

STRESS at work

No job is easy

Into every life a little stress must fall... that's a given. The nature of work is changing at whirlwind speed, and change can lead to stress. Job stress poses a very real threat to the health and safety of employees.

Recent studies have shown that 25% of people believe their job to be the number one source of stress in their life, and 75% of people believe that job stress is worse now than even ten years ago. Continual demands placed on us can take their toll.

Job stress can be described as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of a job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the individual. Job stress can lead to poor health and even injury in an otherwise healthy person.

(Continued on page 3)



Inside this Issue:

Safety Focus: Fire Code Compliance	2
FM&C Corner—Goodbye...	3
Question of the Month	4

Shared Successes

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

- The gravel on the top deck of Parking Structure One (between Sam Jackson Park Road and Mackenzie and Dilehunt Halls) has been completely cleared, thanks to several diligent folks in Facilities Management and Construction. This gravel was a slip and fall hazard for our patients, employees and visitors.
- The top deck of Parking Structure One has reportedly been experiencing traffic congestion and increased parking violations during peak hours, and concerns of decreased visibility of pedestrians was reported. The Parking office was asked to review this possible problem.
- The School of Dentistry has reported an indoor air quality concern in one of its practice areas. This has been referred to Environmental Health and Radiation Safety.

Thanks members... be safe!



Topic of the Month

This month's specialized training topic is a discussion of **Fire Code Compliance**. This information has broad application to all OHSU buildings.



Periodic inspections of OHSU buildings are conducted by both internal resources and the City of Portland for compliance with state and federal fire codes. These can lead to the identification and correction of conditions that might otherwise lead to loss of life and fire damage to OHSU property.

The following is a brief checklist of rules that must be complied with. Problems with any item should be reported to Facilities Management (4-8054):

- ❑ **Suite and office numbers must be clearly posted in visible locations.** This applies primarily to entrances and main areas.
- ❑ **Exit-ways, stairways, fire escapes, pull stations, and fire extinguishers must be free from obstructions.** Do not use these, or areas in front of these, areas for storage.
- ❑ **Exits must be clearly marked, and illuminated EXIT signs must be maintained.** Burned out bulbs need to be reported ASAP.
- ❑ **Fire doors must be self-closing and must freely latch upon close.** These help minimize collateral damage in case of fire.
- ❑ **Wedges and door stops must never be used on fire doors.** These defeat the safety function of self-closing doors and are often accidentally left in place.



- ❑ **Extension cords are only allowed when their use is intended to be temporary and**

never overnight. Extension cords are a primary source of fires, as well as trip and fall hazards. Use only medium- or heavy-duty cords when the need arises. Multiple-outlet power strips are acceptable if they are UL-listed, utilize 15-amp circuit breakers, and are a maximum of 15 feet long. Only use "Hospital Grade" power strips in outlet plugs with green dots on them.



❑ **Electrical boxes and switches must have intact and undamaged cover plates installed.** These confine any wiring problems to within the safety of the junction box.

- ❑ **All electrical panels must be unobstructed and within easy access.** Thirty inches (30") of clearance must be maintained in front of these panels. If these are located in a closed room, signage must be displayed on the door.
- ❑ **Fire extinguishers must be serviced annually.** OHSU provides this annual service on all required units. In addition, hospitals and clinic areas are required by JCAHO to perform monthly inspections, and these are also performed by OHSU staff.
- ❑ **Combustible material (things that can burn) may NOT be placed closer than 18" to the ceiling in areas with fire sprinklers.**



Questions?

Environmental Health & Radiation Safety
503-494-7795

(Continued from page 1)

Don't confuse job stress with challenge. Challenge is supposed to be energizing and motivates us to learn, grow, and master our jobs. When challenge is met, you should feel relaxed and satisfied in your work. The importance of challenge in our lives is what leads us to say, **“a little stress is good for you.”**

Job Stress is when demands cannot be met, relaxation is replaced by exhaustion, and you feel continually stressed without satisfaction.

Two variables contribute to job stress: the characteristics of individual employees, and job working conditions. The first accounts for the differences in how people handle challenges; what is stressful for one person may not have the same effect on another. In contrast, less-than-ideal working conditions tend to affect everyone. Identifying and improving poor working conditions have the greatest potential for broad reductions in job stress.

Part 2 of this article, “What can be done about job stress?”, will be featured in the June issue of SafetyNews. Look for tools for identifying and correcting some basic causes of job stress.

Back Belts

There's lots of talk about preventing back injuries and back pain, so what about back belts... do they work?

Studies show that back belts really DON'T do the job we had once hoped.

A two-year study by the CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) found no difference in reports of back injuries, or pain, between those who used back belts every day and those who rarely or never wore them.



Q of M Answer!

Last month's Question of the Month was from the Focus Topic, **“Safety of Young Workers.”**

The question was, **“What employees must receive annual Bloodborne Pathogens training?”**

The answer is : **EVERY employee who MIGHT work with or around blood and body fluids must be given bloodborne pathogen information and training at the time of initial job assignment and again at least annually.** “Employee” includes students, staff, and interns. Given this broad definition of who is covered, you can see that many people are included.

Training can be provided by individual departments; or Environmental Health and Radiation Safety offers live sessions and online training. Training must include all of the details presented in the University policy titled, “OHSU Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan” found on the O-Zone at:

ozone.ohsu.edu/ehrs/mh/pages/gen/bbp.pdf

Thank you to each of you who participated! If you answered correctly, you earned 1 SafetyPoint! Contact Ben Richards at 503 494-2586 for answers to questions or to check on your SafetyPoint total.

FM&C Corner - Goodbye...

This section was used for many years to highlight safety issues related to Facilities Management and Construction. However, due to the availability of this information in other locations, FM&C Corner will be discontinued in SafetyNews.

Construction questions may still be routed to the Construction Safety Manager, at 503 494-2588, and concerns may be phoned to the Construction HELP line at 418-HELP (8-4357).



Slow down in Construction Work Zones!

SAFETYNEWS

4

May 2005

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 should you call with problems with fire doors, fire extinguishers, emergency lighting, and electrical questions?

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, 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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