SafetyBriefs
SAFETY NEWS FOR UC SAN DIEGO EMPLOYEES

FEMA Special Report on University Housing Fires

UC San Diego’s excellent record of fire safety in student housing was emphasized by comparison to national statistics in a recent Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) report called University Housing Fires (http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/tfrs/v10i1.pdf). The report examines the causes and characteristics of fires in college and university residential buildings, including dormitories, fraternity, and sorority houses. Data collected during 2005 to 2007 shows an estimated 3,800 university housing fires occurred nation-wide annually, resulting in an average of 5 deaths, 50 civilian injuries, and $26 million in property losses each year.

According to FEMA’s report, 94 percent of university housing fires occur in dormitories and residence halls, and 6 percent occur in fraternity and sorority houses. Incidents peak in September and October and are most frequently associated with students preparing snacks or cooking meals. Cooking fires account for 83 percent of all university housing fires. Despite cooking (with hot plates, microwaves, portable grills, etc.) being the leading cause of fires in residence halls, the majority of fire-related deaths occur in bedrooms due to cooking devices being brought into residential units.

continued on back ... see FEMA Special Report

Deck the Halls Safely

Decorating the workplace for the holidays? UCSD’s Fire Marshal reminds us that decorative materials are not permitted in exit corridors, and must not obstruct view of exit signs, fire alarm pull stations, fire extinguishers, sprinkler heads, or hose cabinets in any area. Best locations for your decorating talents are reception areas, lobbies, break rooms, and foyers.

Think safety when you decorate. Follow the guidelines for safe holiday decorating on Blink at http://blink.ucsd.edu/go/holiday.

Sweeping for Clean Water and Air

Facilities Management is sweeping campus streets clean with a new CNG-powered, particulate matter certified street sweeping machine. That means the new sweeper keeps very fine particles out of storm water runoff, out of the ocean, and out of the air we breathe. Small particles are a major transport mechanism for other, more harmful contaminants in both water and air. The new technology street sweeper significantly reduces the amount of particles available to enter the ocean or our lungs. We can all swim and breathe a little easier.

FM’s new CNG-powered sweeper

COEM Clinics for Work-Related Injuries

New procedure for 2010

Starting January 1, 2010 employees should seek treatment for work-related injuries, illness, or exposures at a UCSD Center for Occupational & Environmental Medicine (COEM) clinic, unless the incident requires emergency care or treatment is needed after COEM hours of operation.

Use the COEM clinic convenient to your work location, main campus or Hillcrest:

continued on back... see COEM

Safety Award For Excellence Winner!

Robert Hernandez
Facilities Management, Landscape Services

Robert Hernandez, assistant superintendent of Landscape Services in Facilities Management, championed implementation of UCSD’s Hearing Conservation Program for landscape employees who use an array of noisy equipment daily. Mr. Hernandez ensures LS employees receive and are trained to use hearing protection equipment, have an annual audiogram, and monitors their results. Sharing his personal experiences and challenges with hearing loss reinforces the importance of using hearing protection when operating loud equipment. His vigilant attention to hearing conservation makes the program work for LS. Congratulations!

Tell us who’s making UCSD a SAFE place to work. Use the online Safety Award For Excellence nomination form at http://blink.ucsd.edu/go/safe.

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continued ... FEMA notes the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reported an increase in campus housing fires in recent years, with more fires occurring during evening hours and on weekends when more students are in residence halls. Specifically, most fires occur from 5 to 10 p.m., peaking between 8 to 9 p.m. The increase may be linked to students bringing more items from home, including high powered electronic equipment and portable heating and cooking appliances.

Increased attention within federal, state, and local government, fire departments, and affected communities is focused on university housing fires. The challenge is to remain vigilant for problems, take preventative measures to limit the possibilities that a fire can occur, and provide students with fire safety education upon their arrival at the university.

UCSD has maintained an excellent record of fire safety in residential housing areas. No significant fires, or fire-related injuries or deaths were reported to have occurred in UCSD student housing areas during the FEMA report’s data collection period (2005-07). Find more information about fire safety on Blink at http://blink.ucsd.edu/go/firesafety, including UCSD policies on barbecue use and storage and decorative candles and open flames.

Questions? Contact EH&S Fire & Life Safety at ehsfiresafety@ucsd.edu.

Report on Work-Related Injuries

The first quarter of 2009/2010 saw 215 work-related incidents filed at UCSD, with 89 of the incidents reaching Workers’ Compensation claim status. Current estimated cost for the 89 claims is $430,000. The main causes for the claims are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Incidents</th>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Current Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Lifting</td>
<td>$ 75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Slip/fall same level</td>
<td>$ 54,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Struck an object</td>
<td>$ 24,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Struck by an object</td>
<td>$ 86,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$239,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Descriptions of some of the above injuries included:

- Lifting ice maker
- Lifting portable AC unit
- Cutting wire, end sprung and hit eye
- Fell backwards onto bike rack after spider landed on employee

Holiday Stress Busters

Adopt a strategy for more joy, less stress:

- Be realistic about what you can do. You can’t do it all, so don’t try. Take your time, especially when you’re in a hurry.
- Delegate house cleaning and decorating tasks among family members. Then adjust your expectations. Everything doesn’t have to be perfect.
- Don’t break the bank. Enjoy traditions that don’t cost extra: bake cookies, go caroling, volunteer at a favorite charity.
- Carve time out for yourself. Hire a baby-sitter to look after the kids for a few hours, or take turns looking after kids with friends and neighbors.
- Unwind before leaving work by saving your easiest, least-pressured tasks for the end of the day.

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