



TDCJ Risk Management's Training Circular

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APRIL

SPRING IS IN THE AIR



April Showers bring May Flowers

The temperature is rising and your winter clothes are slowly working their way closer to the back of your closet with each passing week. The flowerbeds in front of the Units are starting to show signs of color and the pollen count is off the charts! Cliché as it is, *Spring is in the air.*

This is also a time of year in which employee and offender injury numbers typically begin a slow climb that doesn't plateau until the end of Summer. There are almost as many theories as there are injuries for the cause of this phenomenon, but this month we will look at some of the more common injuries and ways to prevent them.

Indoor Injuries

Up to now, the focus has

been on injury statistics relating to outdoor activities. Indoor injury trends also show increased activity during the spring and summer months. Slips, trips, and falls are always a concern, but more so in the Spring. Some of these may be attributed to 'April showers' creating slip hazards. Some buildings sweat. Actually, it is condensation. Units with smooth concrete floors and ventilation systems that draw in humid ambient air are most susceptible to this condition. We will forgo the full physics lesson, but here is what basically happens. The concrete in the building cools in the evening and overnight periods. The air inside of the buildings is saturated with humidity (*not so much if you're in far North or West Texas!*). Wet floors should be mopped and dried immediately. Appropriate signs should always be

used to alert staff and offenders of potential slip hazards. Slips, trips, and falls often occur in office envi-



ronments. Contributing factors for these injuries range from faulty furniture to wet floors.

Outdoor Injuries

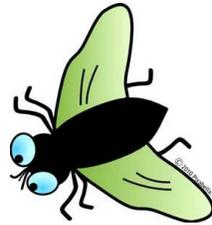
Risk Management statistics historically reflect across-the-board increases for occupational injuries from March through August. It is logical to see an increase in the number of injuries occurring while performing work outdoors simply because staff is now able to recommence outdoor work activities. This is all the more reason

to spend additional time on safety training for 'outdoor jobs.' Supervisors should review the training material for their workers to ensure that it is still applicable and encompasses all areas of their responsibility. If new equipment has been acquired, or if there have been changes in standard operating procedures, then supervisors should modify their safety training to reflect the changes. Equipment used to accomplish 'outdoor work' such as lawnmowers, weed eaters, and utility vehicles should be closely inspected. Special attention should be given to verify the safety devices on the equipment have not been compromised or removed. Ensure that all machine guarding is in place and securely fastened. Any equipment found to be defective or not having all safety devices intact should be removed from service immediately until the condition can be corrected. If the unsafe condition cannot be corrected, the equipment should be permanently removed from service. Every employee is responsible for identifying and reporting facility deficiencies, especially hazards which pose a threat to the safety, security, and well being of TDCJ staff, offend-

ers, or visitors (AD-10.20)

It's a Jungle Out There!

People are not the only living things that are becoming more active outdoors!



Insect bites become more prevalent as the types of reported 'Spring' injuries. Resumed agricultural activity in many areas may force animals and insects, whom have called the greenbelts home all winter long, to migrate from these areas to the Unit. Bee stings are one of the most commonly reported injuries involving insects. According to the stats, staff and offenders working outdoors are the most likely to receive bee stings. Refraining from wearing strong colognes or perfumes will significantly reduce your chances of being mistaken

as flora by a stray bee. In the event you are stung, attempt to remove the stinger immediately. This will not make the pain go away, but it will limit the amount of venom entering your body. Reducing the amount of



venom lessens the severity of the sting and the longevity of the symptoms. Spider bites al-



so become quite common as the mercury rises. The majority of reported spider bites occur during activities that involve searches of some type. Staff need to be particularly aware of this when performing offender housing shakedowns or when working in low traffic areas such as pipe chases and crawl spaces. Most units and facilities have eradication programs in which exterminators routinely spray for insects. Also, remember, some of the attractants are inherent and cannot be eliminated such as food preparation and storage areas. Offenders may also keep commissary items in their housing which also entices the insects. "Putrescible Waste" is organic waste such as garbage, wastewater, treatment plant sludge, and grease trap waste that is capable of being decomposed by microorganisms with sufficient rapidity to cause odors or gases, or is capable of providing food for, or attracting birds, animals, and disease vectors. (AD-10.21)

Spring Cleaning

When you are 'Spring-cleaning' your offices, pay particular attention to where and how the telephone and communication cables are placed. Configure them in a manner where they do not present a trip hazard. Also, check surge protectors and power strips. No piggy-backing is allowed! That is, do not plug one power strip into another in order to gain more outlets. A multi-outlet strip does not provide more power to a location, just more accessibility. The more common power strips have 6 receptacles. This doesn't mean they can power any 6 devices of your choice. Check with the Maintenance department to see if the power strips are being safely utilized.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Most equipment operation requires some degree of PPE for the user. Outdoor equipment may present several hazards that warrants the operator wearing multiple types of PPE. The operator may need hand, foot, eye, hearing, and limb protection depending on the present or anticipated hazards. In accordance with risk management procedure, it is the supervisor's

responsibility to ensure that appropriate PPE is available, used and maintained in a sanitary and reliable condition (*Risk Management Program Manual RM-42*). PPE should be kept in good repair and replaced whenever its effectiveness is questionable. For instance, a pair of goggles or safety glasses that have severely scratched lenses may still provide adequate eye protection from flying objects, but the scratched lenses impair the vision of the wearer.

Finally, take some time this Spring to get outside and take in the scenery. Studies indicate that ultraviolet rays (UV), at moderate exposure levels, are good for you! UV rays cause the human body to produce vitamin D, which helps the body regulate calcium levels and strengthens the musculoskeletal system. *And you thought only milk did the body good!*

May is just around the corner, let's start getting ready for this hot Texas weather!

REFERENCES:

- *TDCJ, AD-10.20, Identifying and Reporting*

Facility Maintenance Requirements

- *Risk Management Program Manual RM-42*
- *TDCJ, AD-10.21, Identifying and Reporting Facility Maintenance Requirements*
- *TDCJ, AD-10.21, Management of Outside Storage Areas for Non-putrescible Recyclable Materials*

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