

*Office of Surety, Safety and Environment (SSE)*

**The SSE Elucidator**

*“Elucidator”*: to give clarity through explanation and analysis.



**March 2006 Newsletter**

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**Does Your Facility Have a Current SPCC Plan in Place?**

Assurance that facilities have developed and fully implemented Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure (SPCC) plans is the EPA’s top priority in 2006. All facilities that store more than 1,320 gallons of oil must have current SPCC plans, and

therefore are subject to EPA inspections. If your facility requires an SPCC plan, it should have the following on site to avoid EPA fines and penalties:

- A clearly written and updated SPCC plan.
- Documentation that proves your plan has been implemented.
- Secondary containment systems that are in good condition and large enough to contain a spill.
- Oil water separators.
- Clearly detailed facility diagrams that highlight storage areas and locations of response equipment.
- Documentation of employee training programs.



To further prepare yourself for possible EPA inspections, you can review the newly published EPA SPCC guidance document that is distributed to its regional inspectors at <http://www.epa.gov/oilspill/guidance.htm#Content>.

## Are You Prepared for a Flood?

Flooding causes approximately 110 deaths per year in the United States and 25,000 deaths worldwide. Unfortunately, most of these deaths are caused by flash floods, which happen with the least warning and therefore are the hardest to prepare for. For this reason, it is important to always be prepared for a flood. This means:

- Having an emergency kit on hand which should include flashlights with extra batteries, a first aid kit, non-perishable food, bottled water, and a portable battery-operated radio with extra batteries.
- Having an emergency evacuation route planned and making sure that all of your family members know this route.
- Developing an emergency plan to communicate with family members.
- Having an out-of-state relative or friend serve as the “family contact.” Make sure that everyone in the family knows the name, address, and phone number of the contact person.

### If a Flood is Imminent:

- Move to higher ground if you are outside.
- Turn off all utilities at the main power switch and close the main gas valve if evacuation appears necessary.
- Move valuables, such as documents, furs, and jewelry to upper floors.
- Fill bathtubs, sinks, and plastic soda bottles with clean water.
- Have your car fueled. If electric power is cut off, gas stations may not be able to operate pumps for several days.

### During a Flood:

- Don't drive through flooded roadways. Two feet of water will carry away most automobiles.



- Don't attempt to cross any streams or rivers. Six inches of moving water can knock you off your feet.
- If you have not evacuated your house and the waters start to rise, keep moving up in the house to stay above the water. Get on the roof if necessary.
- Don't try to swim to safety; wait for rescuers to come to you.

#### **After the Flood:**

- Inspect foundations for cracks or other damage before entering a building.
- Don't use matches, cigarette lighters, or any other open flames in a building that has been subject to a flood as gas may be trapped inside.
- Clean your house as soon as it is safe to enter. Floodwaters can pick up sewage and chemicals from roads, farms, and factories.
- Throw out all food that has come in contact with floodwaters.
- If your water has not been declared safe to drink, boil water for drinking and food preparation vigorously for five minutes before using.

## **Avoiding Workplace Violence**

The U.S. Army Civilian Personnel Advisory Center's working definition of workplace violence is, "*Assaults, other violent acts or threats which occur in or are related to the workplace and entail a substantial risk of physical or emotional harm to individuals, or damage to government resources or capabilities.*" Perpetrators of workplace violence include outsiders or strangers, customers, employees, and people who have a relationship to an employee.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are approximately 1,000 workplace homicides every year and 80% of these were preceded by warning signs.

#### **Warning signs in people prone to homicide and other incidents of workplace violence include:**

- **History of violence:** Someone who has a documented history of violent or aggressive behavior. For example, a new employee in the workforce who had to be moved from his or her past job because of exhibiting violent or aggressive behavior toward a former coworker.
- **Evidence of psychosis:** An example would be an individual who holds false beliefs about people and their motives; has conversations with him or herself; or whose appearance becomes disheveled over a period of time.
- **Romantic obsession:** An employee who continually makes unwelcome advances towards a co-worker and will not leave the other person alone.
- **Depression:** An outgoing and good-spirited person who becomes withdrawn, unusually quiet, and/or exhibits extreme signs of stress.
- **Interest in weapons:** Someone who displays obsessive interest in weapons or explosives through informal discussions and mannerisms.
- **Chemical dependence:** An individual who displays signs such as being late for work, acting erratically, and/or is unable to get along with co-workers.

#### **Environmental factors that can lead to an increased potential for workplace violence include:**

- **Highly authoritarian management style:** This can cause feelings of oppression and frustration among workers.

- **Lack of employee participation in the decision making process:** Workers feel they are merely “assembly line workers” and have no contribution to the direction of the organization.
- **Hostile or threatening work environment:** Allowing aggressive conduct or ignoring and taking no action for thefts, fights, sexual or racial harassment, intimidation or other behaviors viewed as hostile by employees.
- **Lack of training in conflict resolution and communication skills:** Supervisors who lack training in these skills can exacerbate problems in the organization.

**The likelihood of workplace violence occurring can be reduced by a four-part strategy that includes:**

- **Prevention** entails creating a positive work environment. Steps to create this positive work environment may include: recognizing exemplary employees; taking a sincere interest in “quality of life issues” (facilities, job satisfaction, and employee development opportunities); and ensuring open communication between employees and management. In addition to creating a positive work environment, it is also important to plan for potential violence by establishing crisis response teams and ensuring there is proper security.
- **Intervention** is the action taken when behavioral indicators appear or an inappropriate behavior occurs. Select personnel should receive in-depth training to intervene in these situations. These key personnel must have the authority to take initial action to manage the situation. Your mental health provider, social actions office, or employee relations office of the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center should have

information and training available on successful intervention or conflict resolution methods.



- **Response** is the action taken once an incident of workplace violence occurs. The response taken can either allow the organization to immediately address the problem and initiate recovery, or it can prolong the crisis and waste critical resources. Every unit should have an established response procedure, which enables them to notify all personnel of an impending danger or incident.
- **Recovery** is the process by which a work environment returns to its “normal” status after an incident of workplace violence. The success and timeliness of an organization’s recovery is directly related to the health/morale of the organization prior to the incident and the response to the incident.

*March 19-25 is the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's National Poison Prevention Week, we would like to provide you with the following poison prevention tips to keep your children safe.*

- Use safety locks on all cabinets that contain potential poisons such as cleaning products, paints and varnishes, and insecticides.
- If you are using a product that could be harmful to your child and you need to answer the telephone or doorbell, take your small child with you. Most poisonings occur when the product is in use.
- Store all products in their original containers. DO NOT use food containers such as milk jugs or soda bottles to store household and chemical products.
- Store all medicines in child-resistant containers. Remember child-resistant does not mean childproof.
- Take time to teach children about poisonous substances.
- If a poisoning should occur, dial 1-800-222-1222 to be connected to your local Poison Control Center.



# Announcements

**Title:** Creating a World Class Safety Culture Seminar

**Dates:** Various Dates

**Location:** Various Locations

**Description:** The National Safety Council is offering a seminar that addresses practical approaches to forming strategies for a safety culture, gaining employee involvement through safety contact and observation, and measuring the success of safety initiatives. This is a one-day seminar that is good for 0.6 Continuing Education Units (CEUs). The cost is \$230 for members of the National Safety Council and \$300 for nonmembers.

**Phone:** 1-800-621-7619

**Web:** <http://secure.nsc.org/train/course.cfm?id=113>

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**Title:** Concepts in Environmental Health Risk Assessment-An Integrated Approach

**Dates:** 19-23 June, 2006

**Location:** Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD

**Description:** The U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine is sponsoring a 4.5 day course addressing environmental health risk assessments. The course begins with an overview of health risk assessment, risk communication, and risk management. Students will then integrate these three concepts into the main procedural topics of an environmental health risk assessment. This course is free of charge.

**Web:** <https://usachppm.apgea.army.mil/TrainCon/datePage.aspx>

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***For all accidents, no matter how minor, specific forms (military—DA Form 285-AB-4; civilians –DOL Claims Forms CA-1 or CA-2) must be submitted to your Safety Office. All employees requiring medical attention must visit your local Occupational Health Clinic as soon as possible post mishap.***