



# FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY Environmental Health and Safety GUARDIAN

Volume 5 Issue 4

Fourth Quarter 1999

### Also in this issue...

Holidays Around the World	2
Y2K and You	2
Poison Safety	3
Holiday Safety	3
In the news...	4
Did you know, historical facts	4

*GUARDIAN*, is published quarterly by The Florida State University- Department of Environmental Health and Safety, 105 Mendenhall Maintenance Building "A" Tallahassee, FL 32306-4154 (850) 644-6895 Fax (850) 644-8842

Director  
Fran Harley  
fharley@admin.fsu.edu

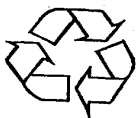
Editor  
Tom Jacobson  
tjacobson@admin.fsu.edu

Contributors:  
Renee Murray  
Dave Plichta

Heading Design  
Richard N. Le

*GUARDIAN* is available on the internet at <http://www.fsu.edu/~safety/guardian>

*GUARDIAN* is printed on recycled paper. Please recycle this newsletter when finished.



## NEW YEAR BUILDING WATCH

On Saturday January 1, 2000, employees of EH&S Fire Systems, Hazardous Materials, Industrial Hygiene and Biological Safety; as well as, FSU Police, Facilities Operations and Maintenance will conduct a team survey of each building on campus to ensure that building systems are up and running. Building surveys will continue on Sunday, January 2, 2000 until all buildings have been evaluated. Problems that may be encountered will be reported to EH&S and FSU Police Command Center staff located in the Public Safety Facility. Unusual occurrences (for example activated local alarms) will be reported to persons named on the emergency call-out list.

Please let EH&S know ahead of time of any conditions that might be of concern to the survey team. For example, local alarms that may sound or processes that could be hazardous if interrupted by power outages.

It is very important that you also update your call-out list of contacts and their phone numbers. If the persons currently listed plan to be out-of-town, please send FSU Police the names of alternate contacts who will be locally available in case an emergency notification is necessary. FSU Police need these updates early in December in order to ensure they are included in the system.

If you have any questions or concerns about these building surveys, contact Fran Harley at 644-7687 or at [fharley@admin.fsu.edu](mailto:fharley@admin.fsu.edu). We hope to find few problems, if any, and usher in the New Year with all systems go.



## Cyber Safety

The EH&S website has recently been given a new look. We've added an improved navigation menu, central repository for all EH&S forms (many of which can be filled out online), and a new section for researchers. The researcher section is designed to aid in the research proposal writing process. Depending on the area of research, it lists what training, forms, and manuals researchers should have prior to beginning their experiments.

As the site evolves, EH&S will add more online training and interactivity. To ensure that this site is as useful as we have intended, we invite your comments and suggestions as to what you would like to see on this site. Feel free to explore our improved home at:

<http://www.fsu.edu/~safety>.



---

---

## Holidays Around the World

The holiday season is once again upon us. This is a good time to reflect on the meaning of the season, how it has changed and remember and respect that other cultures celebrate different traditions throughout the world.



Christmas was once a movable holiday celebrated many times during the year. The choice of December 25<sup>th</sup> was selected by Pope Julius I in the fourth century A.D. to coincide with the pagan rituals of Winter Solstice or Return of the Sun. The objective was to replace the pagan celebration with the Christian one.

The traditional Christmas season starts on November 11<sup>th</sup> and ends on January 6<sup>th</sup>. The four-week period before Christmas is known as Advent. Tradition depicts the Magi, visit of the Wise Men, as January 6<sup>th</sup>. The gifts were gold symbolizing Kingship, frankincense a gift for a high priest and myrrh for a great physician.

Many cultures have celebrations during the winter season. Some of these are as follows:

**Hanukkah**- The Jewish celebration of the victory of Maccabees against the Greek invaders and the miracle of the cruse of oil with enough oil to last one-day yet burned for eight days in the temple menorah after the liberation of Jerusalem.



**Ramadan**- This Muslim festival is a 30 day dawn-to-dusk fast. It was during this month that the prophet Mohammed received his revelation from Allah. Ramadan starts around December/January. *Id-ul-fitr*, celebrates the end of Ramadan.

**Holi**- This is a very exuberant Hindu festival with people marking the end of winter by throwing colored water and powder (gulal) at one another. They also light bonfires to symbolize the destruction of the demon *Holika*.

**Joya no Kane** (New Year's Eve Bells)- Buddhist temples start ringing their bells late on New Year's Eve and continue into the early hours of New Year's Day, 108 times in all, symbolizing the casting away of 108 earthly desires.

**Dosmoche**- Tibetan celebration of the Dying Year. This festival lasts five days where feasting and prayers fill the days. Dancers dress in hideous masks to frighten away evil spirits for the coming new year.

There are many other celebrations that occur throughout the world. It is remarkable to know that there are such rich traditions practiced in this country and abroad. Enjoy your holiday!



---

## Y2K and You

Governments and businesses have spent billions of dollars to ensure that computer systems will make a successful transition to the next century. Although it is unlikely that the Year 2000, or Y2K, issue will create significant problems in the United States, no one can say for sure that there won't be temporary disruptions in some services. Such interruptions are expected to be short-lived, like temporary problems in service caused by storms, and while inconvenient, are not expected to be long term. The following recommendations will help you and your neighbors prepare for any difficulties that may occur:

- Make backup copies of all important files on your home and office computers.
- Obtain current copies of bank statements, mortgage schedules and other financial accounts.
- Refill prescription medications.
- Stock up on groceries and other basic supplies.
- Have a good supply of flashlights, batteries, candles, matches, kerosene lamps and kerosene on hand. If you have a generator, now is the time to test it out.
- Save some juice or milk jugs and fill them with water - especially if you depend on a well, which in turn is dependent on an electric pump.
- Have some cash on hand in case the ATM machine freezes up or your credit card comes back "account unknown" - but don't panic and cause a run on the banks!
- Top off the gas tanks on your vehicles.
- Finally on Monday, January 3, 2000: Sleep in and blame it on a Y2K glitch in your alarm clock.

Have a Safe and Happy New Millennium.





## Children Act Fast ...So Do Poisons

The 1999 theme for Poison Prevention is "Children Act Fast ...So Do Poisons".

This is to remind people of the potential of accidental poisonings that can occur around the home. Poison Prevention should be practiced year around. Lets review steps to make our homes safer and remind ourselves on what to do in the event of an accidental poisoning.

First take a safety tour of your home. Below is a partial list of common items found in homes that are poisons:

<u>Kitchen</u>	<u>Bathrooms</u>	<u>Garage/Workshop</u>	<u>Other</u>
Soaps/detergents	Cleaners/disinfectants	Gasoline/kerosene	House plants
Window cleaner	Medicines	Lighter fluid	Alcohol
Furniture polish	Cosmetic products	Car wax/soaps	Pet care goods
Oven cleaners	Shampoo/hair products	Antifreeze	Cigarettes
Drain cleaners	Deodorizers	Paints	Flaking paints
Ammonia	Perfumes/lotions	Paint thinners/removers	
Vitamins/iron pills	Nail polish/remover	Pesticides/herbicides	
Medicines			

Steps can be taken to help poison proof your home. So here are some poison proofing tips:

- Install safety latches on all cabinets that contain harmful products.
- Keep all products in their original containers.
- Clean out old medicine frequently and flush down the drain.
- Never give medicine in the dark.
- Store cleaning supplies out of reach and sight of children.
- Do not store cleaning supplies or medicine near food.
- Keep physician, poison control center and hospital phone numbers readily available.
- Keep syrup of ipecac on hand. Never administer without first consulting the poison control center or physician.



If you are required to assist someone who has been poisoned first and foremost, remain calm. Look for clues that may help to identify the source of the poisoning. Look for containers that may have held the suspected substance. Check the person to help identify the source of the poisoning. For example you may see some substance remaining around the mouth; there may be burns around the lips or mouth from corrosive items. Perhaps you may be able to detect a distinctive odor from the person's breath. The person may be experiencing breathing difficulties, stomach cramps, vomiting or appear sluggish. In very critical cases the person may be unconscious or having convulsions.

Locate and telephone a Poison Information Center as soon as possible. The number to call for our area is 1-800-282-3171, which is the Florida Poison Information Center located in Jacksonville. If unable to contact them call 911. Be prepared to provide the following information:

- ◆ Victims age and weight
- ◆ Your name and telephone number
- ◆ Your location
- ◆ Name of the product and ingredients
- ◆ Amount of poison involved
- ◆ Time the poisoning occurred
- ◆ Symptoms present in the victim

Remember, stay calm and seek professional help as soon as possible.



## Holiday Safety

Holiday decorations should be selected for both their beauty and resilience. Any decorations should be made to last for their entire period of use. Artificial Christmas trees are safest, but if a real tree is used make sure it is kept away from heat and provided plenty of water. All decorations must be placed to minimize hazards, such as blocking walkways and obscuring views.



### Food Preparation:

Follow proper techniques when preparing your holiday feasts. Keep food preparation areas clean and foods properly refrigerated. Clean up promptly and don't leave things out of the refrigerator too long.



**Electrical Safety:** Only use electrical items that are approved by the Underwriters Laboratories (UL). Always check to ensure that cords are intact, lights are not broken and never overload the outlets. When no one is enjoying the decorations turn them off.

Remember to always think safe and enjoy your holidays!



---

---

## In the news....

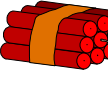


**The Nobel Peace Prize** for 1999 has been awarded to Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières), in recognition of the organization's pioneering humanitarian work on several continents. Since its foundation in the early 1970s, Doctors Without Borders has adhered to the fundamental principle that all disaster victims, whether the disaster is natural or human in origin, have a right to professional assistance, given as quickly and efficiently as possible. National boundaries and political circumstances or sympathies must have no influence on who is to receive humanitarian help

**October 12, 1999** was the day when humans passed a symbolic threshold of population. The six billionth person has been born into this world in Sarajavo.

As a **drinking water** public right-to-know initiative, EPA has set up a National Drinking Water Contaminant Occurrence Database, the first national database to contain information on regulated and unregulated contaminants in public drinking water systems and their source water supplies. The database is available at: [www.epa.gov/ncod](http://www.epa.gov/ncod). The general public can get additional information from EPA's drinking water Web site at: [www.epa.gov/safewater](http://www.epa.gov/safewater), or by calling EPA's drinking water hotline at 1-800-426-

## Did you know....

- 1842 John Gorrie developed the first freezing mechanism (later to be the basis for the refrigerator).
- 1846 William T. G. Morton demonstrated use of ether as an anesthetic at Massachusetts General Hospital.
- 1866 Alfred Nobel created dynamite by mixing nitroglycerine with silica, a paste that could then be shaped. 
- 1873 Othmar Zeidler creates dichlorodiphenyl trichloroethane - DDT.
- 1900 The establishment of the Nobel Prize and the Nobel Foundation based on the will of Alfred Nobel.
- 1943 DDT (dichlorodiphenyl trichloroethane) introduced to the United States.
- 1960 The human population reached 3 billion individuals.
- 1972 The EPA bans DDT because it causes the shells of birds to become too fragile to hatch offsprings.

---

Environmental Health and Safety  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4154

**Non-Profit Organization**  
**U.S. Postage Paid**  
**Permit 55**