Maximize Workplace Safety with Tips from SafetyNET
As the summer winds down, employees return from vacation and offices return to their regular schedules, it is important to think about workplace safety initiatives for the upcoming year. If your business is required to comply with OSHA standards, the American Red Cross can help you design a program that will meet, and even exceed, workplace safety and first aid training requirements. Plus, Red Cross courses fulfill OSHA’s new “Best Practice” recommendations for annual recertification, trainee assessment and AED training.
You'll find more details inside this issue of SafetyNET, along with tips on ergonomics, information about insect bites and stings, and common first aid mistakes.

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Visit the New Online Instructor’s Corner Today!
The new American Red Cross Instructor’s Corner — www.redcross.org/instructorscorner — is now available for instructors to explore! Packed with a variety of resources and content to augment Red Cross health and safety courses, the site can be accessed at every instructor's own convenience. Whether they are looking for program updates, teaching tools, certificates, promotional materials or supplies, Red Cross

Hurricane Katrina Response
The American Red Cross continues to support the victims of Hurricane Katrina. This disaster, unprecedented in Red Cross history, will utilize Red Cross resources from across the country. If you have tried to contact your local Red Cross chapter with a question or concern related to health and safety training and our response has been delayed, we truly apologize and appreciate your patience and understanding.

The American Red Cross appreciates your support. If you have not done so already, we urge you and your business to take the following steps towards assisting the Red Cross and helping to prepare your community:

- Consider making a corporate donation to help support American Red Cross disaster relief efforts. Donations may be made online at www.redcross.org, by calling 1-800-HELPNOW or by contacting your local Red Cross chapter.

- Information on the Red Cross response to Hurricane Katrina and other disasters is continuously updated at www.redcross.org. Provide Workplace Safety Managers and your Red Cross trained instructors with this information so that they may speak to the issues and encourage employees to get involved by volunteering, donating money or becoming a regular and frequent blood donor.

- Implement workplace safety training programs in your workplace, such as Together We Prepare. By investing in emergency preparedness education, you'll help ensure that your employees will have the skills they need to respond in a disaster situation.

If you are not a subscriber and would like to receive SafetyNET
instructors will find it all at Instructor's Corner.

RedCross.org Store
Don't forget to visit the American Red Cross online store at www.redcross.org for first aid kits, reference guides, emergency preparedness kits, and more!

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Ten Common First Aid Mistakes

These days, there are countless resources to turn to for medical information and advice. By means of the Internet, magazines, television and more, almost anyone can publicize their remedy for any ailment with little to no regulation. So, when seeking out health and safety recommendations, it is important to be able to identify the credible sources and disregard popular myths. We’ve listed some of the most common first aid mistakes below, along with the correct response methods. Take a look to find out if you have your first aid facts straight! And, don’t forget to enroll in a first aid class to learn how to respond correctly in an emergency situation.

 Myth: Soothe a burn by applying butter.
 Reality: If you apply butter or an oily substance to a serious burn, you could make it difficult for a doctor to treat the burn later and increase risk of infection.
 The right approach: Treat a burn with cool water. If a burn is severe and starts to blister, make sure to see a doctor. Keep the affected area clean and loosely covered with a dry, sterile dressing.

 Myth: If a child swallows a poisonous substance, induce vomiting with syrup of ipecac.
 Reality: Inducing vomiting is not recommended for certain poisonous substances and may be harmful.
 The right approach: Never give anything to eat or drink unless directed to by the Poison Control Center or a medical professional. If an accidental poisoning occurs, immediately call the Poison Control Center at (800) 222-1222) or your doctor for advice.

 Myth: The best way to treat a bleeding extremity is by applying a tourniquet.
 Reality: Tourniquets stop the flow of blood, which could cause permanent damage to a limb. They should be used only as a last resort in the case of severe bleeding.
The right approach: Pad the wound with layers of sterile gauze or cloth, apply direct pressure and wrap the wound securely. Seek medical help if the bleeding doesn't stop or if the wound is gaping, dirty or caused by an animal bite.

Myth: Apply heat to a sprain, strain or fracture.
Reality: Heat actually increases swelling and can keep the injury from healing as quickly as it could.
The right approach: Apply ice to reduce swelling for about 20 minutes. Place a thin barrier between the ice and the bare skin.

Myth: You should move someone injured in a car accident away from the scene.
Reality: A person with a spinal-cord injury won't necessarily appear badly injured, but any movement could lead to paralysis or death.
The right approach: Move an injured victim only if
The scene becomes unsafe (the vehicle is threatened by fire or another serious hazard)
You have to reach another victim who may have a more serious injury or illness.
You need to provide proper care (CPR needs to be performed on a firm, flat surface.
Otherwise, it's best to stabilize the victim, and leave the person in place until paramedics arrive.

Myth: Rub your eye when you get a foreign substance in it. Tears will wash the substance out.
Reality: Rubbing could cause a serious scratch or abrasion to the eye.
The right approach: Rinse the eye with tap water.

Myth: Use hot water to thaw a cold extremity.
Reality: Avoid any extreme temperature change- hot water can cause further damage.
The right approach: Gradually warm the extremity by soaking it in lukewarm water.

Myth: To reduce a fever, sponge rubbing alcohol on the skin.
Reality: Alcohol can be absorbed by the skin, which can cause alcohol poisoning, especially in young children.
The right approach: Lower a fever by taking ibuprofen. If a high fever continues for several days, see a physician or go to a hospital emergency room for treatment.

Myth: Allergic reactions to bee stings can be treated at home.
Reality: Delaying professional treatment to a respiratory allergic reaction to a bee sting could be fatal.
The right approach: For symptoms such as breathing problems, tight throat or swollen tongue, call an ambulance immediately.

Myth: If you get a cut or scrape, apply first-aid ointment, cover it with a bandage, and leave it untended to heal for a few days.
Reality: Exposure to fresh air is the quickest way to allow wounds to heal, and thus it is generally best not to apply creams or ointments, since they keep the wound moist. Bandages should also be
changed to keep the wound clean.

**The right approach:** The first and best thing to do with a wound is wash it with soap and cool water. All dressings should be changed twice a day. At bedtime, the bandage should be replaced with a looser dressing so air can circulate around the wound. Upon waking, a slightly tighter bandage should be applied, but not so tight that it cuts off circulation. Bandages should be changed even if it means pulling off a part of a scab that's forming, experts say. Also, try to keep the wounded area dry.

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Buzz Basics: How to Treat Insect Bites and Stings

Summer is here, and the bugs are back! No matter how hard you try to avoid them, insect bites and stings during the hot summer months are almost inevitable. So, instead of closing windows and hiding inside, learn how to treat bites and stings and brave the outdoors!

**Bee, Wasp, Hornet and Yellow Jacket Stings**
Most insect stings are not serious and can easily be treated. However, be on the lookout for allergic reactions, especially among adults and children who have never had a bee sting before. Severe allergic reactions that go untreated could be fatal.

A bee may leave behind a stinger when it stings. Try to remove it as quickly as possible by scraping it out with a credit card or similar. Wash the area with soap and water and apply a cold pack or a cold, wet washcloth to prevent swelling. Place a cloth or towel between the source of cold to prevent skin damage.

Pay careful attention to signs of an allergic reaction, especially wheezing or breathing difficulty, tightness in the throat or chest, swelling of the lips, dizziness, fainting, nausea or vomiting. These are indicators of a serious reaction and need to be treated by a physician immediately. You should also seek medical care if you notice a large skin rash, a large area of swelling around the sting site, or if swelling and/or pain persist for more than 72 hours.

**Spider Bites**
The majority of spiders found in the United States are harmless. Bites can be treated in much the same way as a bee sting. Wash the area with soap and water, two to three times a day until the skin is healed. Apply a cold compress. Place a cloth or towel between the source of cold to prevent skin damage.

There are two spiders whose bites can be harmful and need to be treated by a physician immediately. The black widow and brown recluse spider are most often found in warm climates and cause noticeable reactions. Symptoms include a deep blue or purple area around the bite, surrounded by a whitish ring and large outer red ring, body rash, muscle spasms or stiffness, abdominal pain, headache or fever, joint pain, nausea or vomiting, and lack of appetite.
Tick Bites
If you’ve been in or around a wooded area, make sure you check yourself, your children and your pets carefully for ticks. Dog ticks and deer ticks are the most common, and both should be removed quickly and carefully.

If you find a tick, use tweezers to grasp the tick at its head, closest to the skin. Pull firmly until it lets go. Wash the bite area with soap and warm water. Apply antiseptic or antibiotic ointment. If rash, flu-like signals or joint pain appears, seek medical attention. Place the tick in a sealable container for analysis. Wash your hands thoroughly.

Some ticks, especially deer ticks, can carry Lyme disease. If left untreated, Lyme disease can cause permanent damage, so make sure to keep an eye on tick bites for any reaction. Early symptoms of Lyme disease include a red, ringed bull’s-eye rash around the bite, swelling, fatigue, headache, joint pain and chills.

You can avoid ticks by wearing long sleeves and long pants, hats, pulling long hair back in a ponytail, using insect repellent and by wearing light colored clothing so that ticks are easily detectable.

To learn more about first aid for bites and stings, enroll in a Red Cross first aid course. Contact your local Red Cross chapter for more information.

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Ergonomics: How to Sit Comfortably on the Job

For many Americans, long hours in the office, hunched over a desk, can often lead to nagging back pain. Luckily, this common problem can be alleviated with a few simple changes to your daily routine.

The first step is to adjust your chair so that it properly supports your back. Sit all the way back in the chair with your back and thighs, and thighs and calves, at a 90-degree angle. Adjust the height of the chair so your feet are flat on the ground. If you are unable to lower the chair enough, use a footrest. If your chair has an adjustable back, raise or lower the tension to support the curves of your back, especially the lower (lumbar) curve of the spine.

Next, position your computer to complement your posture and reduce strain to your eyes and wrists. Put your computer monitor at arm’s length – about 20 to 26 inches from you. The top of the screen should be at eye level. When typing, sit tall in your chair and lift your wrists off the keyboard. Move your entire arm when you move the mouse, not just your forearm.

Don't sit for more than an hour at a time. Get up and walk to the restroom, get a drink of water or talk to a coworker in another area of the office instead of e-mailing or calling them. Or, just stand up and stretch your arms, back and legs. If you’re on the phone, try standing up and talking instead of sitting. Frequent breaks will refresh your muscles and relieve your neck and back from the stress of sitting still at your desk.

Pay attention to your posture, and change positions regularly. By making small changes to the way you sit for 40 hours a week, you'll find that you are less drowsy, more focused on your work and tension free!

For more information, set up a Red Cross Ergonomics presentation for your staff. In just one hour, participants learn to reduce repetitive stress injuries by improving posture, rearranging work areas, using...
proper tools and doing simple exercises. Contact your local Red Cross chapter for more information.

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Take Simple Precautions To Help Fire-Proof Your Home

Every year, fires that could have been prevented damage thousands of homes across the country. Avoid unnecessary fires by setting aside a few hours to walk through your house with your family, taking steps to fireproof your home. You should follow these same precautions in your office or place of business. Use this checklist as a guide.

Make Your Home Fire Safe

- Smoke alarms save lives. Install a smoke alarm outside each sleeping area and on each additional level of your home.
- If people sleep with doors closed, install smoke alarms inside sleeping areas, too.
- Use the test button to check each smoke alarm once a month. When necessary, replace batteries immediately. Replace all batteries at least once a year.
- Vacuum away cobwebs and dust from your smoke alarms monthly.
- Smoke alarms become less sensitive over time. Replace your smoke alarms every ten years.
- Consider having one or more working fire extinguishers in your home. Get training from the fire department in how to use them.
- Consider installing an automatic fire sprinkler system in your home.

Plan Your Escape Routes

- Determine at least two ways to escape from every room of your home.
- Consider escape ladders for sleeping areas on the second or third floor. Learn how to use them and store them near the window.
- Select a location outside your home where everyone would meet after escaping.
- Practice your escape plan at least twice a year.
Escape Safely

- Once you are out, stay out! Call the fire department from a neighbor's home.
- If you see smoke or fire in your first escape route, use your second way out. If you must exit through smoke, crawl low under the smoke to your exit.
- If you are escaping through a closed door, feel the door before opening it. If it is warm, use your second way out.
- If smoke, heat, or flames block your exit routes, stay in the room with the door closed. Signal for help using a bright-colored cloth at the window. If there is a telephone in the room, call the fire department and tell them where you are.

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