

YCPARMIA Safety Journal

September, 2008

Safe or Sorry?

Three ways to prepare for an emergency

September is **National Preparedness Month** for a very good reason. Two of the worst disasters this country has faced in recent years — 9/11 and the catastrophic aftermath of Hurricane Katrina — occurred in September. The terrorist attack in September 2001 cost nearly 3,000 lives and caused unprecedented destruction. Hurricane Katrina claimed nearly 1,500 lives and nearly destroyed New Orleans.

Ferocious storms, terrorist attacks, fires, floods, chemical releases, and other disasters can happen almost anywhere, at almost any time. You can't control or necessarily predict these terrible events. What you can do is prepare for them.

Here are three steps recommended by the Department of Homeland Security to help you prepare for a disaster.

1. Have a family emergency plan.

To develop one, ask yourself these questions: "Do we have everyone's contact numbers as well as an out-of-town contact?"

"What is the evacuation route for our neighborhood?"

"Is there a designated place for everyone to meet outside of the home and neighborhood?"

"What is the emergency plan including the evacuation location of my child's school?"

Homeland Security says only you can answer these questions and develop an emergency plan that will suit your family's unique needs. You can download templates at their website to help get you started (www.ready.gov).

2. Create an emergency kit.

The kit should include basic items like water, food, battery-powered radio, flashlight, and first-aid supplies. For a complete list of recommended supplies, go to www.ready.gov.

3. Learn more about specific natural disasters, potential terrorist threats, and other catastrophic events.

For general information check the Homeland Security website. For specific questions about threats in your area, contact the Yolo County Office of Emergency Management or Citizen Corps council.

NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: What is National Preparedness Month?

A: National Preparedness Month is a nationwide effort to encourage Americans to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses, and schools. Throughout September, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security will work with a wide variety of organizations to highlight the importance of emergency preparedness and promote individual involvement through events and activities across the nation.

Q: What is the purpose of National Preparedness Month?

A: The goal of National Preparedness Month is to increase public awareness about the importance of preparing for emergencies and to encourage you to take action. Throughout the month, Homeland Security asks you to take steps to prepare yourself and your family, including getting a family emergency supply kit, making a family emergency plan, and being informed about the threats in your community.

WHAT IF YOU'RE AT WORK WHEN A DISASTER STRIKES?

- Know your organization's emergency plan, including your evacuations routes or where to go to shelter in place if it's unsafe to go outside.
- Know your emergency duties. Be prepared to execute these tasks under the worst possible conditions.
- Cooperate with emergency response personnel and follow their instructions.

Read the Sign!

Safety signs help prevent accidents

You'll see safety signs and tags all around our facility, which call your attention to workplace hazards and help prevent accidents. We also use signs to provide safety reminders and alert you to important safety issues, such as "Keep Area Clean" or "Be Careful: Walk Don't Run."



Signs and tags also signal different degrees of hazard. For instance:

- If you see the word "DANGER" on a sign or tag, it means there is a very high risk of serious injury or death, so you have to take immediate action.
Examples: "High Voltage" and "Restricted Area—Do Not Enter."
- If you see the word "CAUTION," you know that there is a potential risk of injury and you need to keep alert and take proper precautions.
Examples: "Watch Your Step" and "Wet Floor."
- If you see "WARNING" on a sign or tag, it means that the risk level is between DANGER and CAUTION. In other words you need to be very careful to avoid a potentially serious injury.

Treat signs and tags as important safety resources. They provide vital safety information that can help you avoid an injury. Go on instant alert when you see a safety sign or tag, and take appropriate precautions to prevent an accident to yourself or others.

Protect Your Feet

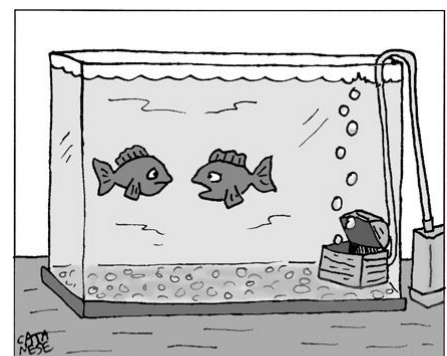
Know the hazards and take precautions

Most people don't think much about their feet until a foot or toe is injured or begins to hurt. But a little forethought can prevent painful foot injuries and keep you on your feet. Carelessness is a major cause of foot injuries. For example:

- ✘ Stubbing a toe against a hard object
- ✘ Dropping heavy objects on feet
- ✘ Getting too close to wheeled vehicles (forklifts, hand trucks, etc.)
- ✘ Getting feet caught in moving machine parts
- ✘ Spilling chemicals or hot substances on feet

To avoid foot injuries:

- **Wear appropriate shoes to work.** Shoes should fit right and feel comfortable. For any job where foot injuries are possible, wear sturdy shoes with flat, nonslip soles that protect your feet and help prevent slips and falls. Avoid sandals, high heels, or other footwear that could expose feet to injuries.
- **Watch where you step.** Keep alert to hazards that could cause you to slip, trip, or stub a toe.
- **Be careful with heavy objects, chemicals, and hot substances** so that you don't drop or spill them on your feet.
- **Keep feet safe when working with machinery.** Know where your feet are when working around machinery so that a foot doesn't get caught in the machine. Never climb on or cross over moving machinery such as conveyors.



"Remember: In an emergency, we meet by the bubbly treasure chest."

Be Security Conscious

Do your part to keep the workplace safe

Keeping our workplace secure is an ongoing challenge. Here's how you can help:

- Keep security doors closed and locked.
- Don't lend entry cards, keys, and IDs to anyone.
- Don't let any unauthorized people into the building.
- Escort visitors from reception to work areas after they have signed in, and then escort them back.
- Obey rules against weapons, drugs, and alcohol at work.
- Lock up purses, wallets, and other valuables.
- Know how to contact security.
- Notify security if you see a stranger with no identification in a work area.
- Alert security if you notice suspicious people or activity.
- Tell security if there is someone you fear might pursue you into the workplace, such as a violent spouse or partner.
- Let someone know when you're working after hours, and don't work alone.
- After dark, leave the workplace with co-workers or call security for an escort.
- Be especially careful when going to or from your vehicle if there are few other people in the parking area.

Good and Safe

Take the good housekeeping quiz

Take this good housekeeping quiz to see how good and safe you are.

1. Good housekeeping eliminates workplace:
- a. Noise b. Hazards c. Cleaning chores
2. Slips, trips, and falls are among the most common accidents caused by poor housekeeping. **True or False**
3. You can prevent slips by cleaning up _____ and wearing nonslip shoes.
4. Preventing the accumulation of _____ can decrease the risk of fires.
5. Good housekeeping ensures that nothing blocks fire exits or fire-fighting equipment. **True or False**
6. If you're practicing good housekeeping, you'll _____ chemical containers for signs of damage or leaks before using them, and regularly while they are in storage.
7. If you spot a safety hazard:
- a. Fix it b. Report it c. Either a or b

Answers:

- (1) b. Hazards (2) True (3) Spills (4) Trash and/or combustible materials (5) True (6) Check (or inspect) (7) c. Fix hazards if you can do so safely; otherwise report them right away.

SAFE CLIMBING

Follow these tips when you climb a ladder:

- **Use a tool belt** to carry equipment.
- **Always have 3-point contact with the ladder**, which could be both hands and one foot, or both feet and one hand.
- **Never go above three rungs from the top on straight ladders** or the second step from the top on stepladders.
- **Climb down and move the ladder** if the work is beyond your reach.

GOT A QUESTION?

If you have a safety question, should you:

- a. Wait for the next safety meeting?
- b. Look for an answer on the Internet?
- c. Ask your supervisor?

The correct answer is "c." Ask your supervisor—and do it right away! There's no shame in not knowing something. It's never dumb to ask about your safety. But it is dumb not to ask and get hurt. And it's a shame to guess and make a fatal mistake.

AVOID TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

- 1. **Leave earlier:** you don't have to rush.
- 2. **Stay off the cell phone.**
- 3. **Obey speed limits.**
- 4. **Keep at least 3 seconds behind** the in front—and 4 seconds at night in bad weather.
- 5. **Adjust speed** to traffic and weather.



Don't Work Solo

Qualities of a winning safety team

You work with a group of other people. But do you work as a team? Not necessarily. There's a big difference between a group of people who happen to work together and a team that *works* together. Here are some of the essential characteristics of a team:

- ❖ **Shared mission.** On sports teams, players focus on scoring and winning. On safe work teams, workers focus on hazards and preventing accidents.
- ❖ **Commitment to safety goals.** To keep safe on the job, you and your co-workers need to understand safety goals and commit to achieving them. Everyone needs to work together toward the same goals to achieve success and prevent injuries.
- ❖ **Participation.** Effective team players don't sit on the sidelines. They get in there and do their share to help the team win. The same is true on the job. You need to get involved in safety programs and other efforts to improve safety.
- ❖ **Interdependence.** Team members depend on one another to identify hazards, follow safety procedures, and prevent accidents.
- ❖ **Communication.** Because team members are interdependent, they constantly communicate, sharing information, giving warnings, reinforcing safe behavior, and generally talking up safety.



Safe or Unsafe?

You be the judge

Read each of the following situations and decide if the action is safe or unsafe.

1. Lyle sets up a ladder in front of a stairwell door so that he can change the bulb in the exit sign. The door has a little glass window at eye level and opens out from the stairwell.
2. Teresa, who is only 5'1," has to haul a stack of cartons from the supply room back to her workstation. The stack is heavy and she really can't see over it, but she can't find a hand truck and doesn't want to ask anyone for help.
3. Jack forgot his safety glasses in his locker and doesn't want to go all the way back to get them just to drill a couple of holes.

Answers:

- (1) *Unsafe.* Lyle could get knocked off the ladder by someone who throws open the stairwell door without looking through the little glass window. Lyle should lock the door.
- (2) *Unsafe.* If Teresa can't see where she's going, she could trip and fall. Straining with a heavy load could injure her back. She should either find a hand truck or cart, make two trips, or ask a co-worker to help.
- (3) *Unsafe.* Even just drilling a couple of holes could lead to an accident. Jack needs to wear his safety glasses every time they are required.

GET ON THE 'SAFEST-DRESSED' LIST

When you get dressed each day, you decide what to wear based on your taste, the weather, and the occasion. The weather may dictate a raincoat or umbrella, sun- glasses and shorts, or boots and a heavy jacket. The occasion may call for jeans and a T-shirt or more formal attire.

At work, you have to match what you wear to the particular situation and the hazards you could face while working. For example, if there may be eye hazards, you have to wear eye protection. If there are substances that could harm your skin, you need to wear gloves, and you may also need coveralls to protect the rest of your body.

If heavy objects could fall on your head, you need to wear a hard hat. And if you could breathe harmful vapors or dust, you need to put on a respirator.

Remember, personal protective equipment (PPE) and protective work clothing provide a safety barrier between you and something that could hurt — or even kill — you. Always choose the right PPE and work clothing for the job and the hazards.