



*“The Goal is Clear! 2007 As Our Safest Year”*

IRVING MATERIALS, INC.

# Safety Topics

## SAFETY SHORTS

### KEEP YOUR COLD AND FLU GERMS TO YOURSELF

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, typically 5 to 20 percent of the U.S. population catches the flu annually. Flu season normally occurs between November and April. It is a myth that cold temperatures cause colds. Cold weather keeps people together indoors making the spread of germs more likely.

Here are some tips to help avoid colds and flu:

- Clean and sanitize shared surfaces such as countertops, keyboards, and phones.
- Avoid touching your mouth, nose, and eyes, and wash hands thoroughly and often.
- Get a flu shot (most important for children and the elderly).
- Eat healthy foods to strengthen the immune system.
- Exercise moderately to maintain a healthy immune system.
- Consult your doctor about vitamin supplements.
- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Try to avoid people who are sick and stay at home if you become sick.

#### Flu Symptoms

- Fever of 102-104 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Headache
- Extreme fatigue
- Dry cough and sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle aches
- Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

#### Cold Symptoms

- Sore throat
- Cough, chest discomfort
- Mild fatigue
- Runny nose
- Fever and headache are rare

#### To work or not to work

Cold and flu are the most common contagious diseases in the workplace. When deciding on going to work or staying home consider these things: If you have a fever always stay home because the fever is an indication that you are at the most contagious stage of the ailment. If sneez-

ing and coughing are uncontrollable, stay at home. Over taxing your immune system by not getting enough rest can lead to more serious complications including pneumonia. When you decide to medicate with over-the-counter medications, check the label and make sure you understand what effects the ingredients may have and whether they may react negatively with other medications you may be taking. Consult a doctor or pharmacist when in doubt. Always make your supervisor aware of all medications that you are consuming.

Here is a good emergency response tip. The American Society of Safety Engineers joined rescue personnel in asking people to program on their cell phones' address book *In Case of Emergency* (ICE) contacts as a way to easily reach a family member or emergency contact should an illness or accident render the owner unconscious. ICE can help emergency personnel in quickly identifying an injured individual and their next of kin in minutes instead of hours. With nearly two-thirds of people in the U.S. now carrying cell phones, this makes good sense.

Making ICE a common practice for cell phone users will help make it a routine measure for police, firefighters, and other emergency personnel to check cell phones when necessary. ICE is free and only requires a cell phone to use it. Simply program a new contact in the phone's address book under the letters ICE followed by the names and phone number of emergency contacts. If you have more than one contact they can be listed under ICE-1, ICE-2, etc. It is probably best to let your emergency contact know what you have done and then make sure that they know about any special instructions that you may have. Such things as special medical conditions and/or prescription use or food allergies are important concerns. Persons under age 18 should list their guardian, mother, or father as the ICE contact because of legal considerations.

*According to the latest issue of "The Concrete Producer", 111 imi plants won NRMCA Safety Awards. That is up from 93 plants last year and 92 in 2004! Way to go!!!*

#### For What It Is Worth! *On The Lighter Side— Farming*

A life-long city man, tired of the rat race, decided he was going to give up the city life, move to the country, and become a chicken farmer. He found a nice, used chicken farm, less the chickens, which he bought. As it turns out his next door neighbor was also a chicken farmer.

The neighbor came for a visit one day and warned, "Chicken farming isn't easy but I'd like to be a good neighbor so I'll tell you what. To help you get started, I'll give you 100 chickens."

The new chicken farmer was thrilled. Two weeks later the new neighbor stopped by to see how things were going. The new farmer said, "Not too good. All 100 chickens died."

The neighbor said, "Oh, I can't believe that. I've never had any trouble with all my chickens dying. I am so sorry. I'll give you 100 more."

Another two weeks went by, and the neighbor stops in again. The new farmer says, "You're not going to believe this, but the second 100 chickens died too."

Astounded, the neighbor asked, "What went wrong? What did you do to them?"

Well, says the new farmer, "I'm not sure whether I'm planting them too deep or not far enough apart."

**Safety is never an accident: it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution! It represents the wise choice of many alternatives!!**

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*"We're Proud of Our Work"*



**Words of Wisdom:**

There is only one person on earth who can use your abilities—YOU. Use those abilities to do something positive today!  
 —Author unknown

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## Strains and Sprains Revisited

The fall issue of the National Safety Council membership newsletter had an article that is worth sharing because it mirrors our own experience. The article relates statistics regarding strains and sprains. This continues to be a major employee injury cause across all of our divisions. Strains and sprains are the leading cause of nonfatal injuries in the American workplace and have been for years. These types of injuries account for 4 out of 10 occupational injuries and illnesses, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Most of the injuries are a result of overexertion or falls on the same level. Does that ring a bell? It should because that is how many of our injuries occur.

Three occupations account for more than 20 percent of all the occupational strains and sprains: laborers and materials movers, heavy truck drivers, and nursing care givers. We are right there on two out of three. These three occupations have the highest number of injuries and account for more than 16 percent of the total days away from work.

According to the BLS report; laborers, materials movers, and truck drivers usually have injuries that occur in the trunk and lower extremi-

ties as a result of overexertion or contact with objects or equipment. These injuries are traumatic wounds to muscles, ligaments, tendons, and joints caused by sudden wrenching, twisting, stretching, or ripping according to a 1999 NIOSH study on strains, sprains, and traumatic muscle injuries. The incidence of strains and sprains - particularly those affecting the back - can be reduced if employees use proper lifting techniques such as sizing up the load, ensuring they have enough space for movement, making sure they have solid footing, bending at the knees while keeping their backs straight, gripping the load with the palms of the hands and fingers, and making sure they have a clear path of travel.

It has also been proven that regular stretching and flexing exercises can reduce the severity and frequency of strain and sprain injuries. Those ready-mix truck drivers in the Indianapolis area who attended the drivers' meeting last winter should remember the discussion of "soft tissue injuries" and the stretching exercises that were recommended. Are you still following the warm-up and stretching tips that were provided? It could prevent an

**Incidence rates\* for workplace strains and sprains, by industry – 2004.**

Construction	91.2
Transportation	81.7
Health Services	80.0
Mining	66.6

\*Rate is the number of lost workday cases per 10,000 workers – Source Bureau of Labor Statistics

injury!