

Safety Topics

Volume 02, Issue 11

November 2002

Special points of interest:

Flu season is upon use. Have you had your flu shot?

Do you still have the first issue or Safety Topics from 2002?

Go back and review the procedures for jumping a battery!

For what it is worth!

God sent an angel to earth to check on how people were doing. The angel reported back that 95% of people were living lives full of sin and 5% were not doing much better. Thinking that another angel should be employed just to be certain, that angel was sent to a different part of the world. Alas, the report was much the same. God thought that some encouragement might help the 5% from following the 95% down the wrong path and sent emails to the 5%. Have you received your email? I didn't either!

Don't Let the Flu Bug Your Work!

I got shot today! A flu shot that is! I have made it a point to get a flu shot for a lot of years. I think they are worthwhile because I don't remember the last time I had a bad bout of the flu.

As the holidays approach, it is easy to forget there is another season on its way – flu season. With body aches, fevers, headaches, coughs and sore throats just a few of the “gifts” this season can bestow, you'll want to act now to do everything you can to make sure you stay healthy. Just these thoughts make me shudder!

Every year, the influenza virus affects hundreds of thousands of people, costing an average of 20,000 lives and countless hours of productivity. Unlike a cold, which can come on gradually, the flu usually arrives suddenly, with a fever as high as 104° F plus chills, aches and weakness. While cold weather itself does nothing to cause flu, the disease is most likely to strike during cold weather, because people are spending more time indoors, where the germs are more easily spread by coughing, sneezing or touching common surfaces.

Although anyone can catch the flu, certain people, such as those who have weakened respiratory systems from smoking, asthma and allergies, are more susceptible to complications. Parents of young children are also more likely to catch a cold or flu because of the germs their youngsters carry home from school or day care.

Health professionals now recommend that all people receive flu shots, not just the elderly or those with special conditions. Anyone who thinks of it should get a flu shot. Reducing transmission of the germs protects all of us.

In addition to the vaccine, there are other steps you can take to reduce the spread of flu (and colds for that matter) in the workplace. Frequent hand washing helps stop the spread of germs, says Dr. Lorraine Stern, a California-based physician. Workers can spread the flu virus before they even know they are sick, says Dr. Stern. “You can spread the virus the day before you experience any symptoms, as well as the first three or four days you feel sick,” she says.

Once symptoms such as fever, aches and coughing arrive, stay at home, Dr. Stern stresses. “If you have a fever, your body is telling you to rest. You won't be much good at work, and you'll run the risk of infecting those around you,” she says.

No workplace can make itself entirely immune from the flu. But some simple steps can go a long way toward keeping everyone healthier and happier as we approach the Holiday Season. Now is the time for a flu shot so that your body can do its work of building an immunity.

Beware of Battery Hazards!

Cold months seem to require more jump starting of batteries. Now seems to be a good time to review some of the important safety demands.

The ordinary vehicle storage battery looks harmless enough. However, that may be its biggest fault, because so many people working with or near batteries seem unaware of their potential hazards. That results in injuries related to misuse or abuse of batteries. A healthy respect for the battery's main hazards can avoid many of these injuries.

- The electrolytic agent in battery cells is diluted sulfuric acid that can burn exposed skin and eyes.
- When a battery is being charged, hydrogen gas can build up in the air space near the cap of each cell, and unless the gas is allowed to escape, a spark can ignite the trapped gas and explode the battery.

Avoid using a metal tool so close to the battery that a spark would ignite the hydrogen gas build-up. Of course, no smoking or lighted matches for the same reason.

Use protective gloves and safety glasses when filling a cell and don't overfill or spill. If you do, handle the rag with caution and dispose of properly. Remember that the acid will burn your skin even after it has dried on a rag.

Remember to keep the last jumper connection as far away from the battery as possible, then follow the safe jump starting procedures that were provided in the Volume 02, Issue 1 of *Safety Topics*.

Portions of this were reprinted from an Indiana Constructors Safety Bulletin.

November 2002 Safety Topics - The Flu Bug Season

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These Safety Topics are an attempt at continuing education. Please read the information and let me know if you have an idea for future Topics. Your input is appreciated!

Plant Location: _____

Supervisor/Foreman/Plant Manager Signature:

Names of those who reviewed this information:

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