



The Net

From The Editor

Smoke alarms are life-saving devices that provide benefits for occupants. They detect smoke well before any sleeping occupant would and provide critical seconds to implement actions to save life and property. Smoke alarms are designed to detect fire smoke and emit a loud and distinctive sound to alert occupants of potential danger.

Smoke alarms have been mandatory in all dwellings in Victoria and South Australia since 1999, with 96% and 85-90% of dwellings respectively in those two states now having smoke alarms. Evidence from the USA, where smoke alarms have been in wide use for 20 years, shows a reduction in house fire deaths of more than 50% in those homes where working smoke alarms are installed. The data available in Australia supports the USA figures.

All of your smoke alarms should be tested at least every month to ensure that the battery and the

alarm sounder are working. Every six months you should clean your smoke alarm with your vacuum cleaner. This will remove any particles that will hinder smoke alarm performance. If you are using a 9V lead battery you should consider changing it twice a year.

If your smoke alarm has a removable alkaline battery, you should replace the battery once a year. If your smoke alarm uses a lithium battery it will not need replacing annually as the battery is inbuilt into the alarm and the entire unit will need replacing every ten years.

Replace your smoke

alarm with a new unit every ten years. Smoke alarms do not last forever and should be removed, replaced and disposed of every ten years. The service life date, which is the date your smoke alarm will no longer work properly, should be indicated clearly on the base of each smoke alarm.

Photo-electric smoke alarms in any quantity may be disposed of in domestic waste

Ed.



Special Interest:

- Man crushed to death at Melbourne building site
- Brigade to investigate why workers not told about asbestos
- Gadgets threaten air safety: report
- Suit over soldier heat death
- Failed 'lock out' procedure led to lion mauling
- China moves to curb mining deaths

Newsletter Contents:

Ed's Letter	1
Special Interest	2-4
Contact Info	5

Breaking News!!!
C-Net Applies for GTC Accreditation



Man crushed to death at Melbourne building site

MELBOURNE, March 8 AAP - A man has been crushed to death by a concrete slab on a Melbourne building site. The man, aged in his 50s, was at a building site at outer south-eastern Pakenham when the accident occurred, said Liana Cross from the Metropolitan Ambulance Service.

He was working at the site when the concrete fell on him about 10.50am (AEDT), she said. "Three of his other workmates managed to get out of the way. They are understandably shaken, but otherwise okay," Ms Cross said.

The man died at the scene. Michael Birt from WorkSafe said the building industry should ensure their practices were safe. "I call on the building industry across the board to review their practices in the wake of this tragedy," he said. "These are the clarion calls for Victorian workplaces to look at health and safety because when these things go wrong, they often go tragically wrong."

He said WorkSafe investigators were at the scene. "They will look to see if there are any breaches of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and to see where it goes from here," he said.

The last death in Victoria's construction industry occurred in January last year, a record period without a fatality.

27th January 2006

CCH OHS News Headlines, www.cch.com.au

Brigade to investigate why workers not told about asbestos

SYDNEY, March 8 AAP - The NSW Fire Brigade is examining why it took at least six months for emergency workers to be told of asbestos exposure during anti-terrorist exercises at a Sydney army barracks.

Defence personnel, fire officers, nurses, ambulance staff and other emergency workers were told last week they may have contracted life-threatening illnesses during training at Holsworthy Army Barracks.

The demolition site was found to contain lethal levels of asbestos in huge piles of rubble used to resemble collapsed city buildings.

NSW Fire Brigade chief Commissioner Greg Mullins today denied media reports the organisation had known about the asbestos threat for more than a year.

"We first became aware of the possibility of asbestos in September last year," Mr Mullins told ABC radio.

Following the discovery, he said the site was no longer used to conduct exercises.

Asked why it took at least six months for the revelations to come to light, Mr Mullins said: "That's what we are investigating now, and we have sought the assistance of Work Cover."

He said an inquiry was also underway into why there were no checks conducted for asbestos when NSW took control of the site in 2004.

"That's what we are trying to ascertain and I just don't know the facts, and I don't think anybody knows the facts at the moment," he said.

Mr Mullins said media

reports that emergency workers had been told they were going to die from the disease were irresponsible.

"The scientific assessment in fact says that there is a low level of risk of illness," he said.

But Unions NSW secretary John Robertson said there were no safe levels of exposure.

"One asbestos fibre can cause mesothelioma, you only need to inhale one fibre and then it takes hold in your lungs and you've got those sorts of diseases," he told ABC radio.

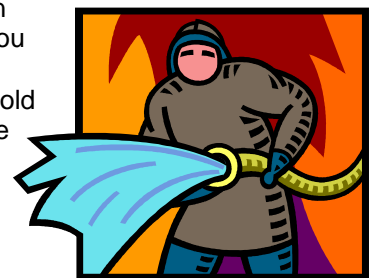
Mr Robertson said police had also used the site, along with SES volunteers who lay in the rubble pretending to be victims, drama students and journalists.

"It is quite alarming for those people to find out

that they may well have been exposed."

Darryl Snow, president of the NSW Fire Brigade Employees Union, said the government should consider providing a counselling service.

A Defence spokesman said the department was trying to identify soldiers who used the site.



30th January 2006

CCH

OHS News Headlines,
www.cch.com.au



Gadgets threaten air safety: report

Flipping open a laptop or gaming device to wile away the time on a long-haul flight might not be such a smart idea after all.

A study conducted by Carnegie Mellon University in the US reveals that it is not only mobile phone signals that interfere with sensitive electronics equipment on aircraft when a flight is underway.

The University said that portable electronic devices like laptops and game-playing devices can also threaten aircraft safety and it has called for their use to be restricted.

Although there are no documented cases of an aircraft crashing as a result of electronic gadgets used by passengers, the researchers believe their study reveal safety issues

"We feel that passenger use of portable electronic devices on aircraft should continue to be limited for the safety of all concerned," said Granger Morgan, head of the department of engineering and public policy at the University.

To conduct the study, the researchers made numerous journeys on commercial flights across the US monitoring radio emissions from passengers using mobile phones and other electronic devices.

"We found that the risk posed by these portable devices is higher than previously believed," said Bill Strauss, an expert in aircraft electromagnetic compatibility who recently completed his PhD at Carnegie Mellon.

"These devices can disrupt normal operation of key cockpit instruments, especially Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers, which are increasingly vital for safe landings," he said.

Their research found that one to four mobile phone calls were typically made during a commercial flight in the northeast of United States, some of which took place during critical flight stages such as climb-out, or on final approach.

While mobile phone use is banned on aircraft, the use of gaming devices and laptops are generally allowed once the aircraft has reached a certain altitude following take-off. However the Federal Communications Commission is currently reviewing whether or not

to allow passengers to use mobile phones on aircraft.

"While we looked primarily at wireless phones, we also discovered that emissions from other portable electronic devices were problematic," said Mr Morgan.

Based on their findings, the researchers are recommending that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the FAA begin coordinating electronic emission standards.

A full report on the Carnegie Mellon study will appear in the March issue of IEEE Spectrum.

2nd March 2006

By Louisa Hearn

<http://www.theage.com.au/>

Suit over soldier heat death

THE Australian Defence Force is being sued after a soldier died while training in extreme heat in the Northern Territory.

Federal workers compensation agency Comcare has launched legal action in the Federal Court, claiming the ADF breached occupational health and safety laws by conducting the training. Comcare wants the court to impose an undisclosed "pecuniary penalty" on the ADF.

Trooper Angus Lawrence, 25, was completing a course, for promotion to corporal, in scorching heat and humidity at Mt Bunday, near Kakadu National Park, when he died of

acute heat stress on November 10, 2004.

An inquest heard he was one of 67 Darwin-based soldiers required to dig pits and conduct patrols with little shade, sleep or relief from the 36C heat.

Thirteen other soldiers presented with heat-related sickness on the day trooper Lawrence died.

Advertisement:
At the inquest in Darwin last year the army apologised to trooper Lawrence's family and acknowledged his death was preventable.

It said it had made significant improvements

to the prevention of heat-related illness during training since trooper Lawrence's death.

Comcare is seeking a declaration from the Federal Court that the ADF contravened the Occupational Health and Safety Act at the Mt Bunday Training Area in November 2004, documents filed with the Federal Court show.

It alleges the ADF conducted the training course in "extreme and dangerous climatic conditions", failed to provide a safe working environment for the soldiers and provided inadequate monitoring of employee health and safety.

Comcare alleges that the ADF failed to provide sufficiently trained medical personnel or an adequately equipped ambulance.

The ADF also failed to respond to prior reports of heat illness by soldiers, did not have rest periods with adequate shade for soldiers, and failed to properly train its personnel about the dangers of heat-related illness.

The matter is listed for directions hearing in the Federal Court in Canberra on March 30.

16th February 2006

By Karen Michelmore

<http://www.news.com.au/>



Failed 'lock out' procedure led to lion mauling

Wellington Zoo Trust is improving its safety systems and procedures, after lions mauled a zookeeper last month.

The Department of Labour has completed its investigation into the 10 January incident. It's found the injured keeper was partly responsible for the incident, because he failed to follow safety procedures. The keeper was mauled by two lions after he failed to lock out the animals as he entered their enclosure. The zoo's safety policy stated that people entering the lions' enclosure needed to double-check the locks.

The Department found the keeper had mistakenly assumed an animal trainer, who had accompanied him into the enclosure to move the lions and then left, had locked a gate between the lions' den and the main enclosure the keeper was servicing. The lions pushed open the unlocked gate and mauled the man for about five minutes before they were distracted and he escaped.

Department chief advisor, health and safety Mike Cosman said the keeper was well aware of the requirement for the person entering the enclosure to check all locks at least twice. 'This man had worked at the zoo for 20 years and he was familiar with the safety procedures. On this one occasion he failed to check the locks, and suffered more than 20 puncture wounds and had to undergo skin grafts, as a result. 'The accepted practice was that the person entering the enclosure was responsible for checking the locks, not the person exiting. Had this been done the incident would not have happened.'

While the keeper was partially responsible for the incident, the zoo recognised relying almost entirely on the actions of the keeper was inadequate as a safety mechanism, Mr Cosman said. 'The zoo was aware that the gate between the main enclosure and the den could be opened if unlocked, but had believed that the 'lock out' procedure was sufficient. 'After this incident, the zoo immediately changed to its policy to improve workers' safety.'

The Department has agreed with three safety recommendations made by the Wellington Zoo Trust: that the gate between the den and the main enclosure be redesigned to make it more difficult for the lions to open; that it became more visibly obvious whether gates were locked; and staff retraining.

The Department will follow up with the zoo later this month to ensure the recommendations have been carried out. Mr Cosman said the zookeeper was recovering well at home, and was expected to return to work later this month. 'This incident should serve as a reminder to people in this industry that they are dealing with wild animals, with unpredictable behaviour, and that vigilance is a must at all times.'

NZ Department of Labour, <http://www.osh.dol.govt.nz/news/press/2006/PR060210.shtml>,
Media contact Dionne Barton, Tel: 04 915 4256 or 027 296 9680



The governor of China's biggest coal producing province has said he plans to slow expansion in the industry in a bid to curb the number of mining deaths.

Shanxi province governor Yu Youjun said limiting development would reduce the number of accidents and cut pollution.

The move comes despite power shortages across

China moves to curb mining deaths

China, caused largely by the demands of rapid industrial expansion.

China's coal industry has a poor safety record, with accidents claiming the lives of about 6,000 miners a year.

'Rough development'

The northern province of Shanxi was responsible for more than a quarter of all the coal produced in China last year.

But such intense production had come at a high cost, Mr Yu said.

"We cannot continue the rough way of development any more and must limit coal production strictly," he told the state-run China Daily newspaper.

Mr Yu said Shanxi province planned to keep annual coal production at about 700 million tons over the coming five years.

But he said the province would begin closing mines producing less than 90,000 tons of coal and push for greater efficiencies at other mines.

Coal is used to generate

more than two-thirds of China's electricity needs, but many mines across the country remain inefficient and poorly regulated.

China, which has been undergoing rapid economic growth, has reported failures to meet power demand since 2000.

It aims for its electricity capacity to rise by 50% by 2010.

BBC News

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/4782244.stm>





**"Would you happen to have a coathanger with you?
I think I left the keys in the ignition!"**

Spy Eye: C-Net News!!

C-Net welcomes Vikram Behal and Alla Krutikova to the Development and Support Team.

Following a corporate triathlon held in Melbourne last weekend, we've been inspired to enter next year! Stay tuned for updates on the team's training progress throughout the year (yes some have already started, on a beer and Pizza diet)

About C-Net

C-Net is an Australian owned company that specialises in SAP based OH&S Solutions. C-Net are the developers and distributors of "SafetyNet for SAP".

"SafetyNet for SAP" was developed for Australian & NZ companies who require an integrated, legislatively compliant and supported OH&S Solution to complement their integrated SAP infrastructure.



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