council in the Hospitals and Clinics approved to put into practice several measures to reduce the risk of spreading VRE to patients in the oncology units:

- A hand cleaning station at the entrance of 5A requiring either hand-washing or use of antibacterial hand sanitizer before entry.
- Importance of hand-washing reinforced among employees.
- Diligent screening of patients upon admission and weekly thereafter.
- Training of family members.
- Progress toward goal communicated to staff.



Continued progress in other patient care areas will further reduce risk of transmission, keeping VRE infection as a "Very Rare Event."



Slow down in Construction Work Zones!

SAFETYNEWS

4

March 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

Who can help you resolve a potential safety problem that could result in an injury?

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 Kristine Abrahamson, 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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