



# Safety Sense

Environmental Health & Safety

June 2001

## What's that Sound?

- Andy Schick

Some people get the wrong idea when they see an animal or an insect. Most of the time, they have an irrational fear based upon their parent's irrational fears or some under-budget Hollywood movie. I am sure that most people on campus are aware that it is indeed snake and bug season and after the recent torrent of rains that means that all of the campus critters have more than enough to eat.

One frequent concern of many are rattlesnakes. Now these little varmints like to rest in the shade during the day when it gets hot and then they go out and hunt for mice and other tasty food. It is important for them to eat mice, what with the circle of life and all that, but more importantly to reduce the rodent population so that the campus isn't infested with mice and rats that could be carriers of plague or anything. Not all snakes in the area are poisonous mind you but the Western Diamondback rattlesnake and its Diamondback cousins are indeed poisonous. But of course, they have to bite you to give

you an injection of poison and just a few easy precautions could keep you from being bitten. The first precaution is to know how they think. As I mentioned earlier,



they are cold blooded creatures and like to stay out of the hot summer sun, so they will find some nice shady place to just relax. One of these shady places could be under your car. Now don't immediately call for a taxi. The rattlesnake is smart enough to know that it can't eat you, because you are just a tad too big for it to swallow, so it

usually doesn't strike without warning. When it does give a warning, it uses its telltale rattle located at the end of its tail. Only rattlesnakes have this feature. Hence the name... "RATTLE-snakes." This rattling often sounds like a maracca player on speed. It is a fast, high pitched rattle that is usually constant. When you hear this, it is your cue to STOP! Just remain calm and look around to locate the little beastie. When you find it, just slowly back away and take a different route. They don't like to strike unless cornered. Plus, when given the opportunity they will run away. Who wants a big clumsy human scaring away all your food?

After discovering the snake your best option is to call campus police (if you are on campus) or animal control (if off campus) so that they can re-locate the little guy to a more suitable locale. Don't attempt to shoot it, most people end up shooting their foot or hitting a rock that ricochets the bullet back in their direction. Don't attempt to run away, you might trip and look like an idiot. And don't at-



tempt to run over it with your car because that is just mean and cruel. For home protection, make sure your house is rodent free, and they won't feel the need to travel under your baseboards or in your living room to help you exterminate them. Plus, if you want to keep them out of your garden or yard, install some fine mesh screen around the bottom of your fence and keep the bushes and weeds clear because they can use them as a little ladder. Now if you happen to be bitten by a rattlesnake, remain calm, try not to use the appendage that it bit and get yourself to a hospital. Don't try any home remedies like sucking out the poison, that just gets spit in the wound or venom in someone's mouth. Don't electrify the wound, cause all you are doing is electrifying yourself. Just remember that rattlesnakes are a sign of a healthy environment and that they were here long before us. So respect them.

— <http://www.ehs.ucsd.edu/pest/snake.htm> —

## BEWARE OF THE SUN!

- Andy Schick

That's right... THE SUN! Technically, the star hovering at the center of our solar system is named Sol, hence, SOLar system. But don't let the cute little name fool you. It may seem nice and warm, but it is a cold blooded killer. All of us walk around basking in its warm glow LIKE FOOLS! The ultra violet rays emanating from the sun are slowly destroying us all. As ultra violet or other types of radiation are absorbed by the skin they have the potential to damage the DNA in each cell that they hit. Now, normally, when a piece of DNA is knocked out of its double helix, the cell is conveniently destroyed by the body because it is no longer viable as a normal, functioning cell and that is why so many of us shed a layer of skin after a bad sun burn. BUT, sometimes, if the sun's dangerous rays knock out just the right sections of DNA, it has the potential to give the cell a proverbial "Mask" to which it tells all the other cells, "What's up? Damaged? Me? You must be crazy, try the next cell." and then it multiplies profusely causing the skin to discolor and grow abnormally. Yup, you guessed it... CANCER! The sun can give us Cancer. That is why we must all take up the fight! No, I am not talking about destroying the sun. Well... at least not yet. Give it a few million years. What I AM talking about is using a personal shield which can protect you from the damaging effects of the sun. SUNSCREEN. Yes, this effective defense system can help you walk around outside without fear of the fiersome fire ball in the sky. Just remember to use an SPF (Sun Protection Factor) of at least in the 30s. Good luck, and fight the good fight. Tell your friends and family too. WE WILL WIN!

### IIPP Meeting Dates & Times

7/24	2:00-3:00	USB
8/30	10:00-11:00	USB
9/24	3:00-4:00	USB
10/31	11:00-12:00	USB
11/27	2:00-3:00	USB

## Things That Bug...

- Andy Schick

Now with this time of year comes dangerous spiders and stinging insects. There are only two dangerous spiders to worry about in the United States. These are the black widow and the brown recluse. Both are solitary buggers that don't like much attention. If you stay clear of them, they will stay clear of you. Now with a brown recluse, they LOVE to make nests in bedding, old clothes, and curtains. Make sure before you get into bed to shake the covers a bit and take a look under the covers for any creepy crawlies, and if you have old clothes that have been sitting in one place for a very long time (especially the floor) just throw them in the washer and put them away afterward. If you are really paranoid you could use a shovel or tongs to touch any fabric item although that would be a bit extreme. If a black widow is near your house and you don't want it playing with your kids, just keep knocking its web down with a broom or stick. "Nobody wants to live in the same trailer park after a twister hits it twice." She will just move to a wood pile or somewhere where there isn't so much traffic.

Now how to identify these little guys. The black widow spider can be identified by its black body and large abdomen. On the bottom of its abdomen, there is usually a red hourglass shape. The web is very tough and sticky and is often irregular in shape. Its adult size is about the size of a quarter including the legs. The brown recluse spider is, of course, brown and is characterized by its telltale "fiddle" shape on the back of its thorax. As you look at it, the "fiddle" should be on its thorax and the strings on its abdomen. The brown re-



**Remember, if you are new and have not been to an IIPP training, ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY. See dates and times on the front page.**

cluse is roughly the size of a nickel including its legs.

There are also some winged creatures to worry about. Every year about this time, wasps and bees enjoy the bountiful harvest of flowers that have sprung up because of the rain. They are not particularly dangerous unless you are allergic to them. So don't worry too much. The only thing you have to



really worry about is Africanized honey bees, also known as Killer Bees. So, if you see any kind of bee nest, try to stay away from it. Also, if you get attacked... run away. Try to get into an enclosed area where they can't get in. And if you can get inside your car, turn the air conditioning on full blast because that slows down the ones that may have



gotten trapped inside the car with you. Also, if you are stung more than five times you should really seek medical attention. Wasps will also sting you if you choose to disturb them. One popular denizen of CSUSM has been the Yellow Jacket wasp. These little guys love sweets and will take every opportunity to invade a picnic or the outer dome area. In fact, they often carry away tiny pieces of food. PLUS, if you agitate them (wave your arms about wildly) they will attempt to sting you repeatedly. If there are more around than you are comfortable with, just walk away calmly. They can take a hint as to when they're not wanted.

Well I have said my rant about the Cal State Critters so, listen to what I have to say and don't worry. Most of them really aren't that bad, and they are usually more afraid of you than you are of them. Remain calm whatever you do and respect them for what they are, our friends and neighbors who are an integral part of our environment.

<sup>1</sup> <http://health.ucsd.edu/poison/spiders.asp>

<sup>2</sup> <http://health.ucsd.edu/poison/stinging.asp>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.desertusa.com/july97/du\\_bwindow.html](http://www.desertusa.com/july97/du_bwindow.html)

## Cal State San Marcos Environmental Health and Safety Says, "Hello" to Humberto Garcia.

EH&S says hello to it's newest member...Humberto (Junior) Garcia. Mr. Garcia has been working and attending classes at this campus for quite some time. He recently graduated in June with a degree in business. Mr. Garcia has previously worked in Parking Services and has given them five wonderful years of service. Now he has chosen to join the dynamic and powerful team of EH&S. He has a lot to offer in many aspects of our department, and we are proud to have him working with us. When asked what direction his life is taking after college he said, "Show me the money!"



## Cal State San Marcos Environmental Health and Safety Says, "Goodbye" to Andy.



EH&S says goodbye to one of its newest members...Andrew (ANDY) Schick. Andy will be leaving for Japan shortly to teach English in the JET Program. Andy will be signing a contract for a minimum of one year; and he can re-contract twice which means that if he so deems necessary, he can be there for three years. He will miss all the friends he has made at Cal State University San Marcos and will try to e-mail often.

When asked for a comment he stated in "Iron Chef" fashion, "Yes, I think I will do well."

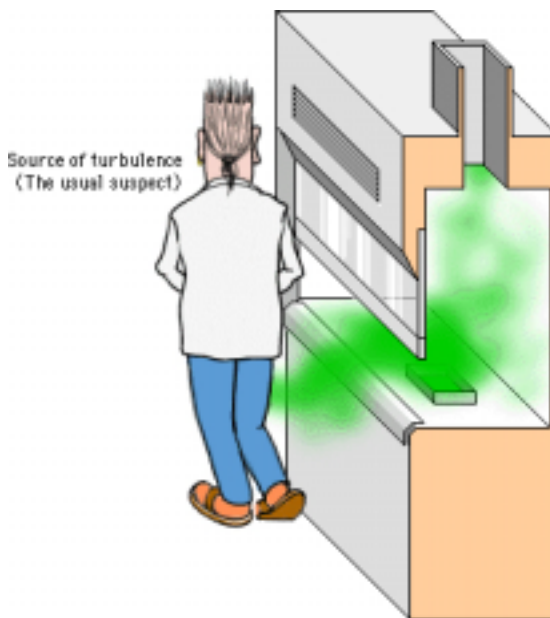
## Chemical Fume Hoods

- Regina Frasca

The Chemical fume hood is an engineering control that provides the user a level of protection when manipulating hazardous materials. The use of the fume hood also provides protection and comfort to the facility and the other occupants in the lab and building. Say, your experiment calls for some B-Mercaptoethanol. You, your coworkers, the occupants of the entire building and EH&S will sincerely appreciate its use in the fume hood. This compound smells like rotten eggs and a little dab will do you. It is highly toxic, very irritating, classified as a stench material, and used widely by chemists and biologists.

Fume hood certification involves an assessment of the air velocity and a visual inspection of the air flow. In order to work safely in the fume hood, the limitations and capabilities must be understood. For instance, it is widely believed that all con-

taminants (vapors and airborne particles) will remain within the fume hood. This is not necessarily so; as fume hoods have limitations and their effective use



is dependent upon a number of factors such as: sash position, the amount of storage in the hood, placement of items inside the hood and baffle clearance.

Here are a few safe work practices:

- Place items at least 6 inches inside the hood to minimize turbulence at the sills edge.
- Don't stick your head inside the hood. The plane of the sash is the barrier between contaminated and uncontaminated air.
- Work with the sash at the lowest position possible. It will afford some protection in the event of an accident (implosion, explosion, fire, etc.).
- Avoid using the hood for storage. Clutter can disrupt airflow. Return chemicals to their proper storage areas, as unnecessary chemicals could increase the risk of and contribute to uncontrolled reactions.
- Periodically flush water into the cup sink. Dry traps contribute to odors. Never dispose of chemicals into these or any other sinks. Damage to the sinks plumbing as well as fires have resulted from chemical disposal.
- Contact EH&S and Facility Services if the hood does not seem to be operating properly.



Cal State University San Marcos

# Environmental Health & Safety

**"We are here to help."**



## BIOHAZARD

Do you need biohazardous waste removed? Are you dealing with harmful substances that can biologically alter the state of the universe? If so, please call us to remove it for you. If you do not know if the waste you have is biohazardous, we will be happy to let you know if it is. Also, last week's microwaveable fish fillets stuck to the side of the trash can, although this may look like biohazardous waste, they are not classified as such. Have a great day!

## Hot Summer Barbecue

- Humberto Garcia Jr.

As the summer of 2001 befalls the campus community, so does a national holiday and pastime, good ol' Fourth of July. At a time when family and friends get together to celebrate, Environmental Health and Safety would like to revisit the time honored tradition of the activity we call: B-B-Q.

Yes, there are many who T-H-I-N-K that it's all about lighting the charcoal and throwing on the meat. Yet, there are many hazards that can present themselves when dealing with fire and raw meat. Food poisoning can occur if the proper steps are not taken when dealing with outdoor cooking. This article is a little reminder on good habits that should be followed when cooking raw meat on the gas or charcoal grill. Whether you are at a Padres game, the beach or in your back yard, it may be wise to follow some food safety tips to keep everyone healthy and out of the ER.



- **Clean: Wash Hands, Food and Surfaces**

Make sure to keep everything clean. Wash your hands after handling raw food, and after going to the restroom (common sense!!). Wash food before handling it. Surfaces contaminated by raw meat should be cleaned after each use. If you will be in an area where there will be no water, bring clean water from home or moist towelettes to use.

- **Separate: Segregate Ready to Eat Food From Uncooked Meats**

A prime cause of foodborne illness is the contamination of food during preparation, grilling and serving. Clean utensils, dishes and cutting boards after contact with raw meat. Avoid placing raw meat near ready-to-eat foods.

- **Cook: Temperature Control**

Cook the food correctly! Many food-borne illnesses can be prevented if the meat is cooked properly. Hamburger and ground meat should be cooked to 160° F, poultry to 165° F, and steaks/roasts to a temperature of 160° F. By properly cooking the meat, bacteria that can be harmful are killed.

- **Chill: Keep Food Refrigerated**

Keeping food cold prevents food-borne illnesses. If there is no refrigerator available, keep raw food in a separate cooler to avoid contamination of beverages or ready-to-eat food.

So before you head off to your destination, be prepared to safely handle the food that you will be cooking. Clean the raw food, separate from other foods, cook it and cool it properly. Remember, we want everybody back at work the next day!

**COOK SAFE**

## National Safety Month

- Regina Frasca

June is National Safety Month. In recognition of this event, be sure to run through this checklist of key safety habits before you perform any job all month—and all year:

Do you remember brushing your teeth and washing your face when you got up today? Probably not. You know you did it, but it's so much a matter of habit that you didn't even notice. You did it automatically, without thinking. Safe work habits are like that, too. You acquire them slowly by doing, repeating, redoing, repeating, and so on and so on, the same way over and over. Safe work habits may take some time to develop, but once you've established them, they'll work for you forever. They'll protect you from hazards even when you're not at your best or when you're not thinking about the particular hazard.

### SAFE WORK HABITS CHECKLIST

- Treat safety as an important job responsibility.
- Keep your work area clear of potential hazards.
- Plan each job before you start.
- Think about what could go wrong and how you'll prevent problems and accidents.
- Follow all safety rules and procedures.
- Pay attention to what you're doing.
- Read labels and MSDSs before you begin any job involving chemicals.
- Always use assigned Personal Protection Equipment.
- Ask questions when you're unsure of what to do or how to do it.
- Check tools and equipment before using them.
- Always use the right tool for the job.
- Check to make sure ventilation is working when working with hazardous substances.
- Keep food, drinks, and cigarettes out of the work area—and wash thoroughly before you touch them.
- Know what to do in an emergency.
- Don't use malfunctioning equipment. Tag it and report it.
- Don't ignore a safety hazard. Fix it or report it.
- Don't ignore other workers' unsafe acts. Correct them or report them.
- Don't let others talk you into bypassing safety procedures.
- Don't take shortcuts.
- Don't fool around.

-Excerpt from Safety Quick, BLR INC.

**For any questions please call Environmental Health and Safety:  
(760) 750-4510**