

Building Evacuations

Jim Gindlesperger

There is no doubt that the evacuation of a building is disruptive and annoying. As Murphy's Law dictates, it will always happen at the worst possible time. As emergency responders, we are sensitive to that. However, there are no good reasons for ignoring alarms to evacuate your building. Be assured, evacuations are not taken lightly, and they only are ordered if there is a potential danger to building occupants.

Each time you ignore an alarm to evacuate, you are gambling with your life. Is there anything that makes less sense? Are you sure that there is no reason for concern? Is your work as important as your life? As a professor, are you willing to jeopardize your students' lives by refusing to dismiss class until the reason for the alarm is known?

Most reasonable people would answer no to all of these questions. Certainly, most evacuations turn out to be for reasons that are not life-threatening, but every evacuation has the potential to be serious, and the risk is far too great to assume that "this is just another false alarm." (As a side remark, you should also be aware that the City of Pittsburgh has an ordinance that provides for a \$1000 fine for those who do not evacuate when told to do so).

Here are some tips to follow if the alarm to evacuate sounds in your building:

- ❖ Remain calm. Evacuate immediately and proceed directly to the designated assembly area. Do not congregate around the building. This does not remove you from danger, and it could interfere with responders.
- ❖ Take your coat, keys, and anything you think you may need in the event that you can not get back in quickly.
- ❖ Do not return to the building just because the alarm has stopped ringing. Alarms are shut off for many reasons, and it still may not be safe to return. You will be told when you can go back inside.

Please help us to keep you safe. Never ignore evacuation alarms, even if they are disruptive. They are for your own good.

Safety Goggles

Michael Fouch



At Carnegie Mellon University eye protection is mandatory for everyone who works in an area where hazardous materials are used or stored. Most people around campus wear the standard, high impact safety glasses, which provide protection against flying objects but little protection against chemical splashes.

For the highest level of protection, safety goggles that completely cover the eye and eye socket and seal against the face are recommended. Safety goggles come in many different styles and with different ventilation features. Basically, you have two choices with goggles worn to protect against chemical splashes. The safety goggles should have indirect vents or they should not be vented at all. Indirect vents allow for air circulation but keep hazardous liquids out. Direct vent goggles potentially allow splashes to reach the eye and are suitable for protection against flying particles only.

Check your goggles and those of your fellow lab workers to ensure that they provide the protection required by the work conducted in your laboratory. Most safety supply catalogues sell both kinds of goggles so be sure you are buying the right kind when placing an order. In most cases, the catalogues include pictures and descriptions of the goggles so that making the determination is straightforward.

Most of us are fortunate to have been born with normal vision and it is frequently taken for granted. Please remember to protect your vision by using the correct type of eye protection for the hazards in your work area.

To Reach Us

Telephone: 268-8182
Fax 268-7871
Web: <http://www.cmu.edu/ehs>
Offices: FMS Bldg., 3rd floor

Help Wanted

Jim Gindlesperger



We currently have more than 400 people who have agreed to assist in emergencies by serving as Floor Marshals for their buildings. This sounds like a lot, but we can always use more.

The duties of a Floor Marshal are generally limited to getting people out of the building safely and communicating information to building occupants during emergencies.

If you would like more information on how to become a Floor Marshal, contact EH&S at 8-3760.

NRC Inspection

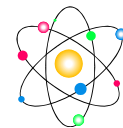
John Zoll



Carnegie Mellon was inspected by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission recently. All laboratories currently using radioactive materials were toured and found to be in good order. Congratulations are in order for those labs, as well as a big "Thank You" for your efforts! Keep up the good work!

Annual Refresher Training for RAM Users Past Due !

John Zoll



Radioactive Materials (RAM) users should have received and documented annual refresher training through an electronic newsletter last month. This training is required annually for active RAM users. If you are an active RAM user who has not received the newsletter, or has not returned the last page, call John Zoll at the Radiation Safety Office, 268-7502.

OSHA Process Safety Management Standard

Jeffrey Harris



OSHA's Process Safety Management Standard outlines requirements for the safe management of hazards associated with processes using, storing, manufacturing, handling, or moving highly hazardous chemicals onsite. It emphasizes the management of hazards through an established comprehensive program that integrates technologies, procedures, and management practices.

The key provision of the standard requires a Process Hazard Analysis (PHA). A PHA is a careful review of what could go wrong, and what safeguards must be implemented to prevent releases of hazardous chemicals. It mandates written procedures, employee training and pre-startup safety reviews. It's not just a review of hazardous chemicals, but the process overall. This includes integrity of mechanical equipment to be used, a complete understanding of a facility's capabilities and its limitations (like utilities). The idea behind this standard is a lot like the safety applied by NASA. If you predict everything that could go wrong, then you can design safeguards to prevent.

Obviously the standard is oriented more toward the manufacturing industry. However, the lab is like a pilot plant, and safety should always be designed into a process from the start. To learn more visit the OSHA website, key work Process Safety Management, or contact EH&S.

New Year's Resolutions for Safety around the Home

Mark Banister



A month or so ago I participated in a volunteer project where I (and many others) checked the homes of senior citizens for safety hazards. We looked at nearly a hundred items—many more than I anticipated. Even if you are not a senior, it would be valuable to check your homes

(and those of any older friends and family) for these basic safety issues:

- ✓ Do you have smoke alarms on each floor of your house? Have the batteries been changed within the past 6 months?
- ✓ Have you considered a carbon monoxide detector for your home?
- ✓ Are there hand rails for your stairs to upper floors and to your basement?
- ✓ Are there curtains near your stove or other heat source (like a halogen lamp)? These are common fire hazards.
- ✓ Do you have a fire extinguisher in your kitchen? Do you have baking soda to use on a grease fire?
- ✓ Do you have a lot of extension cords (tripping hazard) or lots of electrical items plugged into the same outlet?
- ✓ Do you have your furnace checked annually (see carbon monoxide and fire issues)?
- ✓ Do you have sufficient lighting in hallways and in the basement?
- ✓ Do you need protective caps for electrical outlets, if you have young children?
- ✓ Are hazardous chemicals stored in a safe location?
- ✓ Can you get easily to your fuse or breaker box?
- ✓ Do you have a first aid kit in your home, with bandages and antiseptic?

Please have a safe and happy New Year!

Cold Weather Safety Tips

Jim Gindlesperger



Winter in Pittsburgh can be harsh, so when you are outdoors it is extremely important for you to be properly prepared, and to know the warning signs of overexposure. In

freezing weather the body tries to conserve heat by sending blood to the most essential organs. Unfortunately, the extremities are not high on the list of body parts receiving blood. This is why you may feel tingling in your fingers, toes, nose, cheeks, or ears. Take this tingling as a warning sign of potential frostbite or hypothermia and get inside and warm up.

Follow these tips any time you are outside during winter months:

- Wear layered clothing for better protection from the cold. Layers can be removed to prevent perspiring and subsequent chill.
- Wear a cap to prevent rapid heat loss from an uncovered head. Cover exposed skin to prevent frostbite. Outer garments should be tightly woven, waterproof and hooded. Mittens, snug at the wrists, offer better protection than fingered gloves.
- If your clothes become wet, change them immediately.
- Eat high energy foods along with warm beverages and soup. Avoid drinking alcoholic beverages.
- Avoid fatigue and exhaustion during cold weather. Overexertion, such as shoveling snow or pushing a car, can strain your heart. These tasks are extremely hard work for anyone in less than prime physical condition and can bring on a heart attack, a major cause of death during and after winter storms.
- Be familiar with the warning signs and treatment methods for frostbite and hypothermia. These are serious conditions that, in extreme situations, can be deadly.

Cold weather safety is mostly common sense. Frostbite and hypothermia do not have to happen because they are so preventable. Follow the listed tips, know the warning signs, and you should never have a cold weather injury.