# The Safety Net

## In this issue:




**Department of Environmental Health & Safety**

**Office: BSB D.111**

**Phone: 710-2900**

**Fax: 710-2405**

**One Bear Place #97046**

**Waco, TX 76798**

**Website:** www.baylor.edu/ehs

**Email:** ehs@baylor.edu


## Are you Ready for the OSHA GHS?

The Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) is widely acknowledged as one of the most significant regulatory changes to affect workplace health and safety practices in years. In the United States, more than 5 million workplaces and some 40 million workers will be affected by OSHA's new Hazard Communication Standard (HCS 2012), which aligns with the GHS.

Alignment of HCS 2102 with the GHS provides a universal, clear-cut, standardized approach to hazard classification, labels and safety data sheets (SDS). This initiative promotes homogenous criteria for classifying chemicals based on health, physical and environmental hazards. Under the GHS, for example, labels are required to feature a harmonized signal word, pictogram, hazard and precautionary statements, product identifier and supplier identification. SDS also will be standardized, expediting worker access to information.

OSHA estimates the revised standard will help prevent 43 fatalities and 585 injuries and illnesses while saving an estimated $250 million a year by reducing safety and health risks. In addition, OSHA estimates annualized benefits of $475 million a year from cost reductions and productivity improvements attributable to HCS revisions.

Violations of the HCS are common enough to put them in the top 10 list of OSHA violations every year. With a more consistent standard, workers, employers and chemical users hopefully will improve compliance rates and benefit from greater reliability through simplified communications on chemical hazards and practices to follow for safe handling. As a global standard, GHS also is expected to have positive overall effects on human health and the environment.

Key implementation dates regarding GHS-HazCom alignment include a December 1, 2013 deadline to have all personnel trained on the labeling and SDS layout.

To facilitate this training, EHS has the following sessions scheduled in BSB D.110:

Tuesday, September 17: 2-3 pm

Wednesday, September 18: 2:30-3:30 pm

Tuesday, October 15: 2-3 pm

Wednesday, October 16: 2:30-3:30 pm

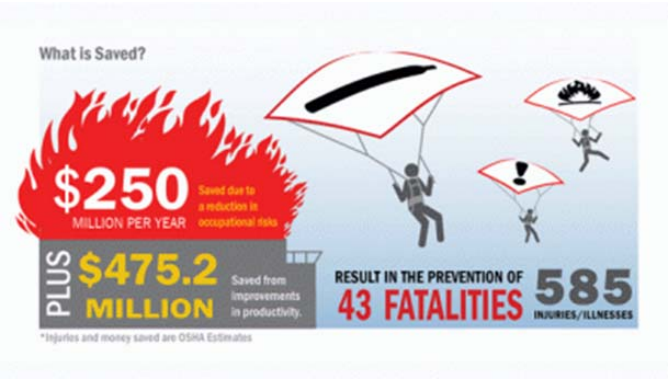
Tuesday, November 19: 2-3 pm

Wednesday, November 20: 2:30-3:30 pm

To make sure you're ready for the new GHS, make plans to attend one of these sessions, or to complete your training online, by December first.

### *Web Bytes*

You can fulfill your GHS training requirement online, through Blackboard. Look for "Environmental Health & Safety" under "My Organizations", and then look for the "GHS Online Training" in the content area. If you are not already part of the organization, please send an email to: Karalyn_Humphrey@baylor.edu and she will assist you with the process.



# Five Tips to Prevent Eyestrain in the Office

Your computer, your tablet, your smart phone: all helpful devices, but when used for long periods of time, they can expose you to eyestrain. Or worse, you could develop something called "Computer Vision Syndrome," which the American Optometric Association defines as a group of eye and vision-related problems with symptoms including headaches, blurred vision and neck/shoulder pain that result from prolonged computer use.

Prevent Blindness America offers five tips to help office workers avoid these health hazards and maintain healthy vision:

1. Place your computer screen 20 to 26 inches away from your eyes and a little bit below eye level.

2. Use a document holder placed next to your computer screen. It should be close enough so you don't have to swing your head back and forth or constantly change your eye focus.

3. Change your lighting to lower glare and harsh reflections. Glare filters over your computer screen can also help.

4. Use an adjustable chair.

5. Choose screens that can tilt and swivel. An adjustable keyboard also can be helpful.

"We want to help to remind employees and employers of the benefits of taking care of our eyesight," said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. "By keeping our eyes healthy, we can become more productive and save on health care costs!"

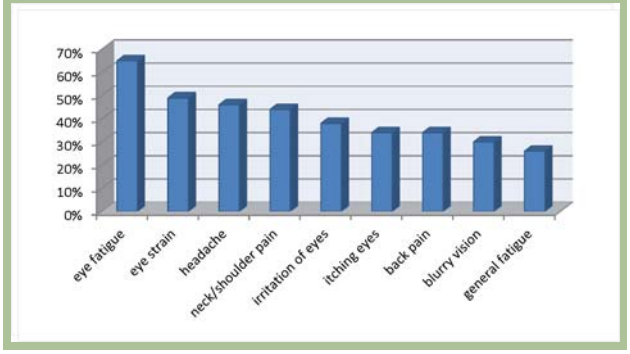
Prevent Blindness America is the nation's oldest volunteer eye health and safety group.

### *Did you Know?*

Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS) is described by the American Optometric Association as a group of eye and vision-related problems that result from prolonged computer use.

Statistics:

- If you spend more than 2 hours daily in front of a computer, you have a 90% chance of developing CVS.
- Workers in America spend an average of 6 hours a day using a computer.
- CVS is the most common computer-related complaint, and can cause worker productivity to decrease by as much as 20%.




## On The Lighter Side


**"We could try a larger monitor with an ergonomic glare filter...but you're still going to get headaches if you keep banging your head against the screen."**

## Dear EHS

Dear EHS,

I think I'm due for lab safety training, but I'm not sure. Please help.

~Forgetful Researcher

Dear Forgetful,

You're in luck, actually. We have recognized that it is difficult to keep up with the trainings, and we want to help. The CHO has been busily compiling all the lab safety training records dating back to 2011 into a massive spreadsheet (color coded and everything!) that she will then review every month to see who is due for training. That person will then get a friendly email reminder to renew their training. If the person is past due, a hand will reach out of the computer and thump them on the skull.

This spreadsheet will track the faculty, staff, and graduate students. Undergraduate researchers have a much higher turnover rate and it will be up to the lab supervisor to track them. All training, whether online or in person, will come with a certificate to help with this.

# Building the Foundation for a Sustainable Safety Culture, Part 1 by Judy Agnew

Culture change in an organization of any size is not a simple process. When it comes to workplace culture, many elements contribute to creating and sustaining a strong culture of safety. While it is likely that some of these elements vary from organization to organization, there are four distinct cornerstones that create a foundation on which a more effective safety culture can be built, despite complexity and variability among organizations.

### Cornerstone 1: Leading Indicators

Safety culture is heavily influenced by metrics. How safety is measured can fundamentally change how safety is managed, and how safety is managed is a primary contributor to an organization's safety culture. In companies with strong safety cultures, safety is embedded in daily management; it is part of the fabric of daily activity. It infuses every interaction, every decision and every behavior.

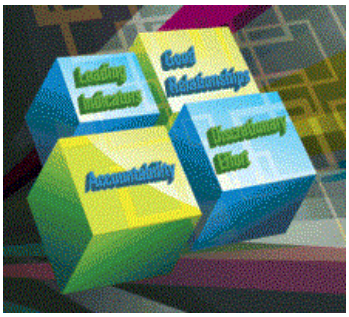
Unfortunately, in many organizations, leaders only attend to safety during safety meetings, audits and reactively, when there is an incident. The reason lies in metrics. Managers attend to what they are measured on because those measures are associated with consequences (positive and negative).

Too many organizations still measure safety largely or exclusively via incident rate (or similar lagging metrics such as lost-time case rate, severity rate, etc.). Such measures tell us how many people got hurt and how badly, but they are not good measures of what leaders are doing to prevent accidents and incidents.

Because of the natural variation in these numbers, incident rates can get either better or worse with absolutely no change in safety conditions or behaviors. The result is that organizations, and departments within organizations, can go for long periods of time without accidents, despite having an unsafe work environment. This statistical fact works against keeping a focus on safety.

Managers and supervisors can do nothing around safety for a period of time and be reinforced with a good incident rate. Such is not the case for other business objectives like productivity, quality and reliability. Those objectives tend to have much more sensitive measures and thus are more immediate with certain consequences for management behavior. In the context of these other important business objectives (and their powerful consequences), it is easy for the well-intended manager or supervisor to put safety on the back burner. When the incident rate is low, one can assume all is well with safety and focus precious time on other priorities.

One important foundational step to building an effective safety culture is to change the way safety is measured. While incident rate is a necessary metric, it should be one of several. The majority of measures should focus on proactive behaviors on the part of all employees – measures that track what people are doing to prevent accidents. When there are measures of what leaders do on a daily and weekly basis to prevent accidents, immediate and certain consequences can be engineered in to ensure those activities occur. This ensures that safety is attended to all the time, not just when there are incidents. Daily and weekly accountabilities will raise safety to an equal playing field with other business objectives and help infuse safety into all parts of work.




## What We're Working On

The department is currently interviewing applicants for the position of general OSHA safety. This person will be involved with general regulations such as ergonomics, hearing preservation, and other general health and welfare concerns. We are currently in the phone interview stage and hope to move to the live interviews soon.

Many people still don't know about EH&S, what we do, and what resources we are making available to the Baylor community. So we're working on networking and outreach. An initiative is underway to get the word out to the department chairs, who will then pass on the word to their departments. Spread the word—we're here and our goal is to be helpful.

The CHO is working to reconvene the Laboratory Safety Committee this semester. She will be reaching out to the departments to identify the departmental safety officers, as well to identify student representatives to serve on a student-oriented Lab Safety Committee. Look for this to unfold with the next month.

***Current Live Training Schedule:***

http://www.baylor.edu/ehs/index.php?id=98325

***Training Matrix:***

http://www.baylor.edu/ehs/doc.php/203191.pdf

***Online trainings available through Blackboard***

"The Safety Net" is a monthly electronic newsletter published by the Department of Environmental Health & Safety and intended to share information with the Baylor community, promote transparency within the university's safety program, and encourage the continued development of a culture of safety among university employees and students.
Comments, questions, and ideas for future stories are welcomed. Email: ehs@baylor.edu