

SAFETY ZONE

Safety Division

Volume 3, Issue 3

March 2003

Tom's Corner

A Message From The County Safety Officer

It's 2003 and our office is once again in the process of conducting Safety Inspections of all County facilities, from Corona to Blythe.

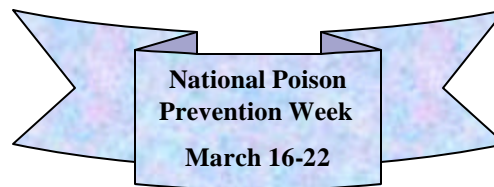
Is your facility ready? It should be, considering the number of inspections the Safety Division has done the past several years.

As we conduct our inspections, safety violations will be noted and brought to the attention of the facility safety representative accompanying us during the inspection. We advise that a formal written report will follow identifying the violation, along with a time frame to abate the violation. Thirty days is usually given to correct, depending on the level of the hazard or violation.

What is frustrating, is conducting inspections and finding what is identified as a "repeat violation".

"Repeat violations" also are accompanied with many excuses. Unfortunately there are no excuses for not providing a safe work environment for employees. This applies to all job levels, categories and responsibilities. Some of the excuses we hear are as follows and I have also enclosed a comment to go with the excuses given:

- "We submitted the work order and we never heard from them."



Comment: Did you bother to follow-up?

- "I did my part by reporting it to my Supervisor—he doesn't care about us."

Comment: Fill out a Hazard Report Form, call us or leave an anonymous call on the **Safety Hotline (909) 955-5868**—we will follow-up.

- "We don't have the money to do this right now."

Comment: Why is it when Cal/OSHA arrives, your department now has the money to abate the hazard and pay the Cal/OSHA monetary fine?

- "I'm the new safety representative and I wasn't made aware of the hazard."

Comment: When accepting a new responsibility—inquire of any pending safety items. You may also check our safety files, of your office.

- "I just haven't had time."

Comment: We would not recommend you saying this to a judge while trying to justify your actions, due to an employee injury.

"Repeat violations" have absolutely no place in the workplace and may indicate your safety priorities may need a boost—How about a Cal/OSHA citation with a monetary fine? - Not a threat, but a form of reality which some of our departments have already experienced.

A Life-Saving Reminder

By Joe Salinas, Safety Coordinator

Ten years ago, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health reported that between 1980 and 1988, 181 workers involved in tree-trimming operations died, and that 68 of these deaths resulted from electrocution. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, 161 fatalities resulted from contact with electric current from 1992 to 1999, including 90 deaths specifically resulting from contact with overhead power lines.

Scores of workers each year in the utility, construction, communications, fire prevention and outdoor advertising industries are seriously or fatally injured.

Many arborists and landscapers work on electric utility, telephone, and cable-related projects near non-insulated, high-voltage power lines. The potential for severe electrical contact injuries is always there, experienced arborists say.

"When you see high tension power lines you need to fear them," said John Miceli, president of Sebring Tree in Sarasota, Fla. He shared some of his power line close encounters, the most recent of which occurred while he wore a high-voltage live line alarm.

"I've been in the landscape and tree service industry for 16 years," Miceli said. "I was in business in Mahopac, New York for 14 years, then moved to Sarasota. Any kind of trimming or removal in residential or commercial projects requires a lot of work around electrical wires. You've got to be very careful, especially doing storm work. You work long hours, sometimes non-stop. I had my first close call three years ago when I got zapped while working on a pine tree on a windy day. I was in the bucket when a swinging branch hit me and I felt the current through the branch. I was lucky-I know it could have been worst. My uncle died that way."

Training to Avoid Exposures

Arborists are not the only group effected. Every year, exposure to electric current, wiring, transformers, or other electrical components seriously injures, sometimes fatally, scores of workers involved with a variety of industries, including utilities, construction, communications, fire prevention and outdoor advertising companies.

OSHA, NIOSH, the National Arborist Association (NAA), and other organizations provide classes and seminars, as well as grants for related safety and health training. Miceli found that safety training, preventive measures, and newly available live line alarms helped him to avoid a potential fatal high voltage electrical contact.

Used as an auxiliary means of high-voltage live line detection, the alarm is a little larger than a wristwatch and has a flexible and adjustable elastic armband for wearing on the upper arm. It has a clear, audible warning tone, is sealed against dust and water, and is always on. It has an integrated test button and readily available batteries with a service life of approximately two years.

"When I bought my work truck and saw the alarm, I thought it was a toy," Miceli admitted. "At first I threw it in the glove-box, but eventually I put it on and forgot about it. Then one day, I was trimming palm trees near a house and it beeped, I looked up and there was a high-tension line.

"Sometimes when you're working, you get involved with a project and don't always think about the power lines, but this reminded me; kind of tapped me on the shoulder. I was too near a high voltage power line and didn't even know it."

Miceli found that preventive measures and safety-related equipment could help to reduce a potential risk of a tragic high-voltage power line contact.

Winter Conditions Can Be Challenging for Drivers of All Skill Levels

Submitted by Pat English, Safety Coordinator

In sunny Southern California, winter driving is not a problem. Don't fool yourself. Winter can be just as dangerous for drivers in Southern California as it is for drivers in other parts of the nation. Whether it is fog, light rain or heavy snow, high winds or extreme heat, knowing how to adjust your driving can mean the difference between being safe or becoming a statistic.

"Experts agree there are three key factors to keep in mind when you must adapt to driving in winter. These three elements are visibility, traction and driving style".

"Reduced visibility and traction are the primary factors that often make winter driving much more difficult and challenging. But it is the driving style you adopt in dealing with those factors that will determine how well you cope with the hazards of winter, and those provoked by other drivers".

The County of Riverside system for safe driving: "*The Smith System*" contains five keys to get more space and visibility while driving:

- **AIM HIGH IN STEERING**
- **GET THE BIG PICTURE**
- **KEEP YOUR EYES MOVING**
- **LEAVE YOURSELF AN OUT**
- **MAKE SURE THEY SEE YOU**

What is clear in the *Smith System* is driver visibility. Drivers must prepare, coping with winter's visibility problems must begin before you even get behind the wheel. It includes allowing enough time to clear any dew, frost, ice, or snow from the windows—all the windows—inside and outside.

You need good clear 360-degree visibility, and don't forget the mirrors and wipers—front and rear, if your vehicle is so equipped. Use a wiper or garden hose to clear the window, your fingers to break off any accumulated ice on the blades and wipe them clean. Be sure the wiper nozzles are clean, too. A long pin works well for that purpose.

To help get through that cold start up critical period, idle the vehicle with the heater on Floor mode while you are cleaning off the exterior, thus keeping frost/moist-laden air off the windshield. (Idling for more than a few minutes can be harmful to the engine, particularly when it is very cold. It warms up most quickly when being driven, moderately until it is fully warm, of course.)

Do NOT drive with the heater in Recirculation mode. Doing so recalculates interior air that keeps increasing in humidity—from elements you have brought in and from your own breath. That moisture-rich air creates fog on the inside of the windows, often faster than the defroster can clear it.

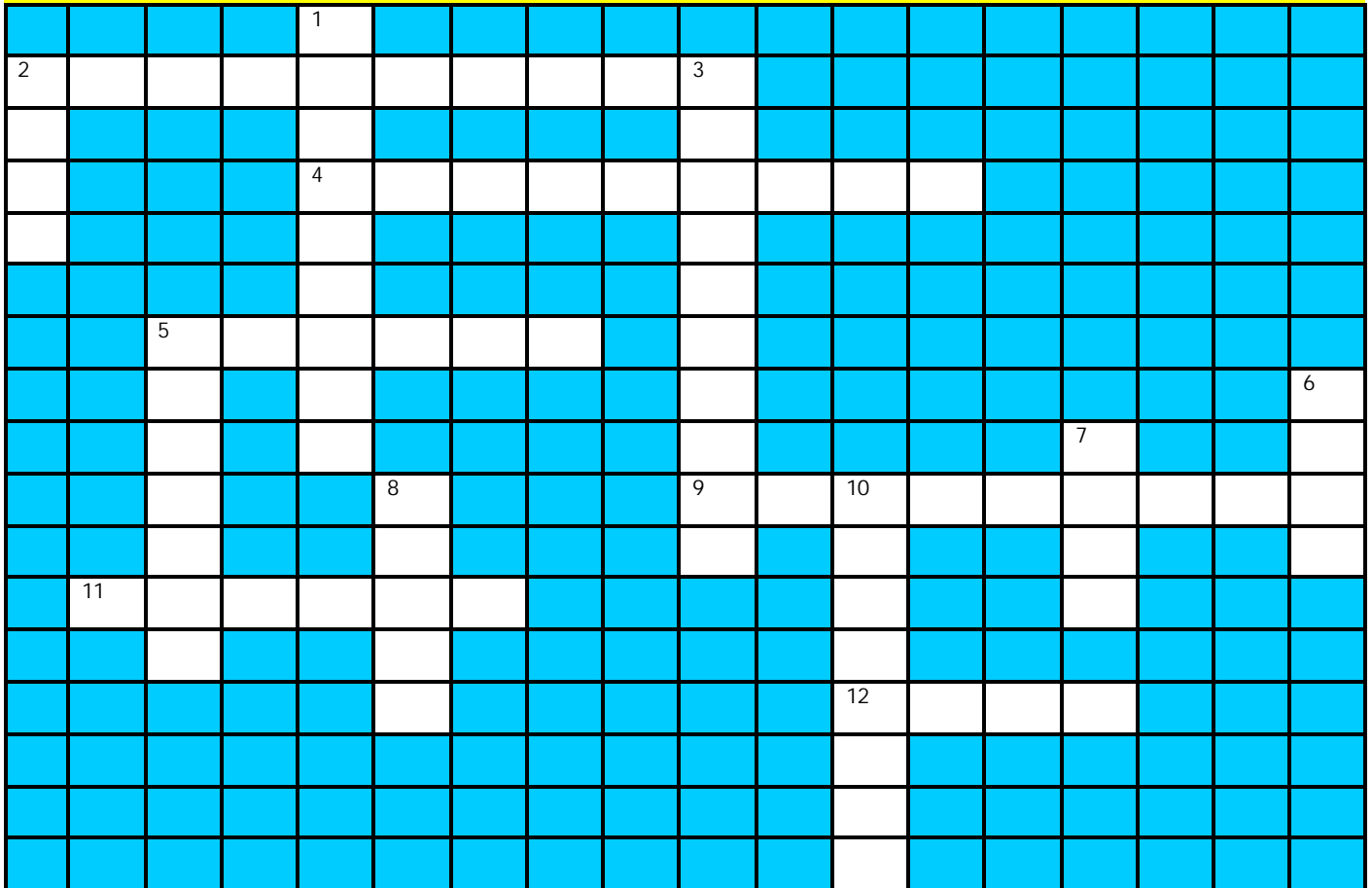
Roads are slickest when it first starts to rain. Water mixes with vehicle oils and lubricants on the pavement and makes roads especially slippery. All the control you exercise over the vehicle—whether input through the steering wheel, accelerator, or brake—is delivered through four palm-sized patches of rubber where the tires meet the road (or off-road) surface. Consequently, all the control you exercise over the vehicle is dependent on the traction generated at those contact patches. Some key elements for control while driving in the rain:

- **REDUCE YOUR SPEED**
- **TURN ON LOW-BEAM HEADLIGHTS AND WIPERS**
- **STAY IN THE MIDDLE LANES**
- **DO NOT DRIVE THROUGH STANDING WATER**
- **AVOID SWERVING AND ABRUPT BRAKING**
- **CHECK YOUR MIRRORS MORE FREQUENTLY**

[MSN Autos Canada Winter Driving Tips From the Experts, by Marc Lachapelle, with Gerry Malloy](#)

[Shell #7 FOUL WEATHER DRIVING, Can you weather the worst?](#)

Safety Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

2. The second word in PPE.
4. Never block _____ exits.
5. Never carry a load that _____ your vision.
9. The safety goal is to have zero _____.
11. It's called the Occupational Safety and _____ Administration.
12. The _____ is part of the body most often hurt at work—nearly 25% of all injuries.

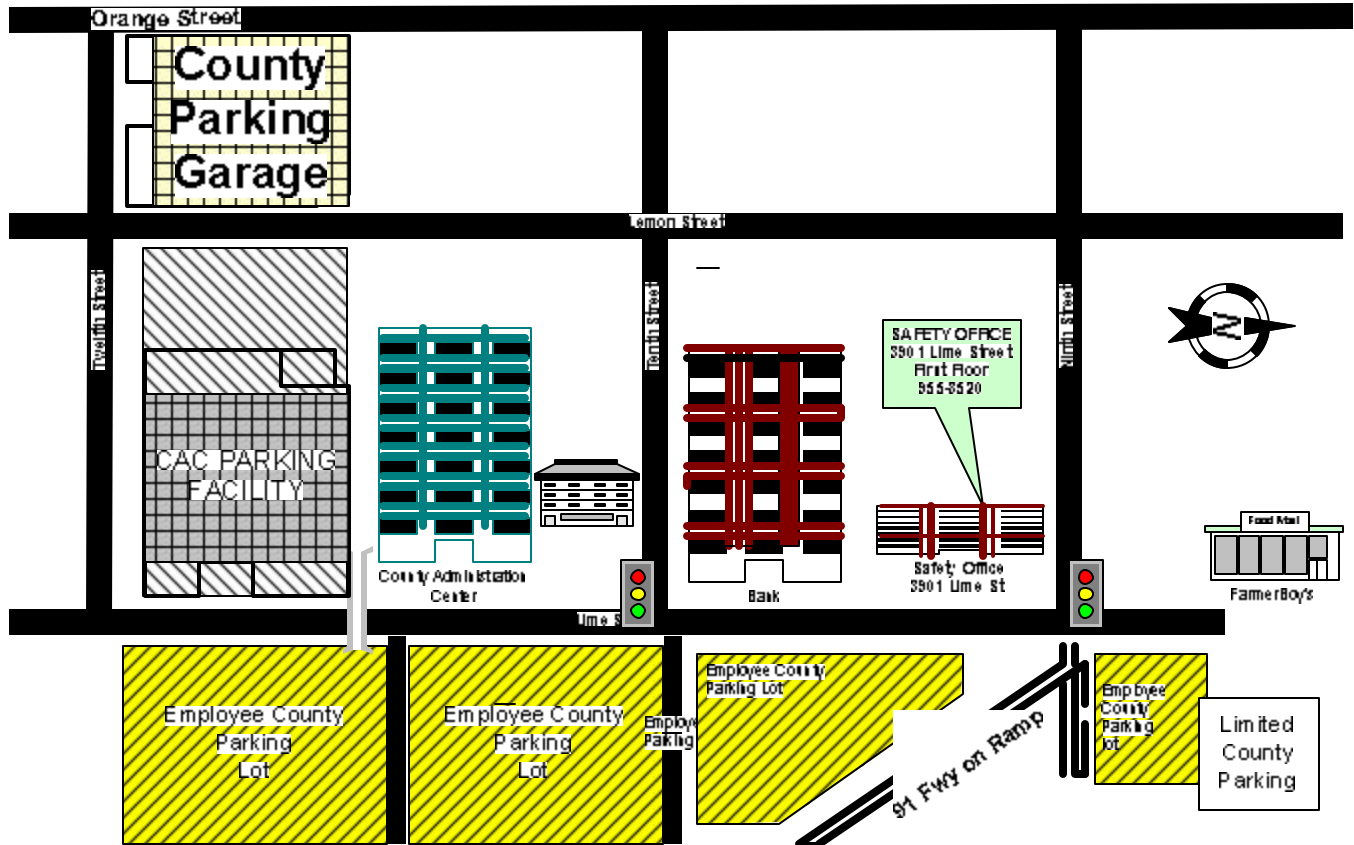
DOWN

1. Properly maintained smoke _____ reduce the risk of dying in a fire by 50%.

2. Push rather than _____ a heavy load.
3. Replace or repair all damaged _____ cords.
5. Be sure everyone in the vehicle _____ up.
6. In case of fire, get out _____.
7. Use these instead of your back when lifting.
8. Drink plenty of this to avoid heat exhaustion.
10. Always face the ladder when _____ up or down.

Safety Training Parking

Note: The instructor can only validate Parking slips from the County Parking Garage located on 12th & Orange St. not from the CAC Parking Facility



While attending training at the County Safety Division Office, parking is available. It is important that you park your vehicle at least a half hour before the training. Finding a parking space can be difficult and you may have to walk several blocks for your training.

Parking can be validated only for the County Parking Garage located at 12th Street and Orange Avenue, NOT the new CAC Parking structure. If you park in any other parking structure or private parking lot, you are responsible for any parking fees, citations or towing fees that may be incurred.

There is 2-Hour Public Parking around the office but it is monitored by the Riverside City Parking Patrol and extended parking is enforced.

Get here with plenty of time and DO NOT JAY-WALK—you will receive a citation—there have been several pedestrian injuries due to jaywalking—besides, it isn't safe to do so.

Coffee is provided and there is a soda/snack machine available at our site.

Unless notified, classes start at 8:00 AM and 1:00 PM—Please be on time—”Thank you”

Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS) is a phrase used to describe eye and vision-related problems associated with computer use. According to the American Optometric Association eyestrain from looking at computer screens is a growing problem. People are spending longer hours in front of the computer at work and at home. Computer use can be very hard on the eyes. Most users are not aware of the constant eye movements involved to read and view information while doing computer work. Long periods of uninterrupted computer work will stress the eyes and even the body in general. Computer users tend to blink less often while looking at the screen. Eyes become dry, scratchy, and even bloodshot. To help you determine whether prolonged computer use is affecting your vision, see below if you suffer from any of these symptoms:

? Tired eyes ? Eye fatigue and irritation ? Sore eyes ? Periodic blurred near vision ? Occasional blurred distance vision ? Headaches ? Dry eyes ? Heavy eyelids ? Red eyes ? Burning eyes ? Contact lens discomfort ? Changes in color perception ? Glare sensitivity ? Excessive tearing ? Neck, shoulder and back pain.

If you checked even one or two of these symptoms, and if your work or recreation involves prolonged use of a personal computer, you could be suffering from Computer Vision Syndrome.

If so, what can be done? Here are some actions you can take to reduce and eliminate CVS.

- Have a thorough eye exam, annually, especially if you're already wearing a prescription.
- Adjust the height of your monitor, desk or chair so the top of the computer screen is at eye level. The screen itself should be about one arm's length away and slightly tilted up from perpendicular with the ceiling.
- Place your computer monitor at right angles to any windows and overhead lighting.
- Adjust brightness and contrast monitor controls for eye comfort. Contrast is more important than brightness.
- Choose a light screen windows scheme because light colors are easier on the eyes.
- Clean your monitor screen often; water and a clean cloth work fine.
- Designate a separate area with sufficient overhead light to read and write.
- Keep your desk organized and clean to reduce overhead lighting glare.
- Use an anti-glare computer screen to reduce reflective glare.
- Use a document holder. Locate it as close to the screen as possible. The screen and holder should be the same distance from your eyes.
- Use eye drops to keep eyes moist.
- Train yourself to blink more often. Blinking moistens the eyes.
- Reduce room lighting to half normal office levels. Use desk lamps for tasks that require more light. Add dimmer switches to overhead lights, use coverings or turn them off completely.
- Take a short 30-second break every 30 minutes (30/30 Rule) to give your eyes a rest.



Computer Vision Syndrome affects your mental and physical well-being and certainly impacts productivity. Unlike many other work-related conditions that affect your health, CVS can be virtually eliminated by taking a few simple, inexpensive precautions. Happy computing!

RIVERSIDE COUNTY SAFETY DIVISION

3901 Lime Street
Suite #100
Riverside

Office Hours: Monday—Thursday
7:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.

Friday: 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.
Safety Hotline: (909) 955-5868

Phone: 909-955-3520

Fax: 909-955-9200

Email: Safety Office Publications

Web site:

<http://intranet.co.riverside.ca.us/>

DIFFINITIONS OF VIOLATIONS

WILLFUL: Intentional, disregard of, or plain indifference to Cal/OSHA rules.

REPEAT: Previous citation for substantially similar violations in other worksites owned by the same company.

FAILURE—TO—ABATE: Previous citations for similar violations at the same worksite.

SERIOUS: Substantial possibility for death or serious harm.

OTHER—THAN—SERIOUS: Unlikely to cause death or serious harm, but directly related to job safety and health.

Cited companies have 15 working days to contest.

County Safety Office Staff are available to assist you at all times. Our office is in the (909) area code, on MICRO and all have Email.

COUNTY SAFETY OFFICER

Tom Sproal, County Safety Officer 955-5859

Safety Personnel

Mike Bowers, RCRMC Safety Coordinator 486-4689

Ken Brooks, Safety Coordinator 955-9205

Annette Dora, Safety Specialist I 955-3522

Pat English, RCSD Safety Coordinator 955-2493 or 955-5853

Tony Gonzales, Safety Coordinator 955-5881

Steve Hickam, Safety Specialist II 955-5892

Steve Hutchings, MH Safety Coordinator 955-3521 or 358-5272

Dan Kerker, Safety Coordinator 955-5880

Art Pereida, Safety Coordinator 955-5883

Becky Perkins, Occupation Health Nurse Consultant 955-5854

Dave Rich, Safety Coordinator 955-9527

Joe Salinas, Transportation Safety Coordinator 955-6788

Brian Teig, DHS Safety Specialist II 955-5880 or 358-5547

Safety Office Support Personnel 955-3520

Tawni Grubbs, OA III

Lydia Temmen, OA III

Jan Zimmermann, OA II



“You do not have to hide when the County Safety Division comes out to inspect your facility!”

In fact, we encourage you to give our office a call now, (909) 955-3520, if you have any questions in preparing for this years inspection. You can also submit any safety concerns or inquiries to Safety Office Publications, via GroupWise, so they can be forwarded to the safety person assigned to work with your department.