

"There are risks and costs to a program of action, but they are far less than the long-range risks and cost of comfortable inaction." *President John F. Kennedy*



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MS IHL OFFICE OF
INSURANCE AND RISK
MANAGEMENT

SAFETY & LOSS CONTROL NEWS

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REDUCING RISK OF FIFTEEN-PASSENGER VANS

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GOOD NEWS!

Slip and fall injuries for December were **down from 30 in 2003 to only 10 in 2004!** Was it because of your efforts, focus and attention to providing a safe workplace?

YES!

Technically speaking, a 15-passenger van has seating for a driver and 14 passengers. They are used quite often to transport teams, class field trips, and groups attending meetings. Due to the precious nature of their cargo, and the documented high risk of rollover - they need special attention. Highway safety experts at the NTSB strongly suggest the following: (see www.NTSB.gov)

Keep seat belts and lap belts accessible and make sure passengers use them. They are often forgotten when they are out of sight and wedged between the seat bottom and seat back.

Inspect seat belts and lap belts and replace missing buckles, as well as broken and worn belts. The NTSB accident investigation concluded that several of the passengers might not have lost their lives if they had been wearing seat belts or lap belts. They were ejected from the vans when the vehicles rolled over.

Regularly check the condition of tires for uneven wear, cracks and damage. Many of these vans are not continuously driven like the family car. Low mileage doesn't mean tires are safe. Age, sunlight, and just being parked for long periods can lead to deadly tire degradation and dry rot. Unfortunately, dangerously deteriorated tires cannot always be detected by visual inspection alone. It often takes an automotive repair professional.

Check the tire pressure often and make sure it conforms to the van and tire manufacturer's standards. Be aware that front and back tires may require different inflation pressures, and these pressures may be higher than the tires on passenger cars. The manufacturer's recommended pressure is usually on driver's door sill or in the tire owner's manual. A major problem with these vans, the NTSB found in its investigations, is that tires are often under-inflated, leading to

higher tire temperatures, faster tire deterioration, and diminished driving stability.

Make all drivers of these vans aware that the dynamics of vans, especially during an emergency like a tire blow out, are very different from the family car.

Get additional training for drivers since these vans handle differently than other vehicles, especially when they are fully loaded. MS Code requires Class C CDLs for driving vehicles designed to transport 16 or more passengers (not 15). (see www.NHTSA.gov)

The NHTSA reports that 90% of rollovers are due to driver error. Here are some behaviors to avoid:

The van goes off a rural road.

The driver is fatigued or driving too fast.

The driver overcorrects the steering in reacting to an emergency or a wheel dropping off the road.

DID YOU KNOW?

The NHTSA estimates 25% of all vehicle crashes involve some form of distraction.

A recent survey found that nearly 75% of drivers reported using cell phones while driving.

An estimated 60% of all cell phone use takes place behind the wheel.

NHTSA = National Highway Transportation Safety Administration

NTSB = National Transportation Safety Board

BITS AND PIECES...

INTERESTING STATISTICS:

There have been 62 **general liability claims** against our institutions since July 1, 2004. 30 have been denied and closed. 17 of the remaining 32 resulted from mowing equipment damaging vehicles, mostly lawnmowers and weed-eaters throwing rocks and breaking glass. Those 17 claims averaged \$331.00 per claim. Focus on **mowing safety**, especially keeping guards in place, could prevent 53% of our valid claims. Is the risk of removing a guard or discharging toward cars worth \$331.00? Look for more on this next month.

We suffered 83 workplace injuries during the month of January. **Slips and falls** led the way again with 15. Walking surfaces, footwear,

and distractions must all be continuously assessed.

Eight people suffered eye injuries in January, most from a foreign body in the eye. Goggles, glasses or face shields could have prevented them. Ask workers if new or replacement **eye protection** is needed. Explain the need to wear it! Standard safety glasses cost from \$2.00 to \$6.00 per person. It's worth the investment.

SAFETY TRAINING UPDATE

Since January 1st, 188 employees have attended the presentation on "Accident & Injury Prevention". The 1-1/2 hr. session focuses on 5 keys to workplace safety. Contact Andy Taylor for more information.

Basic First Aid & CPR training is also available. 14 IHL employees have attended and MAFES has several classes scheduled. Those who complete the 6 hr. course are certified through MEDIC First Aid. There is no charge for the course. Contact Andy Taylor for details.

The **National Safety Council's Defensive Driving Course** is now available to you for no charge. Successful participants will receive NSC certification. This 4 hour course can be scheduled by contacting Andy Taylor.

An **Employment Law Workshop** has been developed and will be coming to your campus soon. This one day workshop is also free of charge.

CHEMICAL STORAGE

The variety and quantity of chemicals used across the IHL system are remarkable. With numerous laboratories, farming operations, custodial closets, physical plants, and medical facilities, the range of chemicals used is nearly indescribable. Each unit has to address the safe storage and handling of the chemicals they work with.

With this in mind, it is not practical to address all storage facilities as one, but there are a few common answers that might make your chemicals

safer while stored. Consult Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) or label for specific storage requirements. When stored together and readily accessible, MSDS can be made into a "Right To Know" station for hazard communication.

These were adapted from Lab Safety Supply publication #181:

The Basics: all chemicals should be properly labeled. Caps should be secure at all times. Never store on bench top, fume hood or floor (in traffic aisles). Shelves should not be over crowded. Do not store above eye level.

Unlabeled chemicals should be evaluated by an expert and properly disposed.

Storage rooms should be cool, dry, well lit, ventilated to the outside, and secure. Shelving should be sturdy. Aisles should be unobstructed. Strict temperature control may be needed.

Signs should alert people of potential hazards.

Emergency phone numbers, "Right To Know" station, 1st aid kit, eyewash and/or shower, fire extinguisher, spill kit, and personal protective equipment should be readily available.

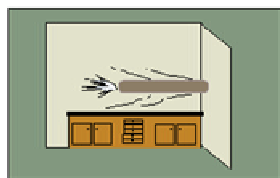
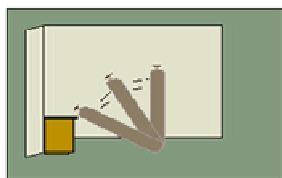


"Right To Know" at USM



Chemical storage at MAFES

SAFETY MEETING TOPIC: COMPRESSED GAS CYLINDERS



Compressed gas cylinders are a common sight throughout IHL facilities. From medical gasses, to welding gasses and even gas used to fill balloons and small blimps, a significant number of people are exposed to compressed gas cylinders every day. Two types of hazards should be considered: the nature of its contents (toxic, flammable, etc.) and the physical hazard of the highly pressurized tank.

Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) can be obtained to inform about the chemical inside, but what about the potential rocket standing ready to blast off? Depending on the type of gas, its use and the size of the tank, there can be anywhere from 2000 to 2700 psi of pressure waiting to be released. Following are some of the characteristics and dangers provided by the Union Carbide Corporation.

The Sleeping Giant:

- I stand 57" tall, and 9" in diameter and weigh in at 155 lbs. when filled.
- I am under a lot of pressure, 2200 pounds per square inch to be exact.
- My wall thickness is 1/4"
- I wear a regulator and a hose when I'm at work.
- I wear a label to identify the gas I'm holding. My color is not the answer.
- I transform stacks of material into glistening ships and many other things when used properly (my medical friends can give life).
- I transform glistening ships and many other things into stacks of material when allowed to unleash my fury unchecked (I can take life as well).

- I can be ruthless and deadly in the hands of the careless and uninformed.
- I am too frequently left standing alone on my small base with no visible means of support, and my cap removed by an unthinking worker.
- I am ready to be toppled over - when my valve can be damaged or even snapped off - and all of my power unleashed through an opening no larger than a pencil lead.
- I'm proud of my capabilities - here are a few: I can jet away faster than any dragster, smash my way through brick walls, fly through the air, and spin, ricochet, crash and slash through anything in my path.

You can control me with two simple steps:

1. Put my cap on when not in use - full or empty.
2. Never leave me standing alone. Secure me with chains or straps, or use a safety stand to keep me from falling.

Material Safety Data Sheets provide a wealth of information about any chemical, such as:

Ingredients
Health Hazards
Flammability / Explosiveness
Incompatible Materials
First Aid Procedures
Safe Storage and Handling
Personal Protective Equipment
Waste Disposal.....and more...

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