

# SAFETY ZONE

Volume 1, Issue 1  
JANUARY 2001

## TOM'S CORNER: A MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTY SAFETY OFFICER

By Tom Sproul, Safety Officer

The County Safety Office is going through many changes in order to assist departments and their employees, and this Safety Newsletter is one of them.

As many of you already know, many departments already have a website and the County Safety Office is no exception. The County Safety Office website should be up and running the first part of this year.

What will be different about the County Safety Office website is it will be a "working" website designed to assist departments and their employees.

With over 15,000 County employees it is important that some means of communication is in place at all times and we hope to achieve this and maintain it 24/7.

Training classes, dates, times

and locations will be provided, along with who to contact to attend.

We're also very excited about our County MSDS, Material Safety Data Sheet, program. It will be accessible to all County employees for MSDS information and you will be able to print MSDS for products used in your facilities without going through the County Safety Office.

Our website will also link you to the County Safety Newsletter, the **SAFETY ZONE**.

This is the first issue and we are very excited over it.

The **SAFETY ZONE** is not intended to dictate code and verse but to provide helpful educational articles that you may use at work, home or play.

If there is a topic you would like

you or your staff to attend.

Register by calling (909) 955-3520 and speak with Lydia Temmen, Jan Zimmerman or Tawni Grubbs. They are also in GroupWise for your assistance.

Classes offered are Driver



"FLASH" is the County Safety Office mascot. FLASH says "Apply caution at work at all times"

to see printed, please contact us and we will make every effort to provide this information.

The **SAFETY ZONE** is an important means of communication between County employees and the Safety Office. We look forward to any comments you may have to improve the **SAFETY ZONE** to meet your needs.

### POINTS OF INTEREST

Tom's Corner	Page 1
Safety Office Personnel	Page 4
Ergonomics (RMI)	Page 2
Training Offered	Page 1
Monthly Safety Topic	Page 4

### In This Months Issue

- Safety Officers Message
- Contacting Safety Office Personnel via phone, FAX or Email
- Training Offered
- Monthly Safety Topic
- Ergonomic Safety Tip
- Driver Safety Tip
- And other Safety Tips to assist you

## TRAINING OFFERED BY THE COUNTY SAFETY OFFICE

The County Safety Office offers a variety of specialized training, which is offered year round.

It is important to note, these training classes fill up fast. Early registration is highly recommended in order for

Training, Workplace Violence, Ergonomics—RMI, 1st Aid/CPR and Forklift Training, to name a few.

Registrations for all 2001 training classes are now being taken.

# SAFETY DRIVING TIP OF THE MONTH—Road Rage

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW TO HELP AVOID IT

By Lou Gianonio, Safety Coordinator

When the **AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety** studied more than 10,000 incidents of violent aggressive driving committed between 1990 and 1996, it found that at least 218 people were killed and another 12,610 injured when drivers got angry.

The study found that men, women, and people of all ages can drive aggressively if they are in the wrong mood or circumstances. What's more, when drivers explained why they became violent, the reasons are incredibly trivial: "She wouldn't let me pass," "They kept tailgating me," or as a driver accused of murder explained, "He practically ran me off the road—what was I supposed to do?"

**THREE BASIC GUIDING PRINCIPLES** can help you avoid becoming a victim:

1. **DON'T OFFEND**—Avoid behaviors that are likely to anger or enrage others.

**CUTTING OTHERS OFF**—Ensure you have plenty of room before merging and signal intentions beforehand. Try to apologize with an appropriate gesture for any mistake you make.

**DRIVING SLOWLY IN THE LEFT LANE**—If someone wants to pass, move over and let them by. In many states and provinces, the law requires that you travel in the right lane and use the far left lane for passing only.

**TAILGATING**—Drivers get angry when they are followed too closely. In California, a three-second space is recommended between your car and

***"ADJUST YOUR ATTITUDE—The most important actions you can take to avoid aggressive driving . . ."***

the car ahead. If you feel you are being followed too closely, signal and change lanes to allow the other driver to go by.

**GESTURES**—Almost nothing makes another driver angrier than an obscene gesture. Avoid all gestures, even "harmless" expressions of irritation like shaking your head.

**2. DON'T ENGAGE**—One angry driver can't start a fight unless another is willing to join in. **REFUSE TO BECOME ANGRY.** Orator Robert Ingersoll said, "Anger blows out the lamp of the mind." An angry person can do something they may later regret and that includes you.

**STEER CLEAR**—Give an angry driver you've offended lots of room. That driver could "snap" and become truly dangerous. Put as much distance as possible between you and the other car and get away as quickly as possible. Under no circumstances should you stop and try to settle things "man to man."

**AVOID EYE CONTACT**—Don't acknowledge an angry driver, looking or staring at another driver can change an impersonal encounter between vehicles into a personal dual that can get out of hand fast.

**GET HELP**—If the other driver is following you or trying to start a fight and you have a cell phone, call the police. Otherwise, drive to a place where people are around, such as a police station, shopping center, convenience store, or even a hospital. Use your horn to get attention. This will usually discourage an aggressor. Do not get out of your car. Do not go home.

**3. ADJUST YOUR ATTITUDE**—The most important

actions you can take to avoid aggressive driving take place inside your head. Try these ideas:

**FORGET WINNING**—Don't let driving become a contest, be courteous and learn to accept mistakes and indiscretions of others. Allow more time for your trip. Listen to soothing music. Practice relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing.

**PUT YOURSELF IN THE OTHER DRIVERS SHOES**—Instead of judging the other driver, try to imagine why he or she is driving that way. Someone speeding and changing lanes could be a volunteer fireman or a physician responding to an emergency. Whatever their reasons, stay cool and don't take other drivers' actions personally.

**Article: "Road Rage-How to Avoid Aggressive Driving" is a contributing article by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. For more information on this and other topics, visit their web site at [www.aafts.org](http://www.aafts.org).**

*"SAFETY ZONE is a monthly publication providing general safety information to County employees. Contributing articles or ideas and comments are welcomed." Submit to: Art Pereira, Editor GroupWise or STOP #2170*

# HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TIP OF THE MONTH

By Ken Brooks, Safety Coordinator

Ever wonder what a **"hazardous material"** is?

It's very easy to identify a gasoline tanker truck on the freeway as a hazardous material transporter, a chemical company as a manufacturer of hazardous chemicals or a painter spray painting a car as a user of hazardous materials.

Have you ever thought of yourself as a hazardous material transporter, manufacturer and user? Maybe not. Guess what? We are

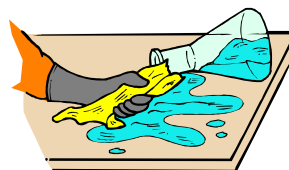
Remember the last time you bought some "extra strength" cleaner, took it home, found it wasn't strong enough so you mixed some other cleaner with it, used it to scrub the tile and this time it really worked well. Fortunately you finished just in time because you started getting a real bad headache and nauseated. . . **"You were lucky! Don't do this!"**

So many times persons are

overcome by chemical vapors created by mixing two products which are considered independently "safe". These products are mixed and one "unsafe" chemical is created.

Vapors can be flammable, unhealthy or reactive.

Take all chemical products seriously at work and at home. Read the labels. Know the precautions to be taken and most important, don't hesitate to dial 9-1-1 in case of an emergency.



**TAKE ALL CHEMICAL SPILLS SERIOUSLY**

# ERGONOMIC TIP OF THE MONTH

## DISCOMFORT AWARENESS

By Tony Gonzales, Safety Coordinator

Generally, if a group of employees are asked if they are having any problems with or at their workstations, they will most often say "no". However, if the same group of employees are asked, "are you experiencing any discomforts in the lower back, tightness in the shoulder or neck, headaches, eyestrain, or fatigue" they will in most cases, respond "yes" to one or more of the discomforts.

During department safety inspections, employees are asked these simple questions. And, whether their workstations are non-adjustable or semi-adjustable, their response remains consistent.

Why do employees experience these symptoms or problems? It is because people are not all the same size or shape. People are different. People vary in

height, physical strength, tolerance to pain, quality of vision, being right or left handed, and there are biologically different. And, contributing to the complexities, these differences change substantially with age.

A job or duty that causes no discomfort



Adjust furnishings to your specific needs

for one individual, may seriously limit the productivity of another, even if they are similar in size. Most notably this situation occurs when there is difference in ages and life style.

If you find yourself making statements such as, "I have a bad back", "I always get headaches", "my eyes get very dry" or "my doctor says I have tendonitis", etc., you are verbalizing what your body is saying to you, making you aware of something you are doing awkwardly or incorrectly. It may even mean that you are staying in one position for a long period of time, and not moving enough.

Be aware of what you are doing and how you are doing it...ensure you are working in neutral and most importantly listen to your body, it's talking to you.

# SECURITY TIP OF THE MONTH—Facility Security

By David Rich, Safety Specialist II

**Fact:** A contributing factor to workplace violence, theft or vandalism is security measures being breeched by employees themselves.

Have you seen employees prop a rear door open so they can take a smoke break? Or a security alarm on a rear door is disen-

*"No matter what department you work in, some form of security measures must be in effect at all times".*

gaged so they can exit sooner? How often are persons let in your facility without asking for "ID"? Persons are permitted entry just because they say "I'm with the phone company and I need to check your relay system"? -

With no questions asked.

No matter what department you work in, some form of security measures must be in effect at all times.

We need to take the responsibility of keeping our work environment safe by questioning unknown persons that do not appear to be a County employee; Question employees with no County "ID" and remind them of County policy; Are they still a County employee?: No ID, call a supervisor or follow your departments Security Policy; Determine the purpose of the visit—Verify; Sign in and sign out.

This is **our** workplace and we need to protect our personal safety and interest.

# FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

By Art Pereida, Safety Specialist II

Ever used a fire extinguisher? Most likely not and you are not alone.

Statistics will show that less than 1% of the work force population have ever used a fire extinguisher. The majority of persons are surprised by what the fire extinguisher does when it discharges.

First of all, we need to know where the fire extinguisher is. Generally, fire extinguishers should be clear, unobstructed and accessi-

ble. They will be located within 75' travel distance.

Once you've located it, grab it by the handle, **P**ull the pin; **A**im the discharge nozzle at the base of the fire; **S**queeze the handle; **S**weep in a left-to-right motion to extinguish. You will notice that it will give a "kick" because of the pressure. Hold it with two hands and stand away from the fire at least 8 to 12 feet for safety. No mat-



Remember **PASS**—**P**ull—**A**im—**S**queeze—**S**weep

ter how small a fire, call the fire department as a precaution.

It is also recommended that the fire extinguisher is "tested", a light discharge, before approaching the fire to make sure it is working.

The majority of all extinguishers in place can be used on the following type fire: classifications: **A**—normal combustibles, **B**—flammable liquids, **C**—electrical.

COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE

3901 Lime Street  
Suite #100  
Riverside

Phone: 909-955-3520  
Fax: 909-955-9200  
Email: See Listing



"FLASH Safety Tip"

*"Being safe at work is no accident"*

**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 ..... 955-3520**

**County Safety Office Personnel**

**Mike Bowers, RCRMC Safety Coordinator ..... 486-4689**

**Ken Brooks, Safety Coordinator..... 955- 9205**

**Larry Chavez, Safety Specialist ..... 955- 5891**

**Lou Giantonio, Safety Coordinator ..... 955-3522**

**Tony Gonzales, Safety Coordinator ..... 955-5881**

**Steve Hutchings, Safety Coordinator ..... 955-3521**

**Art Pereida, Safety Specialist ..... 955-5883**

**Dave Rich, Safety Specialist ..... 955-9527**

**Joe Salinas, Trans. Safety Coordinator ..... 955-6788**

**Brian Teig, Mental Health Safety Specialist ... 358-4747**

**After Hour Emergency Pager # ..... 783-9738/715-6419**

**Office, Monday thru Friday, 8 to 5 ..... 955-3520**

**Fax..... 955-9200**

# SAFETY TOPIC OF THE MONTH: IIPP Program

## SAFETY EDUCATION

By Brian Teig, Safety Specialist II

In the County of Riverside, **Supervisory personnel have direct responsibility for ensuring their employees health and safety.** One important function a supervisor has is to ensure safety training is provided to their employees. In evaluating the status of your employees regarding safety training, consider the following questions:

1. Are all employees, especially new employees, informed of workplace hazards, safety policies, procedures and is this clearly documented?
2. Are monthly safety meetings being conducted and documented? In addition to monthly safety meetings, if your operation involves field or shop type work, are "tailgate" or "toolbox" safety meetings conducted every 10 working

days according to Safety Policy? All Safety Meeting records must be kept on-site for 3 years.

3. Have your employees attended all required County and Department training classes? For a list of re-

quired County training classes, refer to Document 502 in the County Safety Manual.

4. For employees who have received training requiring re-certification, do you have a method in place to ensure their training is current?

5. Are monthly self-inspections being conducted and documented in your facility? Are discovered hazards and safety infractions being reported? How? Inspection records must be kept on site for 3 years.



**DO YOU KNOW YOUR DEPARTMENTS IIPP POLICY?**

If you are a supervisor, take the time to read County Safety Policy Document 501 and 502 located in the County Safety Manual. A supervisor who understands the importance of safety training, generally has more happy and productive employees.