Holiday Cooking Safety Tips

Did you know that cooking is the leading cause of residential structure fires during the holidays? According to the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), nearly 4,300 fires in the United States occur each year in December. Environmental Health & Safety reminds the UCI community to help prevent cooking fires at home by following these safety tips:

- Never leave cooking unattended – remain in the kitchen area;
- Remove combustibles (oven mitts, wooden utensils, plastic bags, etc.) from the stovetop area;
- Avoid wearing loose-fitting or dangling sleeves while cooking;
- Introduce a "kid-free/pet-free zone" of about three feet around the stove area;
- Turn handles inwards to prevent pots and pans from accidentally being knocked over; and
- Keep cooking surfaces clean and free from grease buildup.


Wellness and Safety Monthly Tips for 2010:

- **January**: Give Back—Donate blood, marrow, money, or volunteer on campus.
- **February**: Know Your Numbers—Get screened for blood glucose, Blood Pressure, cholesterol, weight, Body Mass Index, waist measurement.
- **March**: Eat Smart—Check out campus dining and catering, cooking classes, weight management, "Fuel Up" and local farmers markets.
- **April**: Get Involved—"Green Up" and recycle everything from paper and plastic to your bike and e-waste.
- **May**: Exercise Your Mind—Reduce your stress, try biking to work.
- **June**: Stay Safe—Think about safety day and night, on and off campus.
- **July**: Let’s Get Fiscal—Start the fiscal year right, check out financial education opportunities on campus.
- **August**: Check It Out—Prevention is key, get your immunizations and yearly checkups.
- **September**: Be Prepared—Don’t wait, have a plan, get a flu shot, have a fire drill.
- **October**: Balance Life—UCI offers many ways to help balance work and home life.
- **November**: Stand Up To Cancer—Get screened, get help, get support at UCI.
- **December**: Have Healthy Holidays—Be safe and healthy this holiday season.

Website: [www.hr.uci.edu/wellnessandsafety](http://www.hr.uci.edu/wellnessandsafety) - Checkout the “Toolkit” for Additional Resources
EH&S recently recognized and rewarded the following people for engaging in activities and behavior that foster a safe work environment.

**ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUSINESS SERVICES**

**Facilities Management**

**Brad Barclay**

**Safe Act:** Reported an unsafe condition regarding the handicap ramp leading to a non-handicap curb & sidewalk at the Law School.

**Jerry Soto**

**Safe Act:** Provided back up information about the unsafe condition of the handicap ramp at the Law School during a safety meeting.

**Polo Barrera**

**Safe Act:** Volunteered to explain how to report a safety concern & near miss to his department.

**Facilities Management Cont’d**

**Tammy Kelleher**

**Safe Act:** Completed the on-line Hazard Assessment rapidly and voluntarily sent safety training records of Central Plant employees to EH&S.

**Kevin Donovan**

**Safe Act:** Promoted health & safety while working with asbestos.

**Jerry Nearhoof**

**Safe Act:** Made a significant & positive difference to the high voltage electrical safety program.

**SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES**

**Neurobiology & Behavior**

**Ashley Fricks**

**Safe Act:** Helped injured bicyclist while waiting for the paramedics to arrive.

**A “Kodak” Moment in New Digital Techniques for Film Processing**

UC Irvine disposes of about 1000 gallons per year of used fixer related to X-ray film development in research labs. This silver containing waste is handled by a silver reclamation company as hazardous waste. The majority of x-ray film on campus is used for imaging (Western blotting and similar procedures), so a procedure eliminating the need for the wet X-Ray process on campus could reduce the number of film processors to save significant disposal costs, water and energy.

A summary of such a process by Dr. Dana Aswad, a Professor in the Department of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry (MB&B), was recently accepted for publication in Analytical Biochemistry. The article describes successful replacement of traditional wet film processing with new digital techniques.

As a result of successful testing of this method by several labs in Molecular Biology & Biochemistry (MB&B) over the past months, the department is closing down 2 of the 3 wet film processors with an anticipated net savings of $40,000 from reduced X-ray waste disposal services over the next 5 years. Energy and water savings also compound the value of this improvement. Less time is used developing the film – another cost savings, and a reduced risk of exposure to workers to X-ray film processing chemicals rounds out the list of benefits.

Dr. Aswad’s abstract states: “We found that certain mid-range consumer level digital SLR cameras...outperform x-ray film in acquiring signals from immunoblots that use enhanced chemiluminescence for detection. These cameras exhibit a sensitivity comparable to x-ray film, yet provide a 3-fold increase in linear dynamic range and substantial cost saving over time, are more convenient to use, and eliminate the chemical waste associated with processing film.”

Reference: Acquisition of chemiluminescent signals from immunoblots with a digital single-lens reflex camera

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Mitri K. Khoury, Ian Parker, Dana W. Aswad
EH&S Recognizes Safety Champions in the Chemistry Department

In Fall 2009, EH&S began recognizing safety champions on campus. A safety champion is an individual who has the power to influence health and safety policies, procedures and practices, and who uses that influence to help create a culture of safety. Chemistry Professor Dr. Larry E. Overman was identified as a Safety Champion by EH&S for taking the lead in enhancing the safety culture in his labs, above and beyond the basic requirements.

Dr. Ryan Altman, a Safety on Site Representative (SR) for Dr. Overman’s labs, developed a comprehensive system for tracking, documenting, and implementing lab specific safety requirements. Additional Chemistry professors working with hazardous operations and toxic compounds on a regular basis have followed this “Best Practice” (Dr. Evans - SR Tom Mueller, Dr. Law - SR Sean Seefeld, Dr. Chamberlin - SR Steve Kennedy, and Dr. Vanderwal - SR Matt Dowling). These professors have set the highest standards for safety in their research labs while conducting critical research.

Each professor requires their researchers to sign agreements abiding by their safety and ethics rules and holds their researchers accountable for working safely in their labs. In addition, with help from their SRs, Professors Overman and Chamberlin have posted their hazard assessments, required SOPS and agreements on their websites for easy access.

Moving forward, EH&S will continue to identify the leaders among faculty and researchers who are making a difference in safety. Please feel free to contact Rebecca Lally (rrlally@uci.edu) or Sandra Huang Conrrad (sconrrad@uci.edu) if you would like to nominate someone.

Are all plastic numbers the same? Match them / Learn them!

A. Examples: Disposable soft drink and water bottles
B. Examples: Cloudy plastic water bottles, yogurt cups/tubs
C. Examples: Meat wrap, cooking oil bottles, plumbing pipes
D. Examples: Baby bottles, some reusable water bottles, stain-resistant food storage containers
E. Examples: Disposable coffee cups, clamshell take-out containers
F. Examples: Milk jugs, liquid detergent bottles, shampoo bottles
G. Examples: Cling wrap, grocery bags, sandwich bags

Polyethylene terephthalate (PET or PETE): It is usually clear and generally safe. However, because of its porous surface that allows bacteria and flavor to accumulate, it is best not to keep reusing them.

High density polyethylene (HDPE): This plastic is usually opaque and is considered safe and has low risk of leaching.

Polystyrene (PS): Styrofoam, from which disposable containers and packaging are made. This type of plastic leaches potentially toxic chemicals, especially when heated.

Polypropylene (PP): It is used to make wide-necked containers and considered safe. There is increased acceptance by curbside recycling programs.

Low density polyethylene (LDPE): This plastic is considered safe, but is not often accepted by curbside recycling programs.

Polyvinyl chloride (V or PVC): A tough plastic but not safe to cook food near it. There are phthalates in this material—softening chemicals that interfere with hormonal development.

Other (includes polycarbonate (PC), and polylactide (PLA) plastics made from renewable resources as well as newer plastics labeled “BPA-Free”): It’s a mixed bag, composed of plastics which were invented after 1987. Use this plastic at your own risk since you don’t know what could be in it.
TANGO to Safety 2009

Every fall brings the new year of classes, new students, and new opportunities. At EH&S, fall signals the start of TANGO to safety. TANGO stands for Teaching Assistants and New Graduate Student Orientation to Safety. For over a decade, EH&S has offered safety trainings for new incoming graduate students and teaching assistants who will work in Science and Engineering laboratories.

This past fall, almost 300 aspiring scientists completed a day of laboratory safety training. TANGO begins in the morning with two hours of orientation to laboratory safety basics using on-line training classes in TED (www.ted.uci.edu), followed by an afternoon of hands on demonstrations and participatory training in topics such as Fume Hoods, BioSafety Cabinets, Gas Cylinders, Spills and Fire Extinguishers. Participants get experience putting out a fire, chaining up a gas cylinder and replacing the regulator, and evaluating a chemical spill to know when to clean it up safely and when to call for help.

“The hands-on aspect of safety training has been effective in giving people key safety skills and provides an experiential foundation to encourage critical thinking toward evaluating hazard situations” says Marc Gomez, Interim Assistant Vice Chancellor, Facilities Management and Environmental Health and Safety at UC Irvine.

“I have had safety training in other institutions, where they were boring videos for hours, but this program was filled with practical demonstrations, and they were helpful” says a TANGO Participant from the School of Engineering.

“I recommend the program to all new graduates and students” says one TANGO Participant.

We are on the map & on the web!