



*Environmental Health
Safety*

Guardian

Florida State University

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Before You Start, Be safety Smart

**A Newsletter of the
FSU**

EHS

Department

EH&S: 850-644-6895 Fax 850-644-8842
www.safety.fsu.edu email:ehs@admin.fsu.edu

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1200 Carothers Hall
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4481

Director

Tom Jacobson
tjacobson@admin.fsu.edu

Editors

Laymon Gray
lgray@fsu.edu
Amanda Boor
aboor@admin.fsu.edu

Contributors

Amanda Boor
Dave Bujak
Bob Durham
LeAnne Hotchkiss
Laymon Gray
Ashley Gray
Mark Klawinski
Gerred Pogge

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A New Year Brings New Changes In Workers' Compensation Procedures

Effective January 1, 2009, Florida State University, in conjunction with the Department of Financial Services, entered into a new workers' compensation program with OptaComp, a subsidiary of Blue Cross Blue Shield Association.

OptaComp shares our philosophy that the needs of injured employees are a main concern. Given this priority, all employees will receive medical treatment more efficiently with minimal time lost from work.

FSU employees have access to the Registered Nurses at OptaComp twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, everyday of the year. These nurses coordinate medical care for injured employees at the time the initial claim is reported and maintain contact with the employee, employer and medical providers until the employee has made a full recovery from the accident. OptaComp can be reached by calling 1-877-518-2583 anytime.

Employees that have been working with other programs, such as Corvel Corporation or Protegrity, will continue to do so unless otherwise directed.

Further information regarding the claims reporting procedures can be located on our website at www.safety.fsu.edu/wcreporting.html or by contacting EH&S.

Slips, Trips and Falls: Must they happen?

Is prevention of falls important?

There is an old joke that falling never hurt anyone, it is the stopping that hurts you. In real life, falling at work is no joke. In fiscal year 2006-07, 22% of all the State of Florida's workers' compensation injuries were due to slips, trips and fall accidents. These injuries amount to a lot of pain and suffering and sometimes even death, not to mention a great economical loss. In most of cases, these did not have to happen.

How do falls happen?

Statistics show that the majority of falls happen on the same level resulting from slips and trips.

Slips

Slips happen where there is too little friction or traction between the footwear and the walking surface.

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Golf Cart Procedure To Go Live in February!

Be on the look out! Departments will be receiving a memorandum in February providing this link <http://www.safety.fsu.edu/golfcarts.html> to the new FSU Cart/Utility Vehicle procedure. This procedure will provide information and requirements for the use of an electric or gas-powered cart and/or similar utility type vehicles on all campuses of the Florida State University. The intent of the procedure is to establish proper safety procedures and practices, as well as to promote and provide a safe environment for students, faculty, staff, and University visitors.



Eyewashes and Safety Showers

Many precautions are used to ensure the health and safety of employees. Yet even with the best safety practices in place, accidents still happen. Accidents involving hazardous chemicals can be particularly serious; therefore if you work with these types of materials, it is especially important to learn about emergency safety equipment and how to use it.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires all facilities that have potentially hazardous chemicals to provide readily available drenching devices for their employees. Based on the types and amounts of chemicals, facilities may have eyewashes, emergency safety showers, or both. At FSU, eyewashes and safety showers can be found in many locations including laboratories and maintenance shops. These devices are inspected on an annual basis by EH&S staff to ensure that they are in proper working condition and meet all requirements set forth by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

To ensure preparedness in case of an emergency, the following is a list of simple steps that you can take to make sure that your safety equipment is ready for use:

- Know the location of safety equipment: In general, eyewashes and safety showers should be located within 10 seconds of a hazard, equating to approximately 55 feet. EH&S will post all safety equipment with highly visible signs that indicate the type of device and its location.
- Learn how to operate safety equipment: Eyewashes and safety showers are designed for easy, hands-free operation. Most have paddles, levers, or handles that activate the unit. Once the unit has been activated, it should provide a



continuous flow of water until the user manually turns it off.

- Properly maintain the area around the safety equipment: The area around eyewashes and safety showers should be kept free of obstructions and clutter that could interfere with their access or operability during an emergency. Equipment, especially electrical equipment, should not be stored near eyewashes and safety showers.

• Check safety equipment periodically: While EH&S provides annual inspection and certification of eyewashes and safety showers, employees should perform a quick check of the units in their area on a routine (preferably

weekly but no less than monthly) basis. First, look for broken nozzles and levers and contact EH&S if the equipment is damaged or missing parts. Next check for leakage. Finally, flush the unit to clear water lines of debris and rust. A minimum of 3 minutes is recommended for flushing. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact EH&S.

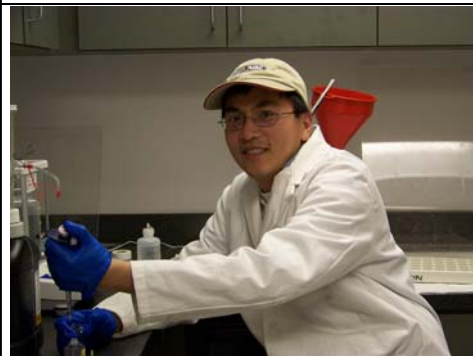
The first few seconds after exposure to a hazardous chemical are critical. Delaying treatment, even for a few seconds, may result in injury. Never hesitate to use safety equipment if needed.

- Immediately flush the affected area for a minimum of 15 minutes.
- *Eye Exposure:* Keep the eyes open and rotate the eyeballs in all directions to remove contamination from around the eyes. An injured employee may need assistance to keep the eyes open.

- *Body Exposure:* Remove contaminated clothing, jewelry, and shoes. Don't let modesty slow you down. Every second counts.

Remember to report all accidents immediately to EH&S.

Thanks to University of California at San Diego Department of Environmental Health & Safety ([UCSD EH&S Home Page](#)).



EH&S Employee Recognized

Richard Le, MPA (FSU Biological Safety Officer and a current EdD candidate) was recently awarded the RBP (Registered Biosafety Professional) credential by the American Biological Safety Association. See <http://www.absa.org/bioregcriteria.html> for a description of the requirements for RBP designation. Richard serves as a member of the University's Biological Safety Committee, Thagard Health Center - Environment of Care Committee, Animal Care and Use Committee, and the Food Advisory Committee. Join us in congratulating Richard for his achievement!

Colds: 10 Tips to Stop Spreading Them

1. Wash your hands often.
2. Don't share cups or eating utensils.
3. Use tissues when you blow your nose, then throw them away.
4. Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth.
5. Use disposable paper towels in the kitchen, not cloth ones.
6. Wash your children's toys once a week.
7. Cover your mouth with a tissue or your hands when you sneeze.
8. Open your windows when the weather is nice.
9. Frequently clean doorknobs, light switches, telephones and counter tops.
10. Don't let anyone smoke in your house.

Aerial Lifts: “OSHA Safety Tips”

Aerial lifts include boom-supported aerial platforms, such as cherry pickers or bucket trucks. The major causes of fatalities in accidents involving aerial lifts are falls, electrocutions, and collapses or tip overs.

Safe Work Practices

- Ensure that workers who operate aerial lifts are properly trained in the safe use of the equipment.
- Maintain and operate elevating work platforms in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Never override hydraulic, mechanical, or electrical safety devices.
- Never move the equipment with workers in an elevated platform unless this is permitted by the manufacturer.
- Do not allow workers to position themselves between overhead hazards, such as joists and beams, and the rails of the basket. Movement of the lift could crush the worker(s).
- Maintain a minimum clearance of at least 10 feet, or 3 meters, away from the nearest overhead lines.
- Always treat powerlines, wires and other conductors as energized, even if they are down or appear to be insulated.
- Use a body harness or restraining belt with a lanyard attached to the boom or basket to prevent the worker(s) from being ejected or pulled from the basket.
- Set the brakes, and use wheel chocks when on an incline.
- Use outriggers, if provided.
- Do not exceed the load limits of the equipment. Allow for the combined weight.



It's Only For Engines!

Gasoline, is a much sought after, often overpriced, at times scarce, and sometimes misused commodity that is often in the news and never far from our minds. Perhaps it should be even closer to our thoughts.

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FSU Protects Storm Water from Construction Runoff

You may have noticed numerous construction projects underway around the Florida State University campus in recent years. These new buildings will beautify FSU's campus in the future but FSU is taking steps to make sure these construction projects do not impact the environment today. Construction site runoff can cause sediment to clog storm water systems and can affect water quality by clouding streams and other bodies of water.

In order to minimize the impact from campus construction sites, FSU and the contractors responsible for these projects take preventive measures to mitigate environmental impact. Environmental Health and Safety and construction contractors perform site inspections to make sure best management practices are used to protect FSU's storm water system. This protection is accomplished by installing silt fences and hay bales around construction sites to prevent sediment from running off site during rain events. Protecting the environment is important for Seminoles that will occupy these new buildings in the future and those that are on campus today during periods of University growth.

Remember to Use Proper Technique When Lifting

Proper lifting techniques will help prevent many of the strains we encounter at work. These techniques include:

- Size up the load to gauge the weight.
- Do a few stretching exercises to warm up your back, arm and leg muscles. Cold, stiff muscles can be easily injured.
- Plan your route. Make sure you know where you are going with the object and check the route for obstacles. If you are moving something a long distance, use a hand truck.
- Protect your hands. Examine the load for sharp edges, metal staples or leaks. Wear gloves if necessary.
- Lift the object properly. Get close to the object and center your body over your feet, bend your knees and keep your spine straight.
- Next, grasp the package and use your stronger leg muscles to push yourself upright.
- As you start the lift, raise your eyes and look ahead. This will keep your spine in correct alignment.
- Keep the load close to your body to exert less force on your back.
- Make sure you can see clearly over the load. If your vision is blocked you may trip and fall.
- Always move your feet rather than twist your body to change directions.
- To unload, crouch down and use your thigh muscles to lower the object. Keep your back straight, and the article held close to your body while unloading.

Wrist Pain/Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Carpal tunnel syndrome is a common injury due to repetitive use and strain of the tendons in the wrist. Symptoms include a feeling of numbness or tingling in the hands or fingers; weakness; and pain.

To protect your wrists, try these things:

- Do exercises to strengthen the muscles that are opposite the ones you use a lot.
- Take frequent breaks to stretch or relax from the repetitive motion.
- Make sure your workstation is ergonomically correct, especially your chair and the location and height of your keyboard.
- Good posture is very important.
- If you have to grip objects, try to use your whole hand, not just your fingertips.

When sitting at a keyboard, here are some things to do:

- Your forearms should be parallel to the floor and in line with your wrists.
- Use a padded rest for your wrists. Don't rest them on the sharp edge of a desk.
- Try to move your fingers instead of your wrists.
- Break up the amount of time you spend keyboarding by taking care of other tasks or duties.

To relax your hands and wrists, shake them around in all directions for 10 to 15 seconds. Extend your arms straight out and raise your hands up. Make a fist, then stretch your fingers far apart. Put your hands flat on a table top with your arm about 90 degrees; press down firmly for a few seconds.

“Slips, Trips and Falls” from Page 1

Common causes of slips are:

- wet or oily surfaces,
- spills,
- weather hazards,
- loose, unanchored rugs or mats, and walking surfaces that do not have the same degree of traction in all areas.

Trips

Trips happen when your foot collides (strikes, hits) an object causing you to lose your balance and eventually fall. Common causes of tripping are:

- obstructed view,
- poor lighting,
- clutter in your way,
- wrinkled carpeting,
- uncovered cables,
- bottom drawers not being closed, and
- uneven walking surfaces (steps, thresholds).

Can falls due to slips and trips be prevented?

Both slips and trips result from some kind of unintended or unexpected change in the contact between your feet and the ground or walking surface. This shows that good housekeeping, the quality of walking surfaces or flooring, selection of proper footwear, and appropriate pace of walking are critical for preventing fall accidents.

Housekeeping

Good housekeeping is the first and the most important level of preventing falls due to slips and trips. It includes:

- cleaning all spills immediately,
- marking wet areas,
- mopping or sweeping debris from floors,
- removing obstacles from walkways and always keeping them free of clutter,
- securing (tacking, taping, etc.) mats, rugs and carpets that do not lay flat,
- always closing file cabinet or storage drawers,
- covering cables that cross walkways,
- keeping work areas and walkways well lit.

Flooring

Changing or modifying walking surfaces is the next level of preventing slips and trips.

Recoating or replacing floors, installing mats, pressure-sensitive abrasive strips or abrasive containing paint-on coatings can further improve safety and reduce the risk of falling.

Footwear

In workplaces where floors may be oily

or wet or where employees spend considerable time outdoors, prevention of fall accidents should focus on selecting proper footwear.

Since there is no footwear with anti-slip properties for every condition, be careful to match the slip hazard with the appropriate footwear.

What can you do to avoid falling at work?

You can reduce the risk of slipping on wet flooring by:

- taking your time and paying attention to where you are going,
- adjusting your stride to a pace that is suitable for the walking surface and the tasks you are doing,
- walking with your feet pointed slightly outward, and
- making wide turns at corners.

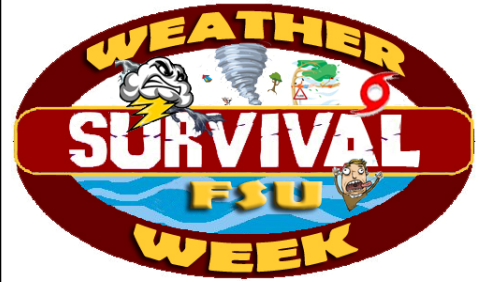
You can reduce the risk of tripping by:

- always using installed light sources that provide sufficient light for your tasks or,
- using a flashlight if you enter a dark room where there is no light,
- ensuring that things you are carrying or pushing do not prevent you from seeing any obstructions, spills, etc. and
- use handrails on stairways. Carrying even small objects, such as car keys, may make it more difficult for a falling person to grab a handrail.

References

FL Department of Financial Services, Division of Risk Management, 2007

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health & Safety, 2008



Learn How To Survive!

Each day, more than 18-million people call the Sunshine State their home. Florida is a great place to live, work and play. A personal responsibility for each of us is to be prepared for the hazards that affect our beautiful state.

In Florida, natural events such as thunderstorms and lightning are common. The key for your family's safety is being aware of hazardous weather conditions and knowing how to prepare for them.

February 2 - 6, 2009 is Florida's Weather Survival Week. The week is designed to raise awareness of Florida's weather hazards including thunderstorms, lightning, tornadoes, hurricanes, flooding, extreme temperatures, wildfires, rip currents, and marine hazards.

Learn how to survive!

Visit <http://safety.fsu.edu> and click on the Weather Survival Week logo for more information.

<http://safety.fsu.edu/EmergencyManagement/hwaw.html>

Gasoline from Page 3

Gasoline, for all its power to shape the world, only has one appropriate use. It should only be used to power engines.

Gasoline should never be used as a cleaner, as an insecticide, or as a charcoal/fire starter. Used for these purposes is inviting loss, sickness, injury or death. When only used for its intended purpose, it is a substance that must be treated properly. How is gasoline treated properly:

- Never store gasoline in a glass or non-reusable containers such as milk jugs or drink bottles. Store it only in approved safety containers in good condition with all spouts and lids intact and present. Store the container in a cool and well ventilated outside area away from a heat source and sparks such as a water heater, electric motor or car engine.
- Do not store excess quantities of gasoline...only the minimum amount of gas required for the task.
- Do not smoke anywhere where gasoline is being dispensed, stored or poured.
- When filling a gasoline container at a filling station make sure it has been removed from the vehicle and placed on the ground before filling. Never siphon gasoline by sucking the hose.
- Always keep gasoline out of sight and reach of children. Not only is it highly flammable, but it is poisonous as well. If ingested, though, do not induce vomiting instead call 911 or Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222.

If a gasoline fire occurs, never use water. Remember: Gasoline is for engines only and should be stored properly and used wisely.