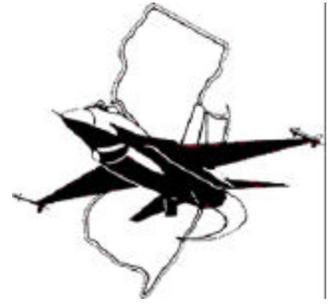




177th FIGHTER WING

JERSEY DEVILS



SAFETY AND HEALTH NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2003

CLICK IT OR TICKET !!!

NOVEMBER 2003 MOBILIZATION

Many people – especially teen-agers and young adults – still don't take one of the simplest and most effective steps to stay safe: Buckling up. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), **59 percent** of the passenger vehicle occupants killed in crashes in 2002 – **32,598 men, women and children** – weren't wearing safety belts.

Teen-agers and young adults are particularly at risk. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teenagers and young adults in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Yet, **64 percent of 16- to 20-year-old passenger vehicle occupants killed or seriously injured in crashes in 2002 were not wearing a safety belt**, according to NHTSA.

Sometimes the fear of getting a traffic ticket is the only reason that someone will wear a safety belt. That's why State and local law enforcement officers across the country are joining the national *Click It or Ticket/Operation ABC* (America Buckles Up Children)

November 2003 Mobilization that runs from November 17-30. Officers will aggressively ticket **unbelted drivers and passengers**. High-visibility enforcement has proven effective in increasing safety belt use.

A similar *Mobilization* held in May helped convert 17 percent of safety belt non-users into users, increasing the national belt use rate to 79 percent from 75 percent.

Bottom line – law enforcement officers would rather write someone a ticket than find that same person dead or critically injured because he or she wasn't restrained in a crash.

Wear your safety belt every trip, every time – and encourage teen-agers and young adults to do the same. Or risk getting a ticket — **especially November 17-30**.

So remember:

CLICK IT OR TICKET!!!

177th FIGHTER WING SAFETY STAFF

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If you have any safety related topics you would like to see in our publication or have any questions that we can help with, please contact the Wing Safety Office at 6013 or e-mail at Robert.Fusco@njatla.ang.af.mil

ERGONOMICS PRIMER

Ergonomics is the field of study that involves the application of knowledge about physiological, psychological, and biomechanical capacities and limitations of the human body. This knowledge is applied in the planning, design, and evaluation of work environments, jobs, tools and equipment to enhance worker performance, safety and health.

Ergonomics is essentially fitting the workplace to the worker.

Ergonomics seeks to prevent injuries and illnesses by applying principles to identify, evaluate and control ergonomic risk factors for work – related musculoskeletal disorders (WRMDs). WRMDs are defined as a class of disorders involving damage to the muscles, tendons, tendon sheaves, and related bones, muscles, and nerves. They may also be known more specifically as repetitive strain injuries (RSI); Cumulative Trauma Disorders (CTDs); and Overuse Syndrome. WMSDs result from the cumulative effect of repeated traumas associated with specific workplace risk factors.

Important Concepts to Know and Remember

Prevention is the most important strategy for dealing with work-related musculoskeletal problems. Preventing WRMDs problems rests on an ergonomically sound work environment, good work practices, and employee awareness. To keep work-related symptoms from recurring, something in your work practices or environment must improve. If not, you will not get better. Each person has physical limits or a "comfort zone" of activities and work levels which can be tolerated without developing lingering symptoms. You must cut back temporarily when symptoms occur.

Your body doesn't know which are work activities and which are home or recreational activities--the two add up, and one is not necessarily worse than the other. Improper use or overuse of splints can cause symptoms that may be hard to distinguish from your original problem. To avoid work-related symptoms, stay in shape, get adequate rest at night, and take care of yourself.

(Continued on next column)

Medical Conditions Associated with Musculoskeletal Symptoms

- Other "pinched" nerve entrapment syndrome
- Nerve injury/irritation from external compression
- Arthritis and other rheumatological disorders
- Muscle strain or fatigue
- Epicondylitis or "tennis elbow"
- Carpal tunnel syndrome
- Tendonitis



Postures to Avoid

- Prolonged or repetitive flexion or extension of the wrist.
- Prolonged or repetitive bending at the waist.
- Prolonged standing or sitting without shifting your position.
- Suspending an outstretched arm for extended periods.
- Holding or turning your head consistently to one side.
- Any unnatural posture held steadily or for a prolonged time.



Motions to Avoid

- Repeated motion without periods of rest.
- Repeated motion with little or no variation.
- Repeated motions done with great force.
- Resting or compressing a body part on or against a surface.
- Lifting heavy objects far away from the body.
- Frequent reaching or working above shoulder height.

Factors Which May Contribute to Symptoms

- Furniture or a work area arrangement which produces bad postures.
- Physically demanding work you are not accustomed to doing.
- Home or recreational activities which produce stresses on the body similar to those at work.
- Being "out of shape".
- Diminished muscle strength or joint flexibility.
- Underlying arthritis.

(Continued from page 3)

Assessing Your Situation



Your Work Environment

- Is your work arrangement sound?
- Is there equipment, which would make your work easier or less stressful?
- Have you enlisted the aid of the Safety Department?

Your Work Practices

- Are you avoiding bad postures?
- Are you taking breaks during repetitive activity?
- Are you varying your activities to reduce repetitive stress?
- Do you plan ahead to avoid periods of heavy repetitive work under tight deadlines?

Other Things to Consider

- Do you and your supervisor have an adequate understanding of the ergonomic issues and factors involved your work?
- Do you and your supervisor agree there are reasonable limits to what a person can do?
- When you have been free of symptoms, have you tried to increase your muscle strength and joint flexibility?
- Have you tried to stay fit in general?
- Do you get ample rest at night particularly when symptoms occur?
- Do you avoid aggravating activities at home when symptoms occur?

Improving Your Situation

There are **four** basic ingredients:

1. Medical treatment;
2. Work restrictions to decrease or eliminate stress on the body temporarily;
3. Employee education (and, if needed, supervisor education); and
4. Long-term solutions.

Medical Treatment

Anti-inflammatory medicines: include aspirin and ibuprofen. For some people, these can be hard on the stomach, however.

Ice: decreases pain and inflammation; use for acute injuries.

Heat: stimulates circulation and flexibility; use in the post-acute phase.

Splints: put a body part at rest. Wrist splints are often used for carp al tunnel syndrome at night. In some cases, splints can be used during work to avoid bad postures and reduce stress on certain body parts. They should only be used under the direction of a medical provider; splints can produce "deconditioning" problems if overused.

Exercises: used to increase range of motion, strength, and flexibility; should be done only when symptoms permit and to a degree that does not cause problems.

Steroid injections: beneficial in some cases.

Surgery: option of last resort when prescribed by competent specialist. The correct operation done on a properly diagnosed patient will often help, but there is no guarantee for improvement.

Long-term Solutions

- Prevention is foremost; there is no substitute for ergonomically sound work environments and work practices. And obviously for the problem not to recur, *something must be done differently*.
- Enlist the help of your supervisor and Safety Department.
- Make improvements to your furniture, equipment, and work arrangement. Can your work be redesigned?
- Pay attention to your body; cut back on all repetitive or strenuous activities if you develop symptoms.
- Reconsider just how much repetitive or strenuous work you can actually do.
- Do all of those things you can to improve the situation.

DON'T BLOCK ELECTRICAL PANELS



In the event of an emergency service personnel must be able to get to fire alarm panels or electrical disconnects quickly. Boxes or pallets that are placed in front of these panels prevent emergency personnel from quickly assessing and correcting potentially dangerous situations.

What many people don't realize is the fire hazard that is created by placing items in front of electrical panels. When short circuits occur the fuses and circuit breakers in the panels can emit particles of molten copper. When this condition occurs the doors to breaker panels can contain most of the particles if they are kept closed. Some molten particles, however, can still get out and ignite combustible material placed in front of electrical panels. The end result is a fire.

For the safety of co-workers and service personnel please don't block electrical panels.

If you have a concern about an electrical panel being blocked contact your supervisor or the building manager.

Turkey Safety

Thanksgiving would not be the same without turkeys, yet very few people take the time to learn how to handle them properly. Any poultry needs special attention when handling. Thawing a frozen turkey the proper way is important to the safety of your family.

Never thaw a turkey at room temperature because this promotes the growth of dangerous bacteria. The safest way to thaw a turkey is to thaw it in the refrigerator. You should do this with the turkey still in its' own unopened wrapper breast facing up and placed on a tray.

The accepted rule of thumb for time is:

1 day refrigerator thawing for **every four pounds** of turkey.

Here is a good site for turkey and holiday information:

<http://www.butterball.com/>



Holiday Stress Relievers

The holidays, while joyful, can be a bit stressful. Follow these helpful hints and tips for a stress-free, special holiday meal.

Save Time Now, Enjoy More Later

- Prepare side dishes and desserts a head of time and freeze.
- Set your holiday table a day or two in advance.
- The day before, take out your serving bowls and plates. Place a little note on each so you know which side dish or entrée goes where.
- After the first course, clear plates and silverware. While preparing the main course, have someone rinse, load and start the dishwasher. When you're ready for dessert unload the dishwasher and load with dinner plates. You'll have clean plates and silverware for dessert and your dishes will be done by the time you finish your second cup of coffee!

FACTS ABOUT MOLD

The most common questions and concerns regarding mold.

What is mold and where is it found?

Mold (fungi) is present *everywhere* - indoors and outdoors. There are more than 100,000 species of mold. At least 1,000 species of mold are common in the U.S. Some of the most commonly found are species of Cladosporium, Penicillium, and Aspergillus. Mold is most likely to grow where there is water or dampness - such as in bathrooms and basements.

How can mold affect your health?

Most types of mold that are routinely encountered are not hazardous to healthy individuals. However, too much exposure to mold may cause or worsen conditions such as asthma, hay fever, or other allergies. The most common symptoms of overexposure are cough, congestion, runny nose, eye irritation, and aggravation of asthma. Depending on the amount of exposure and a person's individual vulnerability, more serious health effects - such as fevers and breathing problems - can occur but are unusual.

How can you be exposed to mold?

When moldy material becomes damaged or disturbed, spores (reproductive bodies similar to seeds) can be released into the air. Exposure can occur if people inhale the spores, directly handle moldy materials, or accidentally ingest it. Although rare, mold can sometimes produce chemicals called mycotoxins. Mycotoxins may cause illness in people who are sensitive to them or if they are exposed to large amounts in the air. Large exposures are typically associated with certain occupations (e.g., agricultural work).

How does mold grow?

All molds need water to grow. Mold can grow almost anywhere there is water damage, high humidity, or dampness. Most often molds are confined to areas near the source of water. Removing the source of moisture - such as through repairs or dehumidification - is critical to preventing mold growth.

What is *Stachybotrys chartarum*?

Stachybotrys chartarum (also known as *Stachybotrys atra*) is a type of mold that has been associated with health effects in people. It is a greenish-black mold that can grow on materials with a high cellulose content - such as drywall sheetrock, dropped ceiling tiles, and wood - that become chronically moist or water-damaged, due to excessive humidity, water leaks, condensation, or flooding.

Many molds are black in appearance but are **not** *Stachybotrys*. For example, the black mold commonly found between bathroom tiles is not *Stachybotrys*. *Stachybotrys* can be positively identified only by specially trained professionals (e.g., mycologists) through a microscopic exam.

What should you do if mold is present?

Although any visible mold can be sampled by an environmental consultant and/or analyzed by a laboratory specializing in microbiology, these tests can be very expensive - from hundreds to thousands of dollars. There is no simple and cheap way to sample the air to find out what types of mold are present and whether they are airborne. Even if tested, it is difficult to say at what levels health effects would occur. Therefore, it is more important get rid of the mold rather than find out more about it. **The most effective way to treat mold is to correct underlying water damage and clean the affected area.**

Please report any area of concern to your supervisor or building manager.

HAZARD ALERT

CPSC, Honda Power Equipment Manufacturing Inc. Announce Recall of Lawnmowers

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announces the following recall in voluntary cooperation with the firm below. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed.



Name of product: Honda Harmony Walk-Behind Lawnmowers

Units: 30,000

Manufacturer: Honda Power Equipment Manufacturing Inc., of Swepsonville, N.C.

Hazard: If the lawnmower strikes an object with sufficient force, the crankshaft can bend. Vibration created by a bent crankshaft can eventually result in a fatigue failure of the Roto-stop™ blade brake control assembly. This can allow the cutting blade to continue rotating after the blade control lever is released, posing a risk of injury to consumers.

Incidents/Injuries: American Honda has received six reports of broken stop plates. No injuries or property damage have been reported.

Description: These are Honda Harmony 21-inch, walk-behind mowers with model numbers HRB216TXA or HRB216HXA. The model numbers are located on a metal plate behind the engine, just in front of the rear discharge opening. These black and red mowers have "Honda Harmony" printed in white on the front.

Sold at: Power Equipment dealers and Home Depot stores nationwide from November 2000 through June 2003 for between \$700 and \$760.

Manufactured in: United States.

Remedy: Honda Lawn and Garden dealers will repair these mowers by replacing the Roto-stop™ mechanism.

Consumer Contact: To locate a servicing Honda Lawn and Garden dealer, consumers should call American Honda at (800) 426-7701 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. ET Monday through Friday or go to the Web site at www.hondapowerequipment.com.

CPSC, Neurosmith Announce Recall of Children's Plush Toys



WASHINGTON, D.C. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission announces the following recall in voluntary cooperation with the firm below. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed.

Name of product: Pet Me Platypus™

Units: 4,400

Distributor: Neurosmith of Long Beach, Calif.

Hazard: Any of the four plastic button covers can detach, posing a small parts choking hazard to young children.

Incidents/Injuries: Three incidents reported, none resulting in injury.

Description: Pet Me Platypus is a musical plush toy with a green head, yellow beak and legs, and blue body. The toy features four geometric shape buttons: a red heart, yellow star, orange circle, and green square. The recalled units have Model #42080 engraved on the battery box cover and batch numbers FV23, FV24, FV25, FV27, FV28, FV29, or FV30 printed vertically on the right side of the cover.

Sold at: Sold exclusively at Target stores nationwide from August 2003 through October 2003 for about \$20.

Manufactured in: China

Remedy: Consumers should immediately stop children from playing with this toy and contact Neurosmith for a free replacement Pet Me Platypus.

Consumer Contact: Call Neurosmith at (800) 220-3669 ext. 1066 between 7:30 am and 4:30 pm PT Monday through Friday.