

October 7, 2011

**MEMORANDUM NO: 080-11HR**

**TO: Agency Administrators**

**FROM: Bobbie Chappell**

**VIA: Rip Colvin, Executive Director**

**RE: September/October 2011 Safety Outlook and Safety Notes from September 2011**

In the September/October 2011 *Safety Outlook* Newsletter from Risk Management, read how things are heating up for the 2011 Fire Prevention Week Spotlight, and we'll share with you some fire safety tips that can save your life and the life of someone you love. Also, does your agency's human resource department have a social media policy? Find out why having one could save your agency millions in litigation costs.

Please find attached the September issues of *Safety Notes* from Risk Management. I am sure you will find these issues to be informative. If you desire, feel free to distribute this material to other interested parties.

Thank you.

Attachments

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*"The only disability in life is a bad attitude."*

*~Scott Hamilton*

**DID YOU KNOW:**

If an employee sustains a heat-related illness, the employer may have the right to require the employee to undergo a fitness-for-duty evaluation to determine whether the employee can continue to perform the essential functions of the job with or without an accommodation?



An employee's inability to tolerate the heat may create a direct threat to the employee's safety or health, as well as to the safety or health of other employees?

# Safety Notes

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 47



## Workers with Disabilities & Summer Heat Safety

Although many state workers and their families have been enjoying relatively cooler Florida temperatures, summer heat still remains a safety and liability concern for agencies and universities.

Florida's summer heat can be dangerous and employees can react to heat in many ways. This reaction can depend upon the Employees' physical characteristics or health.

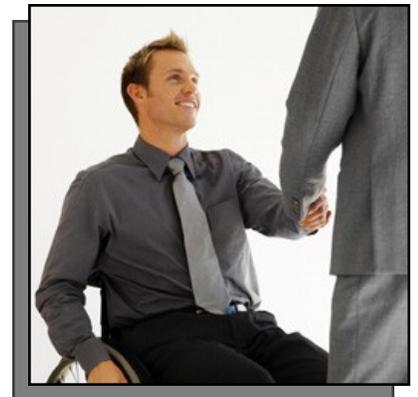


Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), employees who have physical impairments that can be considered "disabilities" may be protected from discrimination and entitled to workplace accommodations to be able to continue to work in a workplace where they are exposed to heat.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has recently issued extensive regulations regarding an employer's duty to accommodate employees who may have disabilities.

### Getting Started

A safety program to protect employees against heat illness must be designed to determine whether employees require assistance at work because of their personal conditions, without violating the ADA. Click the link below for more information on the ADA Act of 2008.



[Americans With Disabilities Act 2008](#)

**Disclaimer**

The links that are posted within the Safety Notes are for educational purposes only. The State of Florida

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*“Hard work never killed anybody, but why take a chance?”*

*~Edgar Bergen*

# Safety Notes



VOLUME 1, ISSUE 46

Quick tips for avoiding overexertion in the heat:

1: Take short, frequent breaks.



2. Cool down and rehydrate.

3. Become familiar with the weight of objects you lift regularly.

4. Don't be afraid to ask for assistance.

5. Don't hold your breath during activities.

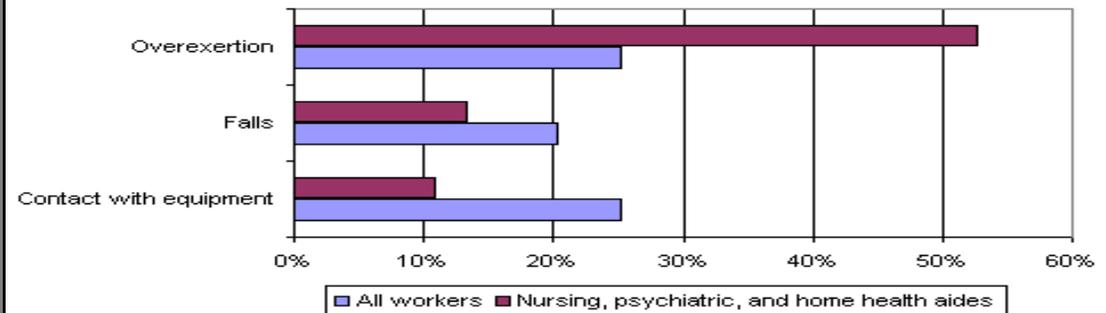
6. Don't increase loads unnecessarily.

## Overexertion

**Overexertion occurs when the body exerts, or releases, more energy than it can handle while doing something physically straining. Overexertion is a risk in all temperatures, but during the summer, the constant Florida heat can have a magnified effect on whether someone feels overexerted.**

**Overexertion is a condition which results in a loss of strength and a loss of control. Safety Consultant Dennis Reilly compares it to the moment a person “holds his or her breath, which results in the depletion of oxygen to the muscles.” If overexertion is not taken seriously, it can cause a spike in workers’ compensation claims. Recognizing the signs of overexertion and learning to avoid them can help increase work productivity and limit injuries and fatalities associated with this condition.**

**Chart 2. Percent of nonfatal injuries and illnesses involving days away from work by selected events for nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides and for all workers, 2004**



## Getting Started

**While overexertion injuries can vary depending on the industry of the worker, here is a link that gives tips on how to avoid this type of injury for a wide variety of workers.**



## [Avoiding Overexertion](#)

### Disclaimer

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# THE SAFETY OUTLOOK

*providing you a new look at safety*



Florida Department of Financial Services, Division of Risk Management

September/October 2011

Volume 1, Issue 9

**Safety**1<sup>st</sup>

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## 2011 FIRE PREVENTION WEEK PROVIDES TIPS ON KEEPING FAMILIES SAFE

Fire prevention efforts are heating up across the United States for the 2011 Fire Prevention Week campaign taking place October 9-15, 2011. This year's campaign theme is titled "*It's Fire Prevention: Protect your Family From Fire.*"

This year--- just like in previous years--- the Department of Financial Services, Bureau of Fire Prevention encourages everyone to be aware of their surroundings and know what do to in the event of an emergency situation such as a fire. Renee McCord, Fire Prevention Specialist with the Bureau of Fire Prevention, says being prepared and knowing what to do to prevent fires can save your life, the life of your family and the life of co-workers and friends. In addition, the bureau encourages agency and university safety coordinators to provide fire safety information to employees during fire prevention week and year round to ensure fire safety awareness stays fresh.

According to the Bureau of Fire Prevention, protecting your family from fire is a daily job that requires having a plan and practicing your fire safety plan. It is also important not to play with lighters or matches. Families should also remember to turn off appliances, practice fire drills, do not overload circuits, keep pot holders and towels away from the stove and change the batteries in their smoke alarm twice a year.

To learn more about fire safety tips to protect your family, visit the fire prevention week website at [www.firepreventionweek.com](http://www.firepreventionweek.com). The Division of Risk Management, State of Florida Loss Prevention Program, will also be offering a fire extinguisher / fire prevention training class on October 12th at the Betty Easley Center. For more information on the fire safety training opportunity e-mail [statelossprevention@myfloridacfo.com](mailto:statelossprevention@myfloridacfo.com).



## FIRE SAFETY : WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW?

Since October 9 to 15 is Fire Prevention Week, this is a good time to think about fire safety at work and at home.

### Be prepared at Work

Here are four questions about workplace fires you should be able to answer:

1. **Do you know your escape route?** Which emergency exits are nearest your work area? Could you get there even if the lights were out and the place was full of smoke? Do you have at least two routes in case one is blocked by fire?
2. **Do you know how to sound the alarm?** Where are the alarm boxes located? Do you know how to activate them? Do you know who to call in the event of a fire?
3. **Do you know where fire extinguishers are located?** Do you know how to use one effectively to fight a fire?
4. **Do you know where to meet outside for roll call?** If you're not where you're supposed to be, firefighters might think you're still inside and risk their lives trying to find out.

### Fire Safety at Home

You should also be able to answer yes to these four questions about home safety:

1. Have you installed smoke detectors and checked them recently?
2. Do you have fire extinguishers in key spots around the house, and do family members know how to use them?
3. Are emergency numbers posted by the phone?
4. Do you have a family evacuation plan, and do you practice it with regular drills?

Knowing what to do in the event of a fire at work or at home will help you, your co-workers, and your family respond calmly and effectively to save lives and minimize property damage. **Be sure to attend the October 12 Division of Risk Management Fire Prevention training to learn the skills needed to respond and prevent fire in the workplace and at home.**

## UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA HEATS THINGS UP FOR NATIONAL CAMPUS FIRE SAFETY MONTH

In recognition of National Campus Fire Safety Month, members of the University of West (UWF) Florida Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) held a Fire Safety Awareness and Fire Extinguisher demonstration "Happening" at the campus on September 15. The UWF EH&S staff and Fire Lieutenant Daniel Akerman, Public Education Coordinator of the Escambia County Fire-Rescue Service, provided training to almost 100 students and staff during the day. Also supporting the event was William Neal Tate, Fire Protection Officer from the Fort Walton Office of the DFS State Fire Marshal. After the trainers provided a brief fire safety talk and instructions, actual fires contained in simulators were extinguished by each participant. Each fall, this same training is given to science lab teaching assistants and offered to Housing's Resident Life staff. UWF EH&S staff members are Peter Robinson, Director, Floyd Replogle, Asst. Director, and Derek Krepp and Pennie Sparks, Coordinators.



## ONLINE SAFETY TRAINING OFFERS DHSMV MORE BANG FOR THE BUCK

There are over 4,500 members (employees) in the Department of Highway Safety & Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) and each member must be trained across various topics, including safety. Approximately two years ago, in order to meet the challenges of training all members, DHSMV purchased a Learning Management System which they have called "iLearn". "It's an easy and efficient way to offer and distribute training to all of our members," said Alan Lamar, Risk Management and Safety Coordinator for DHSMV.

In August of 2011, their Critical Response Plan was distributed to all members. This plan had been in development for several years, before it was sent to our Learning and Development office to be made into an iLearn course. It covers various response situations such as evacuation, "shelter in place", "shelter", and various other aspects of emergency response. In the past, this training was instructor lead and took great coordination to distribute to all members.

The use of iLearn provided a more efficient deployment method, allowed members to complete the course at their own pace, and incorporated the course into member individual work schedules. It also allowed for a reporting mechanism to document all the members who completed the course.

iLearn not only makes it easy to train DHSMV members, it offers the agency the biggest bang for the buck by

reducing training costs and lost work hours. iLearn allows the Learning and Development Office to create and implement "In House" safety training while offering members a variety of other courses, such as training on policies, customer service, and specific on-the-job skills.

Courses are offered to members on a voluntary and mandatory basis. Members assigned mandatory courses are given a required completion date. If the course is not completed on time, the members and their supervisors are sent notification emails until the training has been completed. Additional features of the program include the ability to upload PowerPoint presentations, training videos, custom-designed training modules, course evaluations, and various other training-related resources.

Alan said he is looking forward to working with the Learning and Development Office to utilize this technology to deliver vital safety and security training to all of the members. The use of this technology allows DHSMV to conduct much of their training online. As future training needs develop, DHSMV can easily adjust to provide training to all members in the most effective and efficient way possible.



## FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY HOLDS ANNUAL SAFETY FAIR

Florida Atlantic University (FAU) held their Annual Safety Fair on Sept. 8<sup>th</sup> at the university's main campus in Boca Raton. The goal of the safety fair, which included several safety and loss prevention vendors, was to direct attention to safety issues that impact students, faculty, staff and visitors. Participants learned about safety topics, such as fire prevention, alcohol and drug abuse, date rape, personal and property security and preparing for and recovering from hurricanes and other emergencies. FAU's safety fair is held each year in September.



## EFFECTIVE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES CAN SAVE THOUSANDS IN LITIGATION COSTS

Does your Human Resource (HR) Department at your agency or university have an effective social media policy? In today's society, social media has completely changed how people interact with each other; therefore, even if your agency does not have a social media policy, it is still very important to be aware of the litigation costs surrounding social media tools.

One agency that is educating organizations about social media tools and the rights of employees or potential employees is the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). In a webinar held in September, entitled *Social Media and the EEOC*, the EEOC discussed how it uses social media to investigate EEO complaints. The webinar also discussed the extent of which social media is admissible in trials and administrative hearing.

If you do not have a social media policy in place, it does not hurt to start thinking about getting one from a risk management perspective.

Here are some guidelines you can follow according to an Employment Law attorney in developing a social media policy:

- Make sure the people who create the policy are enthusiastic users of social media.
- Do not try to prohibit employees from complaining about conditions at work. It may make management uneasy, but these employee activities are protected conduct.
- Emphasize making complaints should be held internally.
- Stress that postings reflecting lack of professionalism and ethics, or criminal misconduct can damage the individual and company's reputation.
- Consider installing content filtering to restrict access to these social media outlets.
- Train all employees on this policy, and discipline anyone who violates it.
- Update the policy when needed, as social media and technology seem to change every day.



## DISASTER PLANNING WEBSITE

Although September, which is National Preparedness Month, has recently ended, it is still extremely important that safety and risk management professionals encourage employees to have a disaster plan in place for both home and work.

In fact, as the peak of hurricane season nears, it is more important than ever to ensure employees have some type of disaster plan ready in the event of a major emergency.

When developing a disaster plan, employees can utilize the Division of Emergency Management's family disaster planning website [www.floridadisaster.org/family](http://www.floridadisaster.org/family). The website can help employees and their family prepare for disasters by helping them create their own personalized Family Disaster Plan.

Why is this website important to employees and their families? In a major disaster, emergency workers may not be able to reach everyone right away, and in some cases, it may take three or more days for help to arrive. Are you prepared if you had no electricity, no gas, no water and no telephone service? Having a plan for you and your family and their needs will help ensure their safety and comfort during an emergency.

It only takes about 10 to 15 minutes to create the plan, and although National Preparedness Month has just ended, it is still not too late to get a plan.



## SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

*2<sup>ND</sup> Place Safety Coordinator Award Recipient*

*Donna Gardner*

*Florida Department of Health*

In this month's Safety Spotlight profile, the Division of Risk Management, State of Florida Loss Prevention Program is proud to highlight Safety Award winner Donna Gardner of the Florida Department of Health (DOH). Ms. Gardner is the Safety Coordinator for DOH and recipient of the Division of Risk Management's 2<sup>nd</sup> place Safety Coordinator of the Year Award for 2011.

As Safety Coordinator for the DOH, Ms. Gardner is responsible for the overall management and oversight of the safety program and providing guidance and assistance to all 110 DOH safety coordinators located across the state. "This is accomplished with the use of training, conference calls and workshops," said Ms. Gardner. In addition to providing training and communication, Ms. Gardner is the training director for the local chapter of the American Safety and Health Institute (ASHI) which provides classroom training for employees in CPR/First Aid and Bloodborne Pathogens. One of the most rewarding parts of Ms. Gardner's job as safety coordinator is to see a steady decline in the number of workplace accidents and associated costs over the past four years "Our safety coordinators have worked

very hard to keep our work environments and our employees safe."

The safety program for DOH is also quite unique. DOH has 67 county health departments, 22 children's medical services clinics, four laboratories and a hospital which serves the public. These work environments bring many challenges not only for the safety of the public, but also challenges for those employees serving them. These employees are faced everyday with potential infectious diseases and medical related issues not found in the common office environment.

Ms. Gardner has worked for the State of Florida for 30 years. She has been with the DOH for 10 years and safety coordinator for the last two years. In her spare time, Ms. Gardner enjoys spending time with her family and volunteering at her church.



## Presumption Task Force Holds Initial Meeting

The Task Force on Public Employee Disability Presumptions, which includes a total of 8 members, held their initial meeting on Friday, September 30, 2011 at the Hermitage Center in Tallahassee, Florida. Task Force members met to discuss the best process for collecting and reporting presumption information as well as documenting member recommendations.

Currently, over 43 states have some type of workers' compensation presumption law for first responders such as police, firefighters and emergency medical technicians (EMT). Presumption laws presume that first responders have a greater incidence of certain health conditions as a result of their work environment.

The goal of the task force is to collect data from other states regarding presumption claims, and to analyze Florida data on presumption costs and claims. The group will make recommendations and provide a report to the 2012 Legislature. Members of the task force include: **Michael Clelland**, Esq, Law Firm of Bichler, Clelland, Oliver, Kelley Hastings, Longo, Spears & Parrish, PLLC, Maitland, Florida; **Alan Kalinoski**, Esq, Law Firm of Dean, Ringers, Morgan and Lawton, P.A., Orlando, Florida; **Timothy McCausland**, City Attorney, City of Lakeland, Florida; **Garry Mitchell**, Firefighter Engineer, City of Winter Park, Florida; **Peter O'Bryan**, Indian River County Commissioner, District 4, Vero Beach, Florida; **James Tolley**, Governmental Relations Director, Florida Professional Firefighters, Tallahassee, Florida; **Tommy Wright**, Assistant General Counsel, Dept of Management Services; and **R.J. Castellanos**, Director, Florida Department of Financial Services, Division of Risk Management.



***The next task force meeting is scheduled for October 17, 2011 at the Hermitage Center in Tallahassee, Florida.***

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF QUARTERLY SAFETY REVIEW PROCESS HELPS DEPARTMENT OF ELDER AFFAIRS REDUCE CLAIMS FREQUENCY BY NEARLY 50 PERCENT**

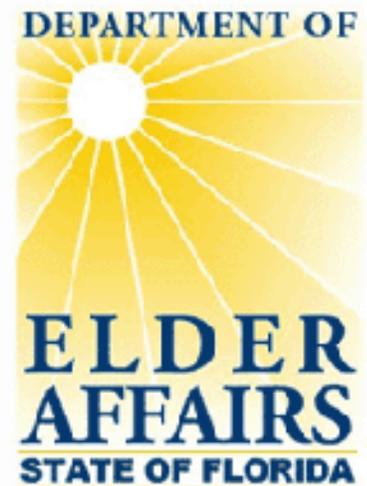
Being able to reduce workers' compensation claims with an agency the size of the Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) is not an easy accomplishment. DOEA was the 1<sup>st</sup> place recipient in the medium agency category for reducing claims frequency.

A huge part of DOEA's success was the implementation of a quarterly safety review with both of its headquarter offices and its 36 field offices. This implementation has helped create an increase in facility and safety issues being reported, and an immediate response to these safety concerns or issues that were reported.

By implementing this quarterly review process, safety in general among employees has taken on a greater attention. DOEA employees are more aware of identifying things that may cause safety concerns and making these matters known to fellow employees and management. Along with this quarterly review process, DOEA implemented a "new employee safety orientation" as part of an orientation training for new employees. In this orientation, new employees are routinely made aware of safety practices and equipment in the department that are important.

DOEA also monitored and integrated weather advisories and alerts with communications to their field offices, and has been successful in warnings with severe weather, potential wildfire activity, and other aspects of conditions that may threaten safety of employees and patients. The integration and coordination of efforts by DOEA employees who handle areas of risk management, human resources, safety, facilities/leasing, and emergency management has yielded the greatest improvement in their safety program.

DOEA won the 1<sup>st</sup> place recipient in the medium agency category for reducing claims frequency. DOEA achieved a 48 percent reduction in number of claims.



## **WHAT DO YOUR EMPLOYEES REALLY KNOW ABOUT INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE?**

Do your employees know what industrial hygiene is and how it is important to their health and safety at work? You can convey this important topic through the following basic information.

Industrial hygiene is the science of anticipating, recognizing, evaluating, and controlling workplace conditions that could cause injury or illness.

Industrial hygienists use environmental monitoring and analytical methods to detect the extent of your risk and exposure to occupational health hazards. Then they use engineering and work practice controls, as well as other methods to control potential hazards and risks.

Industrial hygiene, or IH, is nothing new to the workplace. People have been aware of industrial hygiene for centuries. In the early 20th century in the United States, Dr. Alice Hamilton led efforts to improve industrial hygiene. She observed industrial conditions firsthand and

startled mine owners, factory managers, and state officials with evidence that there was a correlation between worker illness and their exposure and the risks posed by their work environment. She also presented definitive proposals for eliminating unhealthful working conditions.

At about the same time, U.S. federal and state agencies began investigating health conditions in industry. In 1908, the public's awareness of occupationally related diseases stimulated the passage of compensation acts for certain civil employees. States passed the first workers' compensation laws in 1911. And in 1913, the New York Department of Labor and the Ohio Department of Health established the first state industrial hygiene programs. All states enacted such legislation by 1948. In most states, there is some compensation coverage for workers contracting industrial illnesses.

## INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE QUIZ

See how much you know about Industrial Hygiene (IH). Take our four question true or false quiz to test your knowledge.

Industrial hygiene is primarily about cleanliness and sanitation (T or F).

Industrial hygiene has little effect on most people's jobs (T or F).

Industrial hygiene is entirely a management issue (T or F).

Industrial hygiene primarily involves hazards that affect your health (T or F).



**Answers F, F, F, T**

## HALLOWEEN HEALTH AND SAFETY TIPS

Below are tips from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) which will help employees and their families have a SAFE HALLOWEEN.

- S** Swords, knives, and similar costume accessories should be short, soft, and flexible.
- A** Avoid trick-or-treating alone. Walk in groups or with a trusted adult.
- F** Fasten reflective tape to costumes and bags to help drivers see you.
- E** Examine all treats for choking hazards and tampering before eating them. Limit the amount of treats you eat.
- H** Hold a flashlight while trick-or-treating to help you see and others see you.
- A** Always test make-up in a small area first. Remove it before bedtime to prevent skin and eye irritation.
- L** Look both ways before crossing the street. Use established crosswalks wherever possible.
- L** Lower your risk for serious eye injury by not wearing decorative contact lenses.
- O** Only walk on sidewalks or on the far edge of the road facing traffic to stay safe.
- W** Wear well-fitting masks, costumes, and shoes to avoid blocked vision, trips, and falls.
- E** Eat only factory-wrapped treats. Avoid eating homemade treats unless you know the cook well.
- E** Enter homes only if you're with a trusted adult. Otherwise, stay outside.
- N** Never walk near lit candles or luminaries. Be sure to wear flame-resistant costumes.

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<http://www.myfloridacfo.com/risk/Loss%20Prevention/Virtual%20Library/index.htm>

- **Workers' Compensation Claim Change Form** (available electronically & in Adobe Acrobat)
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