

SAFETY ZONE

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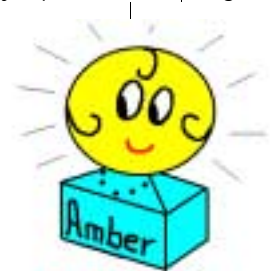
TOM'S CORNER: A MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTY SAFETY OFFICER

Many will use this time to reflect on the past and wonder where the time has gone. Many of us may have even wondered where we would be at this time, considering the September 11 incident of the WTC. It has left us in a world of uncertainty and has made us more aware of how vulnerable we are to such acts of violence. As all of this goes on, we must also focus on our safety at the local level, here, in the County of Riverside—to our fellow employees and cliental. Our main objective is the overall safety for our employees—from the newest TAP employee, to the most senior department head.

And this, by far, is not an easy task. The number of employees, all the different job classifications, regulations continuously being added or changed, technology constantly on the move poses a daily challenge to the County Safety Office staff. Additionally, they respond to hazards and complaints, inspections, training, investigations and public relations, for all departments, agencies, districts and their personnel. Let's make this the beginning of the Safest Year On Record. Lets: **Identify—Report—Respond—Abate** the hazards we discover for a safer and better place to work in, for the year 2002. *Tom*

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Amber: "IRRA" - Identify—Report—Respond—Abate is a good acronym to remember . . . "I-R-R-A"

New Child Seat Belt Law by Art Pereida, Safety Coordinator

As of January 1, 2002, this new child safety seatbelt law is now in effect in California.

The new law states that children must be secured in an appropriate child passenger restraint (safety seat or booster seat) until they are at least 6 years old or weigh at least 60 pounds.

Car seats must be used in conjunction with the vehicle's lap and shoulder belt strap. The booster seat raises the child so that the vehicle lap and shoulder belt can be positioned properly, and the child's knees can bend naturally.

There are two common types of booster seats to use depending on your vehicle:

- **High-Back Booster Seat**
- **Backless Booster Seat**

The **high-back booster** seat is used if your car's back seat is **lower** than your child's ears—use the high back booster seat to protect your child's head and neck.

The **backless booster seat** is used if your car's seat back is **higher** than your child's ear's - this will afford the necessary protection for the child's head and neck areas.

Remember: A booster seat needs to be used **every** time. The back seat is the place for all children to ride.

This law applies to all, including departments that transports children in a car or

van, no matter for what reason or how short the distance may be. It is your departments responsibility to be in compliance with this new law.

For additional information for your department or the public, you are encouraged to click on the attached link to gain access to the State Of California Highway Patrol web page.

They provide printable brochures in English and Spanish, in addition to several other links related to seatbelt safety information for children and adults.

www.chp.ca.gov/html/boosterseats.html

Managing Job Stress

By: Steve Hickam
Safety Specialist II

Job stress has become an increasingly common and costly problem in the American workplace, leaving few workers untouched. Job stress can be defined as the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job don't match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. Job stress can lead to poor health, illness and even injury. Experts agree that job stress results from the conditions of work and worker interaction. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), on the basis of research and historical information, views working conditions as the primary cause of job stress, with worker characteristics playing a secondary role in job stress causation.

Job conditions that may lead to job stress include:

- Heavy workload, infrequent rest breaks, long hours and shift-work; performing tasks having little inherent meaning, that don't utilize workers' skills and provide little sense of control.
- Worker exclusion in decision-making, poor organizational communication channels and lack of family friendly policies.
- Poor social environment and lack of supportive or helpful coworkers and supervisors.
- Conflicting or unclear performance expectations, too much responsibility or wearing "too many hats".
- Job security, lack of growth, advancement or promotional op-

portunities, rapid or unexpected changes in the work environment.

- Unpleasant or dangerous physical conditions like crowding, noise, air pollution or ergonomic problems.



The body's response to stress is biologically preprogrammed. Stress sets off an alarm in the brain, which responds by activating the body's defense mechanism. The nervous system becomes aroused and hormones are released to sharpen the senses, quicken the pulse, deepen respiration and tense the muscles. Short duration or occasional episodes of stress pose little risk, but chronic unresolved episodes of stress keep the body's defense mechanism constantly activated. This increases the wear and tear on biological systems, causes fatigue and can eventually result in damage and injury to the body.

Early warning signs of job stress include headache, sleep disturbances, inability to concentrate, short temper, upset stomach, job dissatisfaction and low morale. Some research studies suggest that stress increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal and psychological disorders, impaired immune function, ulcers, cancer and suicide, though additional research must be done in some of these areas.

Here are some useful stress management tips that employees can use to reduce or control job stress:

- Set realistic goals, deadlines and manageable workloads.
- Resist the superman/superwoman urge. You're not perfect, nor can you do everything. Don't expect perfection from yourself. Ask for help if you need it. Learn to say "No".
- Meditate for 10-20 minutes to reduce stress; listen to music; think of/visualize pleasant things or think of nothing at all.
- Visually rehearse how you'll handle an upcoming difficult task; it can raise self-confidence.
- When overwhelmed, stop; select the most important task and complete it first. When completed, check it off mentally to acknowledge your accomplishment and motivate you to tackle the next task.
- Indulge your personal interests and hobbies; take/make time for yourself.
- Adopt a healthy lifestyle; eat a nutritious diet, limit intake of caffeine and alcohol, get adequate rest, exercise regularly for 20-30 minutes and maintain a balance between work, family and play.
- Be willing to compromise occasionally when encountering professional opposition. Stand up for your beliefs, but do so calmly and rationally; don't argue—arguing increases stress.
- Develop a support network of coworkers, friends and family; don't cope with problems alone.
- Maintain a relaxed and positive outlook and don't worry about things you can't control.

Cleaning Products & Hazardous Materials

By Mike Boers, Safety Coordinator—RCRMC

Chemical products that are potentially hazardous to your health and safety are everywhere and include household cleaners. These products don't necessarily have a big "warning" sign or skull-and-crossbones on the label to let us know about the dangers. In the workplace there are products such as paint, solvents, cleaners that often contain substances that can be harmful if we don't protect ourselves appropriately.

Fortunately, we all can protect ourselves against chemical hazards by:

- Knowing what the hazards are;
- Understanding how we might be exposed to these hazards;
- Knowing how to protect ourselves

Materials are hazardous if they cause harm to people or the environment. More specifically, a material is hazardous if it is any of the following:

- **Corrosive**—It burns the skin or eyes on contact.
- **Explosive**—It can explode under certain conditions, such as heat or pressure.
- **Flammable**—**Reactive**—It burns, explodes, or releases dangerous vapors when it mixes with other substances.
- **Toxic**—It causes illness or death.

Many hazardous materials combine two or more of these characteristics. Two common examples are oil-based paint

(flammable and toxic) and household oven cleaner (corrosive, flammable, toxic, and even explosive if in an aerosol can).

Unfortunately, it can be very easy to become exposed to the dangers of hazardous materials. Often, exposure is the result of carelessness, such as smoking or lighting a match when working with flammable or explosive materials.

If a substance is toxic, that means it can cause illness or other damage to your body. Types of illness include:

- **Acute**—meaning that the ill effects are usually severe and are noticed right away, or
- **Chronic**—meaning that the effects are long term and may not be noticed for years.

Here are the common ways people are exposed to toxic materials:

- Contact with skin and eyes.
- Inhaling toxic fumes.
- Ingestion (that is, swallowing) toxic material.

These are called "routes of entry" to the body. It's important to recognize the routes of entry so that you can avoid careless handling of toxic materials and take proper steps, such as wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) to avoid exposure.

There are a number of basic safety steps everyone should take to avoid exposure to hazardous materials.

They include:

- All appliances **shall** be UL approved.
- Follow the manufacturers safety recommendations at all times—use in approved locations only..
- Keep all combustibles 3 feet away

- **Labels and MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet):** Know how to read and understand the information on labels and MSDS, which tell you about the associated hazards of the chemical and how to protect yourself.
- **Follow the Rules:** Obey posted warning signs, such as "NO SMOKING" signs. They are there to remind you to avoid exposing yourself and others to hazardous conditions.
- **Personal Protective Clothing:** The right kind of PPE serve as a barrier to entry of toxic chemicals. Gloves, goggles, rubber boots, and protective suits are some of the PPE's you may be required to wear.
- **Remove Obvious Hazards:** Before starting to work with a hazardous material, remove items that could burn, explode, react or become contaminated.
- **Be Prepared:** When an emergency happens, you should know the location of extinguishers, emergency showers and eyewashes, and particularly, whom to call for proper medical response.

Never take chances with hazardous materials, including household cleaners. Carelessness is one of the main causes of the hazardous material exposure, so make sure you know what the dangers are and how to prevent them before you start to handle hazardous materials. If you are not sure about what the hazards are or how to protect yourself, ask your supervisor.

Space Heaters —By Dave Rich, Safety Coordinator

Winter weather can bring about low temperatures and many employees may be planning to use portable space heaters at their work locations or in their homes as a supplement heating source this winter season. **Before bringing in a space heater for your work location, be sure that you have permission from your Department Head.** Employees should be aware that space heaters could pose fire or injury hazards if used improperly. Ac-

- Do not leave children unattended—serious burns can occur.
- Turn off when not in use

Remember, portable heaters are only intended to be a supplement to your heating system. Extended or inappropriate use may create a fire hazard. For more information, go to www.ul.com for additional consumer safety information.

COUNTY SAFETY OFFICE

3901 Lime Street
Suite #100
Riverside
Office Hours: Monday—Friday
7:30 A.M. to 5:30 P.M.

Phone: 909-955-3520
Fax: 909-955-9200

Email: Safety Office Publications

Web site: <http://intranet.co.riverside.ca.us/safety>



FLASH: I wear eye protection whenever I work with tools—you should too.

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

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Tawni Grubbs, OA III

Lydia Temmen, OA III

Jan Zimmermann, OA II

Plan Your 2002 safety meetings

By Art Pereida, Safety Coordinator

Where are you when it comes to your safety training effort? Are you feeling as though you've got the coming year well in hand? Or are you feeling as though there's too much on your plate? We can help make your job a bit easier by utilizing some or all of the safety articles provided in the monthly issue of the County Safety Newsletter—

SAFETY ZONE.

By utilizing the Supervisors Guide for Effective Safety Meetings located in Appendices A of your Safety Manual, in conjunction with the topics covered in the **SAFETY ZONE**, your job of producing effective and constructive Monthly Safety Meetings will become a lot easier and less time consuming in

preparation.

There are times when a "round table" is appropriate to discuss safety concerns but this practice should not be done every time.

It's good to let your staff know ahead of time what the topic will be for the next Monthly Safety Meeting and they should be prepared to discuss how it relates to the safety of their work environment.

This may also give you time to reserve a training video on the upcoming topic to be covered (Videos are available from the County Safety Office at no cost).

Still having a problem coming up with safety topics?

Here are some monthly topics. If some of them do not apply to your work environment, replace it with a topic which is

more conducive to your work:

- **January:** Cold Weather Driving
- **February:** Confined Space Safety
- **March:** Lifting/Carrying Safety
- **April:** Machine Safety
- **May:** Eye Protection Safety
- **June:** Forklift Safety
- **July:** Fall Safety
- **August:** Home Chemical Safety
- **September:** Respiratory Safety
- **October:** Compressed Gas Safety
- **November:** First Aid
- **December:** Hazard Communication—MSDS Program.

Give a small quiz to enhance listening and learning, and have an open review. Most important, maintain an "open" two-way communication at all times and your meetings will be positive.