

Safety Notes

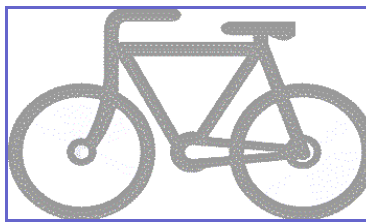
General Safety Issue

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Celebrate Bicycle Awareness Month

The Mesilla Valley Bicycle Coalition in cooperation with many local civic organizations are promoting National Bicycle Awareness Month, May 2004. You can play an active role in celebrating by riding a bike to work, at NMSU, or by participating in one of the planned activities.



Celebrate Bicycle Awareness Month

Activities include a community bike ride on Saturday May 8 at Apodaca Park (Solano at Madrid) with registration starting at 8 am. There will also be a children bike safety rodeo, a children bike ride, a health fair, demonstrations of the bus bike rack, free food and tee shirts, as well as music via a radio remote. A flyer and additional information is posted on the NMSU EH&S Safety website at <http://www.NMSU.edu/~safety> (see News section).

TRAINING CLASSES

Employee & HazCom Class
May 03 & 17 at 1:30-4 pm
June 07 & 21 at 1:30-4 pm

Defensive Driving Classes
May 24/26 at 9-11 am
June 15/17 at 2-4 pm

Forklift Training Classes
May 18 at 8:30 am-12:30 pm

Ladder Safety Classes
May 19 at 9-11 am

Confined Space Classes
June 18 at 9-11 am

Bloodborne Pathogens
May 25 at 9-11 am
June 09 at 9-11 am

HazWst Mgmt Classes
May 26 at 1:30-4:30 pm
June 29 at 1:30-4:30 pm

Respirator, Radiation, Lab Standard & CPR classes are also scheduled

Please register via EH&S web at <http://www.nmsu.edu/~safety>

Fitness Equals Health

Exercise is a key factor in staying healthy and reduces the risk of injury and disease especially as we get older. Strains and sprains made up over 60% of NMSU's work-related injuries last year.



Fitness Exercises

Research shows that improved personal health leads to better job performance, enhanced work satisfaction and reduced health care/insurance costs. In a world where health care costs are increasing annually, implementation of programs that yield a reduction in these costs are a financial necessity. Fitness benefits both employee and employer so take advantage of fitness/exercise classes available through Employee Health (call 646-6600), Physical Education, and Intramurals (call 646-2907).

Pedestrian Safety: Statewide & Campus Concern

New Mexico has the highest pedestrian fatality rate in the country (6.6 per 100,000), nearly twice the national average. Nationwide it's estimated that 5,000 pedestrians are killed and 85,000 are injured each year. According to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration over that last decade, more than 63,000 persons died and over a million were injured in pedestrian/vehicle accidents. Experts indicate that the collisions are due to unsafe behavior by both pedestrians and drivers. Poor visibility (6:00 pm to midnight) is a major contributor as 8 of 10 drivers who hit persons in this time period didn't see them. In the last five years, six pedestrian accidents have occurred on campus on Stewart,

Be Safe. Be Smart. Be Seen.
Make Sure Drivers Can See You.

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Espina, Paine and Wells. While not under NMSU control, University Avenue is also an area of concern for pedestrians.

To minimize pedestrian hazards, NMSU has

- Added new stop signs on Espina at the Horseshoe & near DABCC
- Improved the night area lighting at Activity Center crossing
- Added rumble strips on Stewart Ave
- Placed vertical crosswalk markers on Stewart and
- Asked the City of Las Cruces to install pedestrian safety islands on University Avenue

Additional information on Pedestrian Safety is posted on the NMSU EH&S Safety website at <http://www.NMSU.edu/~safety> (see news)

Caution Radioactive Materials

Uranium and thorium are naturally occurring radioactive materials which have a wide variety of uses at the university.

Uranium nitrate is used as a photographic toner. Uranium and thorium acetate are used in analytical chemistry and *in-vitro* tracer studies. Uranium is used in the ceramic industry for glazes, enamels, fluorescent glass and paint pigments.



Uranium and thorium compounds can be obtained from chemical suppliers under a general license for small quantities of radioactive source material, however, the chemical and radiological toxicities of these compounds are significant. The risks associated with exposure are very high if the suspended dusts or aerosols are inhaled. To safely handle and dispose of these materials at NMSU, please check with EH&S for training.

All uranium or thorium waste must be disposed of as radioactive waste. These include uranyl or thorium acetate, uranyl nitrate, uranyl formate, uranium oxide, thorium nitrate and thorium oxide. Even though these compounds are easy to obtain, they're not easy to dispose and are very expensive. Call EH&S for disposal of any unneeded materials and before you order these types of compounds.

If you have a concern or question about a University-related environmental health or safety matter, call or email. Under the NMSU EH&S Policy, your supervisor is the first contact for your work area, but you are welcome to call on unresolved problems. You can remain anonymous.

Respiratory Protection Reminder

Most of us are familiar with fire department emergency personnel dressed in protective suits. These suits include air tanks worn on the back, attached by hoses to a mask. However, emergency responders



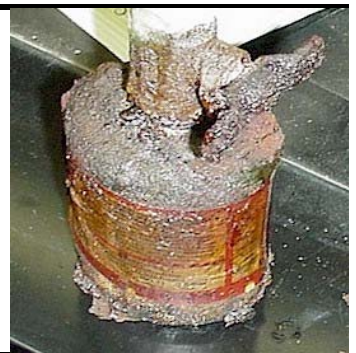
are not the only NMSU workers who wear respirators as a part of their work. Depending on what they expect to be exposed to, research and support staff also use respiratory protection in their work.

EH&S staff provide training in use of respiratory protection, and also do fit-testing of either a full or half-face respirator as a part of the training. When done, users are then legally qualified to wear those respirators. However, by federal law this qualification is valid for only one year. If you routinely use respirators and are beyond the annual limit (check your issued qualification card), sign up for the next class on the EH&S website at <http://www.nmsu.edu/~safety> for training schedules.

Bad Cylinder

a safety hazard

If you have a similar container please call or email EH&S (646-3327) for removal/disposal.



Safety Inspections of Agriculture and Engineering Buildings

EH&S has recently completed annual safety inspections of over 123 labs and 154 classroom and office areas in Gerald Thomas Hall, Knox Hall, Jett Hall, and the Engineering Complex Buildings. EH&S inspectors found a number of safety concerns and submitted over 150 work orders for upgrades and corrections totaling over \$15,000. Department heads will receive a report with specific items that require departmental action. The most common departmental actions include:

- improving employee safety training rate (see training on safety website),
- improving proper signage including emergency contact information,
- maintaining an NMSU HazCom chemical inventory (see Inventory on safety website),
- maintaining safety equipment (extinguishers, eyewashes, showers, hoods, etc),
- improving electrical safety (removing daisy chains, extension & damaged cords).

Additional information on electrical safety, safety equipment, and similar topics as well as a sample safety audit checklist is provided on the EH&S website.



NOTE

All new full time employees are required to attend the Employee & HazCom Class.

All employees (full or part time) that work in a lab or deal with chemicals must attend EH&S training.

Class times and registration are available via the safety web site

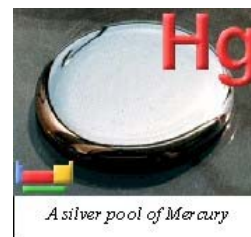
Mercury Program Continues

In continued effort to comply with Las Cruces wastewater requirements, the NMSU Mercury Phase-out program has been implemented. It included the following components:

- all non-essential mercury containing apparatus and compounds are to be removed for disposal
 - any remaining mercury, or mercury-containing compounds, be identified and reported to EH&S (via the web inventory system on the EH&S safety website).
 - encourage the safe-guarding of all essential mercury devices
 - increased testing of wastewater for mercury and replacement of laboratory sink traps (\$62,000 costs to date - still ongoing).
 - inspection of all area for compliance to the mercury remediation plan.
- Please see additional details on the EH&S website (under News).

Mercury Spill

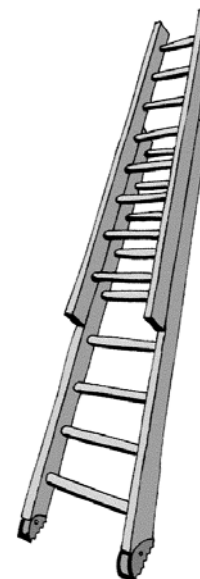
In the event of a mercury spill, do not attempt to clean it up yourself. Keep everyone from immediate spill area and call EH&S (646-3327).



Ladders: Watch your step

Every year many people are injured in falls related to damaged or improperly used ladders and scaffolding. In 2001, there were 810 occupational fatalities nationwide resulting from falls; 123 of these were falls from a ladder (Bureau of Labor Statistics). In comparison, the total occupational fatalities from exposure to hazardous environments (chemical exposure, electrocutions, suffocations, drowning or extreme temperatures, etc) was 499 nationwide (see more labor statistics on EH&S safety website under news).

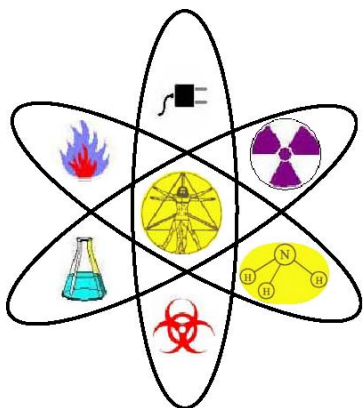
If you use a ladder only occasionally, chances are it's a stepladder. However accidents happen as easily with them as with other types of ladders and scaffolding. The most common type of accidents occurred when the ladder tipped sideways which are typically caused by reaching too far to the side. Other causes included incorrect foot placement, slipping/tripping, damaged/defective ladders, and failure to properly open or secure the ladder.



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Environmental Health & Safety

Location: Academic Research C Room 109
Phone: 505-646-3327/ Fax: 505-646-7898
Safety web www.NMSU.edu/~safety
Newsletter editor: David Shearer



CONTACTS

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Cardinal Rule for Waste Management

"YOU ARE LIABLE FOR ANY DAMAGE CAUSED BY ANY WASTE YOU GENERATE FOREVER"

Always stop and think before pouring any chemicals or hazardous materials down the drain or placing them in the regular trash. Ask yourself one simple question, "Could this cause harm to people or the environment?" If you have any doubts about whether or not your waste is hazardous, simply collect it and call Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) at 646-3327 to get further clarification. Place the burden of proof on us! All standard disposal costs are also paid by EH&S.



Compressed Gas Cylinder Safety

Compressed gases present a number of hazards separate from the chemical properties of the gas. The cylinder can explode if improperly handled. Gases such as Acetylene & Hydrogen present flammable hazards. Some gases reactive explosively on contact with air (pyrophorics). Safety guidelines vary depending upon the gas type, the cylinder size, the use, and other factors. Basic guidelines require cylinder restrains, separation by gas, and use of caps. Details and additional safety guidelines are given on the safety website at <http://www.nmsu.edu/~safety/programs-link.htm> and in the NMSU lab safety guide. If you have additional questions please call EH&S at 646-3327.

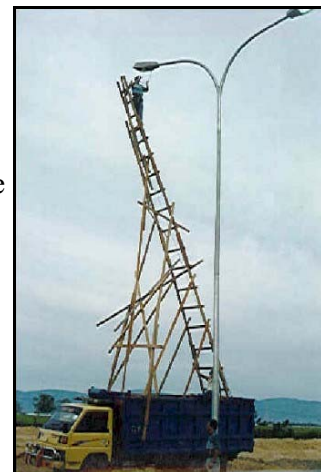


Unsecured & uncapped cylinders safety hazards

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Ladder Safety Tips - Here are some ladder safety tips

- **SELECT** - Select the appropriate ladder for the job. Use only a nonconductive, insulated (not metal) ladder when working around exposed energized electrical equipment. It should be long enough to avoid over reaching. If climbing to the top of a building the extension ladder needs be long enough to extend at least 3 ft above the building.
- **INSPECT** - Inspect the ladder before use to ensure all parts are solid and secure. For a stepladder also ensure the spreader locks into place and the ladder doesn't twist or distort. Keep it free of oil, grease and other slipping hazards. If a ladder becomes defective, remove it from service immediately so that it can be repaired or destroyed. Do not modify the ladder or load it beyond the manufacturer's rated capacity (no homemade ladders - see photo).
- **PLACE** - Place the ladder on a stable, level surface unless secured to prevent accidental movement. Do not use on slippery surfaces unless secured or equipped with slip-resistant feet to prevent movement (check before use). For stepladders, make sure the legs are fully open and lock into place before use. Do not use it as a straight ladder. If the ladder is used in a busy area, ensure the bypass route is adequate to prevent collisions. If not, secure it or use a barricade to keep traffic or activity away. Keep areas around the top and bottom clear. Extension ladders above roof are to be tied off at top.
- **CLIMB** - Face the ladder when moving up or down. Do not carry loads that could cause loss of balance and use at least one hand to grasp the ladder when climbing. Never climb onto the top two rungs of any ladder. If you need to climb higher, get a longer ladder. Do not reach out too far from the ladder (your belt buckle should not extend beyond the side of the ladder). If you must reach away from the ladder to work, climb down and move the ladder.



*A homemade safety hazard (not NMSU)
If you are using a homemade ladder please call EH&S*

Used correctly, ladders can help you work safely. In fact, a readily accessible small stepladder can prevent you from being tempted to stand on a makeshift platform such as a desk, chair, box, vehicle or work bench. Remember, use these safety guides and some common sense, you will be safer and healthier.