

Safety Pen NEWSLETTER

A Service of the Office of Risk Management and Environmental Health & Safety

Summer, 2003

SMU Rewards On-the-Job Safety

SMU cares about the health and safety of its employees. To encourage a safety-mindset the university provides incentives to supervisors and employees. As Risk Management works on increasing supervisor support, examples of incentive awards will include:

- For employees in participating departments, there is **Safety Bingo**. The pot starts at \$50 and each employee gets a bingo card. A letter is drawn to a maximum of \$250. As long as there are no *OSHA Recordable* injuries, the pot goes up every day. If there is a loss, the bingo pot drops back down to the minimum. Eligible departments are required to conduct brief monthly safety meetings that document 80% employee attendance.
- Supervisors who pass surprise Safety Audits could be awarded cash bonuses up to \$200. Cash or recognition awards will also be given to departmental supervisors who implement new safety initiatives in their area.
- This Fall involves Risk Management will partner with Human Resources on the new employee Wellness program, "**WellPower.**" This program awards points to employees who participate in mind-, body-, or spirit-enhancing activities. For example, in the "mind" component, employees will get points for participation in Risk Management training classes such as Defensive Driving, Fire Extinguisher Training, Heat Exhaustion, or Accident Reporting. At the end of the year employees cash in points at the bronze, silver, or gold level. Awards at the "Gold Point Level" might include two free vacation days, a gift certificate to the bookstore, or the like.
- In the **Fleet Safety Auto Program**, up to 30 percent of the vehicle insurance premium is rebated back to departments for their owned, leased, or loaned vehicles, based on the following criteria: (1) authorized drivers of the vehicles maintain a current Defensive Driving Certificate; (2) a department's loss ratio is better than the University's five-year loss ratio; and, (3) regular vehicle maintenance and inspection.



Safety Bingo



Does Anyone Know How to Play Bingo?



Each semester University Park Fire Marshall, Carl McMurphy (far right) bestows a Fire Safety Award to the exemplary Residence Hall(s) that excels in fire safety initiatives.

University Park Fire Department

The University Park Fire Department "UPFD" provides fire protection and emergency medical services to Southern Methodist University. Their average response time to the campus is three to four minutes, for any type of call. One-third of all of the calls that UPFD responds to at SMU are for medical service.

The UPFD Fire Chief is David Ledbetter and the Fire Marshal is Carl McMurphy. Since SMU is UP's biggest client, Carl spends about 80% of his time on campus. He inspects all of SMU's buildings at least once a year for fire code violations. Carl also investigates all fires and malicious acts regarding fire alarms. He strongly believes, "the best way to deal with a fire is to prevent it."

For the past two years, UPFD has collaborated with Risk Management and Residence Life and Student Housing to conduct the "Great SMU Escape". During this event, SMU students are challenged to see if they would be able to make it out of a smoke-filled building alive. Students are placed in an enclosed room on the second floor of a building. When the fire alarm sounds, they open their doors to the hallway, find themselves in total darkness, and enveloped by thick theatrical smoke. "We enjoy doing this event" McMurphy said, "because it is one of the few times when we get to educate the students during a non-emergency situation."

Emergency Management Planning: Know Your Building Manager

As a part of the SMU Emergency Management Plan, university administration appointed a Building Manager and at least one Assistant Building Manager for every building on campus with occupancy of 10 or more people. Building Managers maintain their building's emergency plan, assist with training and emergency evacuation and shelter-in-place exercises, and can answer occupant questions on matters pertaining to emergency planning issues. (They do not fix the toilets!)

In evacuation situations you will see them with their lime green vests on directing people to safety. We appreciate these critical volunteers. Get to know them and the plan for your building before a disaster strikes.



RMEH&S Student Intern

New Position – Emergency Management Administrator



As part of the University's ongoing effort to bring emergency planning to the forefront of the campus community, Lisa W. Morris will be joining the RMEHS team this summer. Among her many tasks in this new position, Lisa will assume responsibility for maintaining the campus Emergency Management Plan and assist with the development of training and operational guidelines to ensure the plan's effectiveness.

Lisa is already a well-known member of the SMU community. She has served as Assistant to the Vice President for Business and Finance since August 1999. Prior to that she was an assistant to the Dean of the Cox School of Business. Before arriving at SMU Lisa was a regular Columnist for the *Mesquite News* for ten years.

Lisa is one of the founding members of Mustang Partners and is very active in volunteerism in her local community and at SMU. She was elected to serve as this year's President of the SMU Staff Association.

Lisa graduated from Mesquite High School and earned her Bachelor of Science, Communications (Radio-TV-Film) from the University of Texas at Austin.

Niraj Bhagat "Raj" joined the RMEH&S team in September 2002. He is pursuing a Masters degree in Environmental Engineering at SMU. As a technical assistant in Risk Management, Raj has responsibility for implementing environmental compliance projects, reviewing and writing technical reports, conducting safety inspections, and carrying out other environmental projects.

Raj is a transfer student from India and completed his undergraduate studies in Environmental Engineering in his home country. Before coming to United States, he worked with a Consulting firm. When he is not working, studying, or attending classes he spends his leisure time playing Cricket and Racquetball.

Overview of West Nile Virus

According to the CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) there were 4,156 positive cases of West Nile Virus in 2002, 284 resulting in death. The total in Texas was 202, with 13 deaths.

The West Nile Virus was originally found in Africa, West Asia, and the Middle East. It is closely related to St. Louis encephalitis virus found in the United States. The virus can infect humans, birds, mosquitoes, horses and some other mammals.

Most people affected by the virus develop West Nile fever, which is a milder infection, characterized by flu-like symptoms, which typically lasts only a few days and does not appear to cause any long-term health effects.

More severe cases can develop into West Nile encephalitis or West Nile meningitis. It is not known where the United States virus originated, but it is most closely related genetically to strains found in the Middle East. CDC scientists believe the virus has probably been in the eastern U.S. since the early summer of 1999, possibly longer. The continued expansion of West Nile virus indicates that it is permanently established in the Western Hemisphere.

Symptoms of West Nile Virus

Most people who are infected with the West Nile virus will not have any type of illness. It is estimated that 20% of the people who become infected will develop West Nile fever: mild symptoms, including fever, headache, and body aches, occasionally with a skin rash on the trunk of the body and swollen lymph glands. Symptoms of mild disease will generally last a few days.

The symptoms of severe infection (West Nile encephalitis or meningitis) include headache, high fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, and paralysis. It is estimated that 1 in 150 persons infected with the West Nile virus will develop a more severe form of disease.

The incubation period in humans (time from infection to onset of disease symptoms) for West Nile encephalitis is usually 3 to 14 days. Symptoms of severe disease may last several weeks, although neurological effects may be permanent.

Bob Casagrande, Director of SMU Plant Operations and Facility Maintenance, said, "We are working with the City of University Park to control the problem on campus. The City is staging traps in various parts of the campus to catch mosquitoes and test them for the virus. Members of CPPO are checking the campus to insure that we have adequate drainage and there are no puddles for mosquitoes to breed."

Basic Information About SARS

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is a respiratory illness that is most prevalent in Asia, but has recently been reported in Europe and North America. Though the illness seems to have peaked in late April, as of June 5, the World Health Organization reported **8,403** cases of SARS with **775** deaths resulting from the disease.

In general, SARS begins with a fever greater than 100.4°F. Other symptoms may include headache, an overall feeling of discomfort, and body aches. Some people also experience mild respiratory symptoms. After 2 to 7 days, SARS patients may develop a dry cough and have trouble breathing.

The primary way SARS appears to spread is by close person-to-person contact. Most cases involved people who cared for or lived with someone with SARS, or had direct contact with infectious material

Most of the U.S. cases of SARS have occurred among travelers returning to the United States from other parts of the world affected by SARS.

The CDC has issued recommendations and guidelines:

For individuals considering travel to affected parts of Asia: CDC advises that people planning elective or

nonessential travel to mainland China and Hong Kong may wish to postpone their trips until further notice. The CDC has moved Toronto, Canada back and forth on the warning status. Travelers should check the CDC for information on specific destinations before traveling and weigh the risk. Travel information is available at: http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/travel_advice.htm.

What SMU is doing: Pat Hite, Director of the Memorial Health Center said, "Our attention is focused on two areas: (1) staying abreast of what's happening in our area and (2) developing plans if someone contracts SARS." Two Health Center staff members attended specialized training sponsored by the American College Health Organization. SMU has also adopted the reaction plan developed by that organization and we have the supplies needed. Right now there is no indication of SARS at SMU. There is one suspected case in Abilene, Texas. We do not see much changing unless there is a real threat to our campus.

For more information, visit the CDC's SARS Web site <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/>, or call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (Español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY)

The Red Carpet Tour



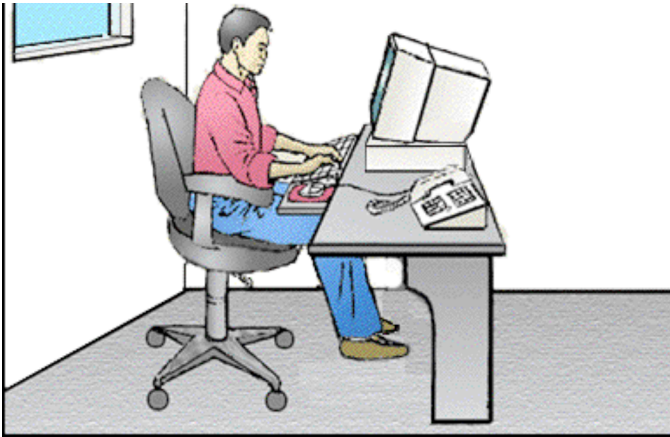
On April 11, 2003, the Risk Management Department hosted two Grand Opening tours of the SMU Material Accumulation Center (MAC). The MAC building was made possible by the farsightedness of Dean Jasper Neel, Dedman College, Risk Management and SMU Administration. The tours were conducted to educate both the campus and the surrounding community on the importance of the MAC building in the process of removing hazardous materials from campus. The tours included a brief history of how chemical waste was previously handled on campus, along with information on the improved storage capability resulting from the MAC.

Besides SMU constituents, attendee's of the tour included the University Park Fire Department Chief David Ledbetter, and UP City Manager, Bob Livingston.

For safety and emergency response purposes, all shifts of the University Park Fire Department were given a special tour, and supplied with a list of chemicals most frequently stored and processed through the MAC.

Our thanks to Dean Jasper Neel and Dedman College for their contributions to this project!

Ergonomic Smarts



Most individuals think of office ergonomics as a chair, a keyboard tray, or wrist rests for the keyboard but office ergonomics is much more than quick fixes to address achy muscles. The total ergonomic process must be used to find the right solution to the issue. The basic elements for an office ergonomic process include: Management commitment, employee involvement, RTW management, workstation analysis and control, and training. What this means in a “real world” office environment is the implementation of sound solutions based on the needs of your business or organization. The following are some basic issues that should be considered when developing an office ergonomics process:

- Set some goals (quantitative & qualitative) along with a mission.
- Commitment to success: i.e. everyone should be committed to focus on the enhancement of task performance.

- Use a team effort to coordinate ergonomics throughout the organization. It may take several different departments to help implement a solution.
- Remember the basics of ergonomics; design the workstation/task to fit the person performing the job.
- Know the roles and responsibilities for workplace ergonomics, from the injured employee's, to HR, RMEH&S, the Managers, and even Procurement.
- Look for opportunities beyond the potential cost savings from avoiding a workers' compensation claim. For example, purchase of ergonomically appropriate furniture can improve employee morale and make the work environment a more enjoyable place to be.

For more information on office ergonomics, go to SMU's Risk Management website:

http://www.smu.edu/business_services/RISKMG/



Office of Risk Management, from left to right, top row: James Oravsky, Fire Safety Coordinator, Anita Ingram, Director, Floyd Phelps, Sr. Fire Safety Coordinator. Bottom row: David Liner, Assistant Director, Linda Oliver, Claims Coordinator, Lance Zurawski, Environmental Health & Safety Coordinator.

Have A Safe & Happy Summer!!