Summer Safety

National Safety Month, Week 5

Here are this year’s National Safety Month themes:

Week 1 (6/1 to 6/6): Prescription Drug Overdose Prevention
Week 2 (6/7 to 6/13): Teen Driving Safety
Week 3 (6/14 to 6/20): Preventing Overexertion at Work & at Home
Week 4 (6/21 to 6/27): Dangers of Cell Phone Use While Driving
Week 5 (6/28 to 6/30): Summer Safety

Visit www.nsc.org for more on these themes. Since Week 5 only gets 2 days, let’s focus on Summer Safety now. One hazard of summer weather is lightning, which has been the #2 weather killer in the United States over the past 30 years. In fact, lightning kills more people than hurricanes and tornadoes combined.

Understand that no place OUTSIDE is safe during a thunderstorm. Being caught outside with no safe shelter is a severe emergency. Follow these suggestions, which won’t protect you but may improve your odds:

 Do not seek shelter under tall, isolated trees.
 Do not seek shelter under partially enclosed buildings or in tents.
 Stay away from metal objects, such as fences, poles, or golf clubs.
 Stay away from water.
 Find the lowest spot around and crouch down.

The SAFEST location is a fully enclosed building with wiring and plumbing. Unsafe buildings include picnic or beach shelters, large outdoor tents, or other buildings that do not have electricity or plumbing.

The second safest location is a hard-topped car, SUV, bus, or other hard-topped vehicle. Do not seek shelter in a soft-topped convertible. Close all the windows and doors and do not touch any metal surfaces.

If someone is struck by lightning, call 911 or your local emergency number to get immediate medical care. You are in no danger of an electrical charge if you touch a lightning victim or administer CPR.

Check out the sidebar for tips on how to be prepared and to “Beat the Odds” of a lightning strike. Then take the “Lightning Quiz” on page 2.
Preventing Overexertion

National Safety Month, Week 3

Surely no one deliberately intends to undergo the pain and harm of overexertion, but it happens just the same. Consider the homeowner determined to shovel a long driveway covered with 2 feet of snow without taking a break, or the vigorous exerciser, at home or in the gym, who insists on performing just a dozen more sit-ups or toe-touches.

Men and women at work may also court the harm of overexertion through competitiveness, cutting corners, hurrying, ignoring aches or fatigue, and unwillingness to seek help when the task is too difficult for one person to handle. In each of these scenarios, “giving it one’s all” may, alas, be just that!

How can that be prevented?

 Know and follow job safety procedures.
 Don’t take shortcuts that might save some time but cause overexertion, e.g., moving a huge load by yourself or without material-handling aids.
 Take regularly scheduled breaks, including meal breaks.
 Recognize the signals of overexertion, such as pain and fatigue.
When in doubt, get help. That’s not a sign of weakness; it shows you’ve got smarts.

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) is an illness that results in severe and debilitating exhaustion. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), other symptoms include:

 Impaired memory or concentration
 Extreme, prolonged exhaustion following physical or mental activity
 Unrefreshing sleep
 Muscle pain
 Multijoint pain
 Headaches of a new type
 Sore throat
 Tender lymph nodes

The CDC states that CFS “results in a substantial reduction in occupational (work-related), personal, social or educational activities.” [emphasis added]

What steps can you take to manage CFS on the job?

1. Work with your doctor on a treatment plan that alleviates your CFS symptoms.
2. Talk with your supervisor about possible alternate ways to get the job done.
3. Pace yourself. CFS patients cannot endure regular cardiovascular exercise routines but must still remain active at moderate levels.
4. Join a CFS support group. Check with your health provider or visit www.cdc.gov/cfs for local groups and more information.

Lightning Quiz

Know how to stay safe

Circle T for “True” or F for “False.”

1. No place OUTSIDE is safe during a thunderstorm. T F
2. Hurricanes kill more people each year than lightning. T F
3. If the time between when you see lightning and hear thunder is 30 seconds or less, you are close enough to be struck. T F
4. Once the sun comes out again, the danger is over. T F
5. Enclosed buildings are the safest spot because of plumbing and wiring. T F
6. The second safest spot is a building like a picnic shelter or a tent. T F
7. The third safest spot is a hard-topped vehicle. T F
8. Do not seek shelter under tall, isolated trees. T F
9. Stay away from metal objects, such as fences, poles, or golf clubs. T F
10. If someone is struck by lightning, call 911. T F

ANSWERS

1. T. Lightning has been the #2 weather killer in the United States over the past 30 years. 2. T. Seek shelter immediately. 3. F. Wait at least 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder before leaving shelter. 4. T. Building's roof provides shielding for those inside. 5. T. The second safest spot is a building like a picnic shelter or a tent. 6. F. Buildings like picnic shelters or tents are unsafe because they do not have electricity or plumbing. 7. T. The second safest spot is a building like a picnic shelter or a tent. 8. F. Buildings like picnic shelters or tents are unsafe because they do not have electricity or plumbing.