Safety Alert: Turkey Fryers
(Don’t be a turkey this Thanksgiving)

From UCSD Fire Marshal Dick Benton

This warning, originally published in Consumer Reports, identified a hazard important enough to bring to the attention of everyone at UCSD as the holidays approach:

“Deep-fried turkey has been a pleasure of Southern backyard cooks for years. Thanks to the Food Network and celebrity chefs, the technique is catching on elsewhere. But many of the deep fryers are potentially so dangerous that Underwriters Laboratories (UL), the testing and certification organization, has taken the unusual step of refusing to certify any of them as safe.

UL examined six cookers, all consisting of a large aluminum pot, a metal tripod base, and a propane-fueled burner. None had automatic temperature controls. UL would not disclose brand names, but said that all could overheat.

continued on back...see Turkey Fryers

Car Rental Insurance Problems

Frequent inquiries come into the Risk Management Office from UCSD departments that must pay rental car accident claims due to inadequate insurance. When traveling on University business, be advised: Insurance is not automatically available when renting vehicles.

There are two types of insurance to obtain for car rentals:

- **Collision insurance** - Automatic when the UCSD Diners Club Card is used to pay for car rentals.
- **Liability insurance** - The University has agreements with many, but not all, of the top rental car agencies. Liability insurance is only provided when these UC agreements are used properly.

Read “How to Rent a Car for UCSD Business Travel (UCSD Employees)” on the Blink Travel tab at http://blink.ucsd.edu for detailed information.

Fines Go UP for Failing to Immediately Report Workplace Serious Injury or Death

Governor Gray Davis has signed legislation imposing a minimum $5,000 fine on employers who fail to report a workplace death or serious injury within eight hours. Assembly Bill 2837 does not change existing reporting requirements, but it does increase existing fines tenfold.

A serious injury is defined as:

- An injury requiring a hospital stay longer than 24 hours (for care other than medical observation)
- An injury involving loss of a member of the body or a serious degree of permanent disfigurement

Report serious injuries or a workplace death immediately to Environment, Health & Safety at (858) 822-2979. EH&S will report the incident to Cal/OSHA within the required eight-hour time frame.

If you have questions about accident and injury reporting, contact Mike Fouquette at mfouquette@ucsd.edu or (858) 534-2112.

Holiday Decorating Guidelines

Are you starting to think about holiday decorating? It’s fun and festive! But think “safety” when you pick out a tree, hang up lights, consider candles, and choose locations for your displays.

Before you get started, review “Holiday Decorating Guidelines” on Blink at http://blink.ucsd.edu/go/holidec. Safe practices for selecting and using decorative materials, trees, lighting, and extension cords in UCSD workplaces are covered. Apply them to your home and community gatherings as well.

Whatever holiday you’re celebrating, best wishes for health and happiness from the Environment, Health & Safety Office.

Safety Training from EH&S

Check the Safety Training page at http://www-ehs.ucsd.edu/training.htm
Turkey Fryers...continued

oil to the point of combustion. Among UL’s findings:

- Many units easily tipped over— a potential spill of five gallons of scalding oil.
- If the pot was overfilled, oil spilled onto the burner when the turkey was immersed. Flames then engulfed the unit.
- Frying a partially-frozen turkey caused oil to spatter, also resulting in a fire.

Some packaging may lead consumers to believe that turkey fryers pass UL safety tests. Certain parts (for example, the hose and propane pressure regulator) may be UL-approved, but not the entire appliance!

Based on our [Consumers Union] investigation and limited tests, we also believe the fryers can be risky. Cooks must constantly monitor level and temperature of the oil.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission has received some 30 complaints in the past two years concerning turkey fryers. A spokesman says there are no standards for the appliances.”

Holiday Food Preparation

Avoid uninvited guests at your holiday table—bacteria that cause food-poisoning.

Follow these tips for preparing holiday meats:

- Defrost meats in the refrigerator or microwave. Never allow them to thaw at room temperature. Allow 24 hours refrigerator defrost time for every five pounds.
- Stuff turkeys and other poultry just before cooking.
- Use a thermometer when cooking meats to be sure inner sections reach the right temperature. Turkey is done when the inner thigh temperature reaches 180°F and the stuffing is 165°F.
- Leftovers shouldn’t sit out more than two hours. Slice leftovers small enough for refrigerator air to penetrate and cool the meat.

Wash Your Hands!

Hand-washing is your first defense against the spread of colds and other disease-causing germs. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that hand washing last at least fifteen seconds, but to cover all areas of your hands you may need to take as long as thirty seconds.

Understanding Polarized Plugs and Outlets

**Being Neutral Isn’t Always the Safest Course of Action!**

With the proliferation of desktop machines in office space built before the computer age, extension cords are routinely used until additional wall outlets are installed. With the extra electrical demand of holiday decorating, we’ve got a lot more plugs than outlets. It’s tempting to alter appliance cords or use adapters to fit the extension cords and wall outlets you have on hand, but it’s a dangerous practice.

Understanding a basic principle in electrical wiring could save you, a loved one, or a co-worker from possible electrical shock and serious injury or even death!

In its most basic form, electrical wiring has a “hot” leg (black wire with narrow prong or slot) and a “neutral” leg (white wire with wide prong or slot). Additional safety is provided with most outlets and appliance cords by a grounding conductor (green wire with half-circle prong or slot).

The wide and narrow slots on the wall outlet, just like the wide and narrow prongs on the appliance cord, are “polarity-keyed” to provide safe electrical connection and operation of equipment. Defeating the safety measures by filing down the wide prong or incorrectly using two-prong adapters to mate newer appliances with older extension cords or wall outlets could create “reversed polarity” (hot and neutral switched) and damage equipment, or ... make YOU part of the electrical circuit.

Observe this basic electrical wiring convention and practice good electrical safety at work and around the home:

- Don’t use an appliance with a non-factory plug on the end of its cord. The add-on plug may be incorrectly wired and create a dangerous reverse polarity condition.
- For the same reason, don’t connect an appliance plug to an extension cord with a non-factory outlet box or plug at either of its ends.
- Finally, avoid using electrical wall outlets not previously inspected and approved for correct polarity and grounding.

Questions about electrical safety at UCSD? Contact Joel Ross in the EH&S Fire Safety Division at jross1@ucsd.edu or (858) 822-5706.

How to Get Assistance with Indoor Environment Concerns

Who do you call when you smell natural gas, sewage, or a burning smell? Getting help with odor complaints, ventilation, leaks, and other common building-related issues is covered on Blink’s “Indoor Environment Concerns: How to Get Assistance” page. Search for “indoor” on Blink at http://blink.ucsd.edu.