

Safety Sentinel

Jan 2009

Fond du Lac County Safety Committee Mission Statement

It is the Fond du Lac County Safety Committee's mission to provide safety awareness, education, and advocacy to all Fond du Lac County employees, while recognizing it is both the employer and employee's responsibility to maintain a safe work environment.

Fireplace Safety

More than 6,000 people end up in emergency rooms for injuries associated with fireplaces and fireplace equipment ... and most of the injuries occurred with children under five years old.



Approximately 14,000 house fires each year are started by fireplaces. Most of these fires escalated beyond the fireplace because of an overloaded fire or damage to the fireplace, such as missing bricks, obstructed flues, ignition of nearby combustibles, and flying sparks.

Keep your family safe and warm by following these tips:

- Inspect the fireplace.
- Have chimneys inspected annually. This reduces the risk of fires and carbon monoxide poisonings due to creosote buildup or obstructions in the chimneys. To locate a certified sweep, go to www.csa.org or call 1-800-536-0118. A certified sweep can also perform maintenance on wood stoves or help remove gas logs from a fireplace.
- Keep the top of chimneys clear of tree limbs or debris.
- Always open the damper before lighting the fire and keep it open until the ashes are cool. This will avert the buildup of poisonous gases, such as carbon monoxide.
- Never use gasoline, charcoal lighter or other fuel to light or relight a fire because the vapors can explode.
- Do not treat artificial logs like real logs.
- Always use a screen around the fireplace to keep sparks from flying out and to prevent accidental clothing ignition.
- At holiday time, make sure the Christmas tree is not close enough to be ignited by a spark.
- Always make sure that the fire is completely extinguished before going to bed for the night or when leaving the house.

Source: www.about.com "Fireplace Safety - Facts to Help You Operate Your Fireplace"

Tips on Driving in Poor Weather

On a regular basis have a mechanic check your vehicle's brakes, battery, cooling system, engine components, lights, tires, and windshield wipers and washer.

Once you're satisfied your vehicle is in good condition, here are a few tips to remember when driving in poor weather:

- Allow extra time to get to your destination.
- Warm up the motor and turn on the heater and defroster.
- Clear snow and ice from your windows, lights, and roof.
- Start off slowly when on ice or snow.
- Always maintain a speed safe for conditions.
- Allow plenty of space between your vehicle and the one in front of you.
- Activate your flashers when visibility is poor.
- Put your headlights on low beam in rain or snow.
- If the road is slippery, begin braking earlier than normal.
- Keep the inside windows clear and dry to improve visibility.
- Remember overpasses may freeze sooner than surface roads.

Always keep your eyes on the road to identify hazards as soon as possible. Driving in inclement weather requires extra skill and attention.



Source: Wausau Insurance Companies

January is Radon Action Month

Radon is an odorless, radioactive gas that seeps into your home from underground. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer. Test kits are available from the County Health Department (\$8-short term test kit; \$20-long term test kit).

For more information on radon, see www.lowradon.org or contact the County Health Department, 929-3085.

----- Cut on line and return inter-office mail marked "Safety Suggestion Box" or give to a Safety Committee Member -----

Safety Suggestion

Date: _____

Please share any safety concern or suggestion:

Name (optional) _____

Four Steps to Setting Up Your Computer Workstation

STEP 1: Your Chair

- Push your hips as far back as they can go in the chair.
- Adjust the seat height so your feet are flat on the floor and your knees equal to your hips.
- Adjust the back of the chair to a 100°-110° reclined angle. Make sure your upper and lower back are supported.
- Adjust the armrests so that your shoulders are relaxed.



STEP 2: Your Keyboard

An articulating keyboard tray can provide optimal positioning of input devices.

- Pull up close to your keyboard.
- Position the keyboard directly in front of your body.
- Adjust the keyboard height so that your shoulders are relaxed, your elbows are in a slightly open position and your wrists and hands are straight.
- The tilt of your keyboard is dependent upon your sitting position. If you are reclined, a slight positive tilt will help maintain a straight wrist position.
- Wrist rests can help to maintain neutral postures and pad hard surfaces.
- Remember to use a footrest if your feet dangle.

STEP 3: Monitor, Document, and Telephone

- Incorrect positioning of the screen and source documents can result in awkward postures. Adjust the monitor and source documents so that your neck is in a neutral and relaxed position.
- Center the monitor directly in front of you above your keyboard.
- Position the top of the monitor 2-3" above seated eye level.
- Sit at least an arm's length away from the screen.
- Reduce glare by careful positioning of the screen.
- Position source documents directly in front of you, between the monitor and the keyboard, using an in-line copy stand.
- Place your telephone within easy reach.
- Use headsets and speaker phone to eliminate cradling the handset.

STEP 4: Pauses and Breaks

Once you have correctly set up your computer workstation, use good work habits. No matter how perfect the environment, prolonged, static postures will inhibit blood circulation and take a toll on your body.

- Take short 1-2 minute stretch breaks every 20-30 minutes.
- Avoid eye fatigue by resting and refocusing your eyes periodically.
- Rest your eyes by covering them with your palms for 10-15 seconds.
- Use correct posture when working. Keep moving as much as possible.

Winners Announced

Winners from the safety traveling board drawings for Emergency Preparedness Kits which contained a Shovel, Hand Warmers, Kitty Litter, Blanket and Food in a Storage Bin are as followed:

John Hoffman – Highway
Linda Gabrielson – Govt Center
Mary Neuman – DSS
Deb McLain – HCC/DCP

Self-Defense/Personal Safety Training

Self-Defense/Personal Safety Training was held in twice in October and we had over 25 employees attended. We had several requests to consider a Parent/Child class (child needs to be at least 5' tall & weigh at least 100 lbs). If you are interested in this type of class please call or email Mike Marx at 929-3134.

A special thanks to Sgt. Paul Rottscholl for donating his time and expertise in providing this training for us

Fond du Lac County Safety Committee Members

Linda Chandler, Purchasing/Risk Manager – 929-3143	Kay Lock, Health Dept. – 929-3311
Ken Fischer, Land & Water Conservation – 923-3033	Michael Marx, Human Resources – 929-3132
Chris Frederick, Health Care Center – 907-5631	Deb Neubauer, District Attorney's Office – 929- 3049
Linda Holschbach, Dept. of Social Services – 929-3413	Sam Tobias, Planning – 929-3135
Diane Immel, Clerk of Courts – 929-3071	Dean Will, Sheriff's Office – 929-7604
Ann Kaiser, UW-Extension – 929-3170	Tony Zelhofer, Emergency Management – 906-4705
David Brandenburg, Golf Course 929-2926	Kathy Thurow, CMO – 906-5111