PROTECTING YOUR SKIN

Summer weather is upon us and many of us will be spending more time outdoors working or enjoying the beautiful days. More time outdoors means more time being exposed to the sun. Exposure to the sun’s ultraviolet (UV) rays can predispose a person to skin cancer. According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, one out of every five Americans will be diagnosed with skin cancer during their lifetime.

Consult with a physician immediately if you detect changes in your skin’s condition. When detected early skin cancer is highly treatable in most cases.

It is never too late to start protecting your skin by limiting sun exposure and/or using sunscreen, preferably with a minimum protection factor of 15. Remember to apply sunscreen to all exposed areas of the body including the face, ears, scalp, lips, neck and the tops of your feet every couple of hours. Wide brim hats and sunglasses can also provide protection against UV rays. Protect yourself, avoid those painful sunburns and enjoy the summer!

EMLOYEE SAFETY CODE COVER CONTEST

Here is a chance to showcase your artistic ideas and skills. The Occupational Safety and Health Unit (OSHU) is in need of a design cover for our revised Employee Safety Code manual. OSHU would like employees to get involved.

After all, the Employee Safety Code is a manual comprised of safety regulations written to keep IDOT employees safe. Get creative with the use of a safety slogan and artwork. All current IDOT employees are eligible to participate and the winner will receive a vehicle emergency response/first aid kit. Please contact DOT.EmployeeSafety@illinois.gov to request the entry form and guidelines. Deadline to apply is August 1, 2014.

HEAT RELATED WEATHER AND STORMS

Summer and summer are filled with many opportunities to be outdoors. Whether you plan on working or just enjoying a beautiful day outside, be prepared for the weather.

Hot, humid and sultry weather or the so-called “dog days of summer” begin in July and run through August. Avoid heat-related medical issues while working in the hot weather by following a few safety tips:

- Wear a hat and light-colored clothing
- Drink water every 15 minutes even if you are not thirsty
- Rest in the shade
- Watch out for each other. Early symptoms may include dizziness, weakness and/or headache
- Seek medical attention quickly for those experiencing any symptoms

Summer storms including lightening, hail, flash floods, tornados and strong winds can pop up without warning. Being prepared and knowing what to do ahead of time can eliminate chaos in emergency situations. To prepare for a storm follow these safety tips:

- Have an emergency action plan and prepare an emergency kit
- Seek shelter from the storm away from windows and doors
- Unplug electronic equipment
- Use a battery operated radio for weather updates
- After the storm, stay away from debris and downed power lines and report them immediately to local authorities
- Check on those who may require assistance

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN AT IDOT

Are you familiar with the Emergency Response Plan (ERP) at your workplace? Do you know your specific exit route in the event of a building evacuation? Do you know where to seek shelter when severe weather is forecasted? Uncertainty in the answers to any of these questions could create chaos at the time of the emergency or place you in an unsafe situation with no time to react.

Each IDOT facility is required to have an ERP and post emergency exit routes and shelter areas. Additionally each employee shall be instructed on the specific ERP for their work area. Visitors are included in this instruction as we cannot control the moment mother-nature decides to strike.

The ERP and instruction also includes the types of alarms or communication that will be used in the event of an emergency. For example, Central Management Services (CMS) has recently installed a new alarm system in the Harry R. Hanley building. The new system has two distinct alarm sounds, as opposed to three in the old system.

- Continuous Alarm Sound = Seek Indoor Shelter Immediately
- Intermittent Alarm Sound with Strobe = Evacuate the Building Immediately

The continuous alarm sound occurs for weather-related emergencies and an intermittent alarm with strobes is sounded for emergencies requiring evacuation such as a bomb threat or fire.

ERP Central Office standard operating procedures have been recently developed and designate emergency response-related responsibilities including those of CMS, the Bureau of Operations Station One, OSHU and Emergency Wardens.

For more information on IDOT’s statewide ERP visit: https://insideidot.portal.illinois.gov/Employees/Pages/EmergencyProcedures.aspx

Nominations for highlighting employees who help make a difference when it comes to safety and health in our organization can be sent to DOT.EmployeeSafety@illinois.gov. The Occupational Safety and Health Unit can also be contacted for questions, concerns and recommendations for a safer work environment.