

"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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ONE APPROACH TO REDUCE DRINKING ON CAMPUS

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BE ON THE LOOK OUT

The following fire hazards are commonly found in our students' residential areas:

- Overloaded outlets
- Disabled smoke detectors
- Candles, candles, candles
- Lava-Lamps (can get very hot)
- Items stored in stairwells (blocking escape)
- Non-working exit lights
- Evacuation Routes not posted
- Yes, Lava-Lamps!

In addition to the easy and inexpensive suggestions in the article to the right:

- Eliminate long reaches
- Eliminate elevated work
- Allow more time for task
- Consider reaction time
- Remove clutter

A common misperception may be the cause of much of the binge drinking and associated high-risk behaviors that some students portray on your campus. According to the Education Development Center, Inc., "surveys of college students reveal that most students greatly overestimate the amount of high-risk drinking that occurs on their campus". This misperception of what is normal may lead students to "believe they are both justified and pressured to consume large amounts of alcohol" in order to fit in.

People's beliefs about the behavior that is expected of them in a particular social setting are called "**social norms**". An example would be to think about how you and others should behave at a veteran's memorial service versus how you and others are expected to behave at a basketball game. Jumping up and down, whooping, hollering, and high-fiving at the

memorial service is just plain wrong. And so is treating a college career as a five year party of drunken and dangerous behavior instead of an opportunity to learn and grow that the rest of your life depends on. Correcting the "Animal House" misperception through a campaign of educating students about the truth, based on actual conditions on your campus and data collected from your students is called "**social norms marketing**".

Some of our campuses have social norms marketing campaigns already. You may have seen public service announcements dispelling myths about the number of students who drink every day, or the number of drinks they have each week or when they party. The Greek community has utilized this method for years to dispel myths about hazing and parties and turn attention to academics and community service.

If your campus is using some type of social norms marketing campaign, great! Support it. Ask how you can help. *Make sure the message is getting out consistently to those who need it.*

If not, you may want to consider this approach. It begins with a basic survey to ask what students believe is true about drinking (or drug use, or seatbelt use, or speeding, or any other behavior) and then also asking the same students about how they actually behave. The results can be quite enlightening. After data is collected and analyzed, a marketing campaign is designed, constructed and deployed to promote the truth and discourage students from falsely following a road that will lead to trouble.

For more information, contact the Education Development Center's Higher Education Center at www.edc.org/hec/socialnorms

SAFETY FOR AN AGING (AND VALUABLE) WORKFORCE

The aging "Baby Boomer" generation has been discussed thoroughly in the news this past year. Reports seem to indicate that as the generation born between 1946 and 1964 retires, the retirement system and social security will be put to the test. But what about those who have not yet retired? Let's not forget about those still in the workforce!

With state and federal jobs being the last bastion of "job security", we tend to have a lot of employees with "seniority." With year after year on the job comes wisdom, experience, development, efficiency, and yes - age. And, since the next generation (born 1965-1985) is smaller in number, the workforce is not only aging, but it's shrinking, too. Employers with an eye on the future are making adjustments now to accommodate the older workers and increase efficiency to account for fewer workers.

Safety is one aspect of the workplace that can benefit from those adjustments. In an article for the American Society of Safety Engineers, Linda Tapp states, "To accommodate the aging workforce and reduce fatality rates, businesses should design a safe workplace for this aging, but valuable workforce..."

In her report, Ms. Tapp cites Department of Labor Statistics for 2004. When work related injuries are considered by age groups, workers age 45 and over had fewer injuries per capita, but had a higher rate of fatal injuries per capita than any other age group. Workers age 25 to 44 had the highest rate of injury, but were not as severe. Many experts cite age as a factor in the length and severity of disability as related to workplace injuries as well. Simply put, younger workers seem to heal faster on average. The facts are that as we get older (past age

44), we also get shorter, heavier, weaker, slower, and have less stamina (65 year olds have 70% of aerobic power they had at age 25). Also, as we get older, vision and hearing become diminished. However, getting older is not something we want to prevent! Nor is it something we can modify. "Even though older workers face additional obstacles to performing their job, they bring experience and knowledge and an excellent work ethic to the job making them a valuable part of the workforce", explains Bruce Tuglan of Rainmaker Thinking, Inc.

Consider equipment, facilities and processes that can be modified to take advantage of your workers experience and capabilities. Some easy modifications include: *improve lighting, repair flooring, reduce static standing time, rotate tasks to reduce strain of repetitive motion, eliminate heavy lifting.*



PREVENTING COLD STRESS INJURIES

Mississippians generally concern themselves with guarding against heat related illness and injury. However, just as too much heat can be a problem, so can not enough heat. For those who work outdoors in the winter months, some attention to preventing cold stress injuries is appropriate.

Hypothermia: The first symptoms of hypothermia are uncontrollable shivering. The heartbeat slows and may become irregular. The pulse weakens. As the condition progresses, shivering turns into severe shaking. Muscles may become rigid. The victim may have slurred speech, memory lapses and drowsiness. The skin becomes cool, breathing becomes irregular and exhaustion sets in. The core body

temperature is dangerously low and immediate medical attention is needed.

Frostbite: Frostbite occurs when fluid in the body's tissues actually freezes. Core body temperature may be normal, but extremities such as nose, ears, fingers and toes are especially vulnerable. Symptoms include: numbness, tingling, and skin turning white or grayish-yellow. As tissue freezes, initial pain subsides. Blister-like wounds may appear. The damage can be irreversible if not treated immediately.

Following are some tips to prevent these types of injury:

Dress in layers. Preserving an air space between the body and the outer layer of clothing will help retain body heat. Cotton

and wool are good at insulating while also letting sweat evaporate. Some synthetics also do this. Tuck-in each layer. Pay special attention to hands, feet, head and face. If working makes you warm, you can remove layers and as you cool off, you can add them back.

Wear a hat. Nearly 1/2 of your body heat can escape through the top of your head.

Keep dry. Wetness greatly increases cold stress. Think about spills, precipitation and sweat. Keep your feet dry.

Take a break. Get out of the cold periodically.

Eat right. Eat a balanced diet and replace liquids all day.

Use the "buddy system". Look out for one another.

every direction before you ever move your vehicle. Unless you were parked in a garage, you will need to walk around your vehicle and remove the frost from the glass in all four directions (and don't forget the mirrors!). There are a few ways to accomplish this, an **ice scraper** does a good job without adding more moisture to the problem. Nothing is scarier than to see another driver using a peep-hole to navigate a 5,000 pound vehicle at 50 mph! They claim they can see where they are going but they cannot see what is coming from intersections and they cannot see to make a turn, change lanes or back up.

Keeping the windows clear becomes the next challenge. Having good **wiper blades** and windshield **washer fluid** with an antifreeze component will do wonders. A working **defroster** and a warm engine will also combat refreezing on the outside and fogging on the inside. When warming an engine, be aware that state law prohibits drivers from leaving an unattended vehicle while it's running, and that unless you have an old-fashioned carburetor, it's

not necessary for the engine. However, it may be necessary for your safety and comfort. This means sitting in your vehicle as it warms, finishing your morning coffee and listening to a song on the radio before you hit the road. As you travel down the road, your windshield should *remain* clear.

As you drive, pay special attention to **shady spots along the road as well as wet areas**. These may contain ice when the rest of the road is warmer and drier. When you recognize these slippery areas - **slow down**.

Overpasses and bridges can "freeze before road surface". We've all seen those signs, and it's true because cold air is surrounding them while the solid road is only exposed on one side - **slow down, increase your following distance, scan your mirrors**.

Of course, **maintenance is also key**. Inspect your tires for tread depth and pressure. Make sure all your lights, brakes, wipers, and horn work. Check all fluid levels.

And one last thing: **wear your seat-belt!**

ADJUST YOUR DRIVING FOR WINTER

We may not have the blizzards of Colorado or the solid five months of winter that Idaho gets, but here in Mississippi, we sometimes need to adjust our driving for winter-time conditions. Today's high temperature will be near 70 degrees. Tomorrow's low will be near 20! Having these intermittent conditions makes it more difficult to adopt habits related to cold weather driving, but your life may depend on it.

Frosty mornings indicate that moisture is present and that it can and will freeze. Before you start the engine, you should be thinking "**slow down**." Driving more slowly means allowing more time to reach your destination. Frosty mornings mean leaving for work earlier to allow for a safe arrival. Slowing down also means **leaving more room between you and the car in front**. Add another second or two (or five) to your following distance. If the car in front of you stops suddenly, you will have more time to react, and your car will have more space to stop.

Frosty mornings also mean **making sure you can see** in

MS IHL Work Related Injury Statistics

Day most injuries occur: Tuesday

Most common injury: Strain

Part of body most injured: Finger

Cause of most injuries: Slip, Trip, Fall

Period surveyed: FY 2005

Seat-belt use in the United States

The NTSB has released a new report on seat-belt use:

Nationwide - **82%** of drivers wear their seat-belts.

Best State - Hawaii, 95%.

7 states above 90 % - Arizona, California, Maryland, Michigan, Nevada, Oregon & Washington.

Worst State - **Mississippi, 60%** (MS has secondary law)

States with primary law - 22

States with secondary law - 37

State with no law - New Hampshire (not surveyed). State motto: "Live free or die."

Least likely to wear - male pickup-truck drivers.

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