

RUTGERS

Rutgers Environmental
Health and Safety

REHS NEWS

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Busch Campus - CORE Building

Welcome to the 2008 Spring edition of the REHS Newsletter. If you have a suggestion for a future EHS article, please feel free to contact us through the Safety Suggestion Link on our website at <http://rehs.rutgers.edu> or at 732-445-2550.

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Motor Vehicle Safety

Whether commuting to or from work, driving your children to school or practice, running errands, traveling, or operating a vehicle as part of your job, most of us use and drive vehicles everyday.

Unfortunately, automobile accidents are a common occurrence because of the number of vehicles on the road, errors made by drivers, impaired drivers, weather conditions, etc. Chances are that you or some-



one you know has been involved in a vehicle accident. In fact:

- A motor vehicle accident

occurs every 5 seconds, someone is hurt every 10 seconds and someone dies every 12 minutes on U.S. roadways

- You have a 1 in 15 chance of being involved in a vehicle collision each year
- Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of deaths and injuries (on average 43,000 deaths and 2,575,000 injuries per year)
- Motor vehicle deaths account for 25% of all workplace fatalities
- The average cost of a workplace vehicular accident is \$16,500 per incident

Common driver causes of accidents are:

- Distracted Driving - eating, reading, talking on a cell phone, etc. Estimates place distracted driving as a factor in 25-30% of all accidents
- Aggressive Driving – exces-

sive speed, tailgating, passing on the right, etc.

- Impaired Drivers – alcohol, illegal drug and medication use. Approximately 40% of all fatal car accidents involves alcohol use
- Fatigued Driving – fatigue driving causes more than 100,000 accidents per year
- Young Drivers – most likely to engage in risky driving behaviors (speeding, impaired, aggressive, etc.)

At Rutgers, we have many employees (faculty, staff and students) that use and operate over 1,000 University owned vehicles (i.e. cars, vans, trucks, tractors, etc.). We note or experience, on average, the following:

- The University is self-insured and covers the cost of accidents directly (damage to the vehicle, injury costs, lost

Motor Vehicle Safety

- productivity and wages, 3rd party claims, etc.)
- Almost \$500,000 in costs each year (repair of vehicles, liability claims, workers' compensation claims)
- Over 90 reported accidents per year
- Most of the accidents involve hitting a fixed object (i.e. another parked vehicle, post, loading dock, other structures, etc.)

Accident Prevention Suggestions

You can prevent accidents or minimize injuries, both in your personal or work vehicle, by following these simple suggestions:

- Always wear your seat belt and ensure all passengers wear their seat belts



- Ensure children up to the age of 8 or 80 pounds ride in booster or safety seats in the rear seat of the vehicle
- Properly maintain your vehicle (i.e. tire pressure, lights, windshield wipers and fluid, brakes, etc.) and inspect your vehicle prior to use
- Look around and behind your vehicle before you enter it
- Avoid distractions while driving (i.e. cell phone use, eat-

- ing, reading directions, etc.)
- Practice defensive driving techniques (i.e. maintain spacing between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you (at least 3 seconds), use directional signals, avoid sudden lane changes, etc.)
- Increase your distance between you and other vehicles in snow, rain or ice
- Be courteous and respectful to other drivers
- When possible, have someone guide you when backing into/out of a location, use your mirrors, and proceed slowly
- When approaching an intersection, ensure the vehicle in front of you has cleared the intersection before you move
- When transporting tools or equipment, ensure that these materials are properly secured to prevent unsafe movement (sliding or becoming airborne)

Operating a University Vehicle

Prior to operating a University owned or leased vehicle, you must:

- Possess a valid driver's license for the type of vehicle operated
- Have 2 years of driving experience
- Successfully complete the Defensive Driving Course and eye exam

If you have an accident while driving a University vehicle:

- Obtain medical services, if needed

- Notify the local law enforcement authorities
- Complete and submit the Motor Vehicle Accident or Loss Notice and Manager's Motor Vehicle Interview Report immediately (but no later than 72 hours after the accident) to The Department of Risk Management and Insurance.

The Defensive Driving Course is offered through the Department of Emergency Services. The course is free to all University personnel and students and is offered to non-members of the Rutgers community at a cost of \$20. You must pass an eye exam before operating University vehicles. Eye exams are offered on the day of the course at a cost of \$15. For additional details on the Defensive Driving Course and training dates please visit <http://rues.rutgers.edu/defense.shtml> or contact Rutgers University Emergency Services at (732) 932-4800.

If you have questions regarding automobile safety, please contact Alex Ruiz at (732) 445-2550 or aruiz@rehs.rutgers.edu. Information is also available at the following websites:

OSHA – <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/motorvehiclesafety/other-resources.html>
National Safety Council - <http://www.nsc.org/resources/issues/drivsafe.aspx>
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration - <http://www.nhtsa.gov/>

Child Car Seat Inspection

The Public Safety Department has partnered with the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety to provide instruction and guidance on the proper use of child car seats.

Ensuring your child safety seat is properly installed is a simple and effective way to pro-

tect young children in the event of a motor vehicle accident.

Visit the Rutgers University Child Seat Inspection and Education Station, 129 Davidson Road, Busch Campus on Wednesdays from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. and Thursdays from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. to have your car seat

checked. No appointment is necessary for this free service.

For more information on this program or to locate other stations throughout the state, please visit http://www.nj.gov/oag/hts/childseats/childseats_newlaw.html.

Laboratory Audit and PI Self-Inspection Programs

Rutgers participated in the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) innovative self-audit policy beginning 2001 through 2003. The University agreed to complete the following:

- Complete comprehensive environmental audits of our five major campuses and off-campus facilities for 11 environmental programs
- Correct all deficiencies within 60 days
- Implement mechanisms to prevent the recurrence of violations.

The EPA agreed to waive **almost 1 million dollars** in potential fines for non-compliances, provided Rutgers implements and maintains proactive compliance programs. Additional information about the self audit program can be found on the REHS website at http://rehs.rutgers.edu/rehs_epa.htm.

To ensure compliance with the EPA's Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) hazardous waste regulations, the University, with the assistance of the Lab Safety Committee, implemented a program to annually audit all University labo-

ratories and requires Principal Investigators (PI's) to perform biannual self-inspections of their laboratories.



During the annual laboratory audits, REHS auditors review hazardous waste management procedures, OSHA compliance, as well as other environmental health and safety concerns. The audits program consists of the following activities:

- Identify issues of concern
- Correct problems immediately
- Follow-up on matters which cannot be corrected at the time of the inspection
- Submit an audit report to the Principal Investigators
- Provide an executive summary of inspections to department chairs
- Track compliance levels

The biannual PI Self-Inspection program was developed for the following reasons:

- To ensure the PI is familiar with their EHS responsibilities for their laboratory
- To provide a format for identifying potential health and safety issues in the laboratory
- To assist laboratory personnel in evaluating hazardous waste compliance

The self-inspections are performed twice per year using the online inspection program. The program maintains the records and allows for the user to review past inspections. The self-inspection program can be accessed through the REHS website at <https://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~rehs/selfaudit/>.

These two programs are critical components to ensure the health and safety of University laboratory occupants, maintain our commitment with the EPA, ensure environmental compliance and to provide mechanisms to prevent recurrence of violations. If you have questions or would like more information about these programs, please contact Dave Fernandez of REHS at (732) 445-2550 or dfernandez@rehs.rutgers.edu.

Stormwater and Waterways at Rutgers University

The Rutgers University campuses are surrounded by many different surface water bodies, (i.e. the Raritan River, Lawrence Brook, Ambrose Brook, Buell Brook and many other ponds and streams). These waterways perform vital functions in our communities and provide:

- Drinking water to millions of people
- Wildlife habitats
- Recreational opportunities for fishing and swimming
- Stormwater drainage
- Farm irrigation
- Industrial needs

These resources are strained and impaired by activities of a growing population and land



development. Examples of these activities include:

- Construction
- Particulates from vehicle emissions

- Roadway litter
- Pet waste
- Excessive erosion

Stormwater regulations were enacted in 1983 to minimize flooding and erosion and to protect water quality. In 2004, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) adopted new rules which were designed to:

- Increase the quantity of stormwater that is allowed to be absorbed into the soil (reduces runoff directly into waterways)
- Improve water quality by street sweeping roadways and parking lots (reduces contaminants, such as oil, from getting into streams)
- Maintain construction site runoff

As part of our commitment to protect the environment and to comply with these regulations, the University has implemented the following initiatives:

- Maintain natural vegetation
- Minimize disturbances of wetlands, forests, and meadows
- Construct and maintain

stormwater retention basins

- Maintain preserved land (i.e. The Rutgers Ecological Preserve and The Hutcheson Memorial Forest)
- Conduct routine street and parking lot sweeping
- Maintain drainage areas

To learn more about stormwater, waterways and how you can protect these limited natural resources, both at home and



at work, please visit the REHS website: http://rehs.rutgers.edu/rehs_stormwater.htm or contact Sue Dickison of REHS at (732) 445-2550 or dickison@rehs.rutgers.edu

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