

BITS & PIECES

Volume 4, Issue 3
August 2003

Health and Safety Training

By: David L. Dolanar, Deputy Executive Officer

Health and Safety Training will be the focus of the County Wellness and Safety Fair this year in October. The training will take place at various County locations to facilitate attendance and to allow employees to take required Title 8 classes and those which focus on the County's leading accident causation factors. *As previously stated, due to budget constraints, this year's event will not include the customary exhibitor hall, food, transportation and entertainment.* There will be

approximately 43 classes, which have been selected for training. These will fall into the categories of General, Wellness and Special Classes. Check the County Web site for a listing and description of all the classes. We will provide additional information on the October Health and Safety Training and registration in the upcoming months. So, mark your calendars now for **October 14, 15 and 16.**

Inside this issue:

Going-On-Line	2
Driver Authorization	2
It's a Real Stretch	2
Sun Protection	3
County Train is ready to Roll....	3
2004 Open Enrollment Schedule	4

Bacteria Lurking in the Workplace

By: David Becker, Safety Officer



An article in Business Week magazine entitled "Yuck" quoted results of a study conducted by Chuck Gerba, a professor of Microbiology at the University of Arizona. Professor Gerba's objective was to quantify how dirty offices are. His

test evaluated 7,000 samples from hundreds of workstations in New York, California, Arizona and Florida. Here are some of the surprising results revealed in the article:

- Telephone receivers contained an average of 25,000 bacteria per square inch.
- Desktops contained an average of 21,000 bacteria per square inch.

- Computer keyboards contained an average of 3,000 bacteria per square inch.
- The average office toilet seat contained an average of just 50 bacteria per square inch.
- Receptionist areas, where many people pause each day, tend to be the areas of the highest bacteria levels.

The solution lies in proper cleaning with a disinfectant. The remarkable low count for bacteria on the office toilet seat stems from the fact that toilet seats get cleaned regularly with a disinfectant cleaner, while work areas where employees eat and drink are seldom cleaned with anything beyond a damp towel.

Did you know?

- * A healthy attitude is contagious but don't wait to catch it from others. Be a carrier.
- * Women blink nearly twice as much as men.
- * An ostrich eye is bigger than its brain.
- * "Go," is the shortest complete sentence in the English language.

Going-On-Line

By: David L. Dolenar, Deputy Executive Officer

For thirteen quarters the CEO-Risk Management Division has published the Bits & Pieces Newsletter and distributed it with the bi-weekly payroll. We are proud to announce that Bits & Pieces will now go on-line commencing with this publication. We will be printing a few copies to be distributed to Department Heads and payroll clerks so they can post them in strategic locations or make copies for their staff. We will also have a few copies available at the Risk Management Division counter for our customers.



We will continue publishing Bits and Pieces quarterly, (February, May, August, and November) usually on the first pay period of the month. Payroll/HR clerks will be notified when each issue is available on-line. We would appreciate your feedback on how this process improvement and budget reduction strategy works for you. Thank you for your continued readership and positive comments over the past three years.

DRIVER AUTHORIZATION PROCESS SURVEY RESULTS

By: Diane Pearson, Administrative Assistant

Comments and feedback received from a random customer survey indicated that valuable time was wasted tracking driver license information on County department's driver(s). This involved numerous GroupWise messages, telephone calls, and faxing information between the CEO-Risk Management Division and the department's contact person responsible for maintaining the driver authorizations.

Based on the survey, the CEO-Risk Management Division has improved the County's Drivers' Authorization Process by eliminating the "renewal" portion. Elimination of this step will streamline the process by saving valuable work hours required by the department's Contact Person who processes driver authorizations for drivers currently on the DMV-Employee Pull Notice Program.

Once a driver has been enrolled on the DMV-EPN program, no other action is required from the department **unless** the driver terminates employment or transfers to another department. When a driver is enrolled on the DMV-EPN program, a record is generated and then mailed to the CEO-Risk Management Division. Thereafter, a record will be received annually or upon an action or activity on the driver record.

By eliminating the "renewal" portion, the department will continue to issue driver's authorizations as needed. Once an employee has been added to the DMV-EPN his/her status will remain in effect until one of the following occurs:

1. Long Term LOA
2. Transfer to another Department (Liability Purposes)
3. Terminates from County employment.
4. Invalid CDL
5. Departmental discretion

At such time, it is the department's responsibility to notify the CEO-Risk Management Division of a driver who is no longer required to drive for or on County business. By submitting the "Department Copy" of the driver's authorization to the CEO-Risk Management Division, the driver will then be removed from the DMV-EPN program. The Department Copy is then forwarded to Fleet Services/Motor Pool to be removed from the Motor Pools records.

If you have any questions, please contact Diane Pearson at 525-5712.

It's A Real Stretch

By: Dixie Barrigar, RN, Medical Review Nurse

Have you begun to notice that you are not as physically flexible as you once were? Is getting out of bed in the morning becoming more and more of a challenge? When you walk across the room, does the noise your knees make cause people to turn and stare? You are not alone. As we age our joints lose some of their flexibility unless we do something to counteract it. According to recent research, very flexible people may be less likely to develop arthritis in their joints

compared to their stiffer peers. Flexible people also appear to have better bone mineral density. Retain your flexibility and help maintain bone strength as you age by doing a set of all-over body stretches each day. Good exercises for maintaining your flexibility include yoga, tai chi, and swimming. These exercises can increase strength and flexibility without injuring joints.

*Blessed are the flexible,
for they shall not be
bent out of shape.*

Sun Protection

Submitted by: David Becker, Safety Officer

Question: If you work or play outdoors, what's your best defense against the sun's harmful rays?

Answer: The American Cancer Society and American Academy of Dermatology recommends wearing a sunscreen with a minimum sun protection factor (SPF) of 15. Protecting skin from the sun's rays can prevent about 80 percent of skin cancers.

Question: What does SPF mean?

Answer: SPF indicates the length of time someone can spend outdoors without burning. When using an SPF 15 lotion, a person who normally burns after 30 minutes in the sun can tolerate 15 times 30 minutes (450 minutes) without burning.

Question: When should I apply sunscreen?

Answer: Apply a generous amount of sunscreen about 30 minutes before you go outside, and reapply after swimming or perspiring. If you're taking medication, including birth control pills, ask your doctor or pharmacist if your medications will make your skin sensitive to the sun. **Tip:** Remember to protect your lips.

Question: Can I use the same sunscreen I bought last year?

Answer: Yes, unless indicated by an expiration date, the FDA requires that all sunscreens retain their original strength for at least three years. However, if you're using enough, your sunscreen shouldn't last that long.

Question: Can the sun harm my eyes, too?

Answer: Wear sunglasses that block out 99 to 100 percent of UVA and UVB rays. Studies show that exposure to ultraviolet light can contribute to eye problems, including cataracts and macular degeneration. Caution: UV-absorbing contact lenses shouldn't be used as substitutes for sunglasses.

Question: How else can I protect myself from the sun?

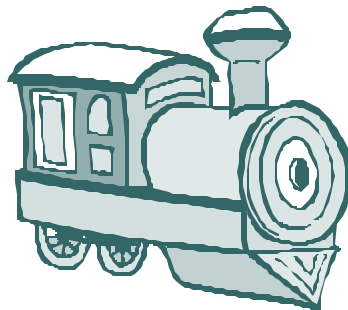
Answer: Look for "sun safe" clothing to wear. You can find sun-protective clothing online or at a surf shop. The higher the garment's ultraviolet protection factor (UPF), the higher the protection from the sun's UV rays

(Source: Federal Trade Commission, National Consumers League)

COUNTY TRAIN IS READY TO ROLL...ALL ABOARD! OR..... COUNTY HOLDS ANNUAL BENEFIT OPEN ENROLLMENT

By: Barbara Cooper, Employee Benefits Manager

If you are a long-term Stanislaus County employee, you are familiar with the drill. If you are new to the County, this may be your first time. No matter.... Everyone with County benefits gets to participate!



Every fall, the County holds its Annual Benefit Open Enrollment. Dates and times are scheduled during the last week of September & first week of October. All of the health plans as well as the Medical Groups are invited to come to the different County locations to answer questions and/or handout updated provider information. (The Stanislaus Dental Foundation is also invited to answer questions about the County's Self-Insured Dental Plan.)

This year Kaiser, PacifiCare and Blue Cross will be invited. Also, the Medical Provider Groups including Sutter-Gould, Central Valley Physicians IPA and Allcare IPA will be asked to send a Representative.

Because many employees have general questions about the Stanislaus County's benefits, an employee from the CEO-Risk Management Division's Employee Benefits Unit is always on site.

So, please check the Open Enrollment Calendar for dates and location. Come by the Employee Benefits table and let us answer your benefit questions. The County continues to provide great benefits for employees and their families. Let us help you get all you can from your many great benefit plans and options.



STANISLAUS COUNTY
CEO-RISK MANAGEMENT DIVISION

1010 10th Street, Ste 5900
PO Box 1723
Modesto, CA 95353
Phone: 209-525-5710
Fax: 209-525-5779

Stanislaus County 2004 Open Enrollment Schedule

September 2003

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3 Pay Day	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 Pay Day	18 Open Enrollment Starts!!!	19	20
21	22 CSA Cafeteria Training Room 9:00-5:00 pm	23	24 1010 10th St. Basement Tr Rm 9:00-noon 6-7:30 pm	25	26	27
28	29 HSA Martin Conf Rm 9:00 to Noon 2:00-4:00 pm	30 Sheriff's Conf Rm #152 6:30-9:30 am 3:30-6:30 pm				

October 2003

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 Pay Day	2	3 Ag Center Conf Rm H&I 8:30-Noon	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 Pay Day	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24 Open Enrollment Ends!!! Return Forms to Dept Pay-roll/Personnel Clerks	25
26	27	28	29 Pay Day	30	31	