

BITS & PIECES

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Health & Safety Training – 2008 A TREMENDOUS SUCCESS!

By: David L. Dolanar, Deputy Executive Officer



Congratulations and thank you to everyone who attended and supported the Health & Safety Training – 2008 event. Attendance at this event surpassed all previous years. Our loss prevention program and safety

awareness efforts are taking effect as we strive to raise the level of safety culture in our organization.

The following data compares last year's event to this year's success:

	H&S 2007	H&S 2008
Classes Completed	2,894	3,147
No Show	666	599

The top ten classes ranked in order of participant attendance are as follows:

1. Laugh Yourself Safe 532
2. Diffusing a Difficult Customer 319

3. Gangs 271
4. Defensive Driver Training 180
5. Slip/Trip/Fall 164
6. Injury Illness Prevention Program 159
7. Yoga 126
8. Understanding/Dealing with Trauma 122
9. General Ergonomics 118
10. Fire Extinguisher Training 111

The ratings for all classes came in very high with approximately 75 percent shown in the categories of **strongly agree** and **agree**. Comments from participants were very positive and some made suggestions for new classes in 2009.

Overall we are pleased with the results of this year's event. We look forward every year to providing the training to you, our customers. If you have further suggestions please let me know. Again, thank you for a successful event!

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A Sense of Values

During my second year of nursing school our professor gave a pop quiz. They breezed through the questions until they read the last one. "What is the first name of the woman who cleans the school?"

Surely this was some kind of joke. I had seen the cleaning woman several times, but how would I know her name? I handed in the paper, leaving the last question blank. Before the class ended,



one student asked if the last question would count toward our grade.

"Absolutely," the professor said. "In your careers you will meet many people. All are significant. They deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say hello. I've never forgotten that lesson. I also learned her name was Dorothy.

By: Joann Jones, Guideposts



Have a bountiful
Thanksgiving, a
Happy Holiday,
and a prosperous
New Year.

From the CEO-
Risk Management
Division Staff

Get Physical!

By Peggy J. Huntsinger, Disability Manager

Did you know that bones diminish in size and strength if we are inactive? Exercise stimulates the cells that help generate new bone tissue. Weight-bearing activity can reverse lost bone mass. Being active helps keep osteoporosis at bay which, in turn will lower the risk of bone fractures in our later years.



Regular exercise is particularly important for postmenopausal women. Just four 30 minute sessions each week!

Exercise

- raises the level of endorphins in the blood, enhancing your mood and allowing positive response in the face of stress

- helps regulate body temperature – reduced hot flashes and night sweats
- helps maintain better mental agility by increasing the amount of oxygen delivered to the brain

So get physical!

Thanksgiving Safety Tips

Submitted By: Peggy Dominguez, Administrative Assistant

Preparation and Decorations:

Thanksgiving would not be the same without turkeys, yet very few people take the time to learn how to handle them properly. Any poultry needs special attention when handling. Thawing a frozen turkey the proper way is important to the safety of your family.

Never thaw a turkey at room temperature because this promotes the growth of dangerous bacteria. The safest way to thaw a turkey is to thaw it in the refrigerator. You should do this with the turkey still in its' own unopened wrapper breast facing up and placed on a tray. The accepted rule of thumb for time is 1 day refrigerator thawing for every four pounds of turkey.

Start holiday cooking with a clean stove and oven.

Keep the kitchen off-limits to young children and adults that are not helping with food preparations to lessen the possibility of kitchen mishaps.

When cooking, do not wear clothing with loose sleeves or dangling jewelry. The clothing can catch on fire and the jewelry can catch on pot handles, causing spills and burns.

Cook on the back burners when possible and turn pot handles in so they don't extend over the edge of the stove.



Never leave cooking unattended. If you must leave the kitchen while cooking, turn off the stove or have someone else watch what is being cooked.

Keep Thanksgiving decorations and kitchen clutter away from sources of direct heat.

Candles are often part of holiday decorations. Candles should never be left burning when you are away from home, or after going to bed. Candles should be located where children will not be tempted to play with them, and where guests will not accidentally brush against them. The candle holder should be completely noncombustible and difficult to knock over. The candle should not have combustible decorations around it.

Bon Appetite!

Good News... Flexible Spending Accounts Update!!

By: Barbara Cooper, Employee Benefits Manager



County employees enrolling in the voluntary Flexible Spending Account (FSA) during the upcoming Open Enrollment for a January 1, 2009 effective date will have the opportunity to elect a new payment reimbursement method using a Visa Debit card.

All employees enrolling in either the \$2500 Health Care Spending Account and/or the \$5,000 Dependent Care Spending Account will be contacted at the close of Open Enrollment to make their voluntary election of

paying an additional non-refundable \$1.20 per month or \$14.40 annual fee to Creative Benefits for the use of a Visa Debit card for FSA eligible services.

Health Care Spending Account: The card can only be used at your doctor or dentist's office, the chiropractor, pharmacy or other health care providers as well as multi-use stores which have implemented a certified inventory control system that allows the use of the card only for eligible items. Non-qualified merchants include gas stations or restaurants. You should be sure that you

use the card for eligible expenses.

Dependent Care Spending Account: Qualified merchants include any day care facility that accepts payment cards. The card is good for any amount up to your maximum available balance and after services have been rendered.

WATCH FOR MORE INFORMATION AT OPEN ENROLLMENT MEETINGS OR ON THE EMPLOYEE BENEFITS WEB PAGE.... <http://www.stancounty.com/riskmgmt/risk-eb-home-main.shtm>

Preventing Diabetic Eye Disease

Submitted by: Casi Persons, Employee Benefits Coordinator



The key to early detection and treatment.

Each year, thousands of people begin to lose their sight without suspecting anything is wrong. Yet diabetic retinopathy, an insidious disease whose symptoms are so subtle most people don't detect them on their own, has been making the blood vessels in the eyes change irreversibly. As a result of diabetes, nearly 24,000 people a year go blind in the U.S. and 27,000 people with kidney failure are forced to start dialysis. In that same year, 56,000 limbs are amputated, according to the American Diabetes Association (ADA). Quite a scary picture.

Genetics do play a part in diabetes. But, 90 to 95 percent of people have adult onset diabetes largely attributable to aging, lack of exercise and weight problems. In fact, 16

million people in the U.S. suffer from diabetes, and it's estimated that 10 million more are at risk. But, because the symptoms are so subtle, this disease often goes undetected until it is very advanced. As a result, one-third of people with diabetes do not even know they have it.

With diabetic retinopathy, the most common diabetic eye disease and the leading cause of newly occurring adult blindness, the blood vessels in the eyes can be damaged without the person's sight being affected. The blood vessels swell, leak and grow on the surface of the retina without any discernible vision problems. As such, the disease may not be found until it becomes severe. That is, unless people have yearly eye exams, someone who has diabetes can go for several years without noticing any impairment of vision, meanwhile, a great deal of damage is being done to the

blood vessels in the eyes. The worst part is that 90 percent of diabetic retinopathy cases could be prevented with early detection and treatment, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Luckily, the eye exam for diabetes is very simple. The pupils are dilated so the doctor can see into the retina. The screening does not hurt and usually is done as a part of an annual vision check-up. It is important that people get annual checkups with their eye care doctor.

As an employee of Stanislaus County, you are offered a vision benefit through VSP. To use this benefit, it is as easy as finding a VSP provider at www.vsp.com, make an appointment and get an exam.

Holiday Safety

By: David Becker, Safety Officer

Family and friends have some time together to relax and enjoy each other during the holidays. Remember working or on vacation safety must be part of everything we do. Six major areas of dangers to watch for are as follow:

1. Fires- Decorations need to be kept away from any heat source. This would include fireplaces, candles or portable heaters. Smoking and decorations do not mix any more than smoking in bed does so be careful. Smoke detectors and fire extinguishers need to be in good repair and ready to work should trouble occur. When was the last time you had your fire place inspected? Burning paper in a fire place puts a lot of heat up the chimney. I would suggest using the trash can for such waste.

2. Electrical Hazards- Use only electrical equipment that is in a good state of repair and UL approved. Do not overload extensions and use indoor lights only indoors away from water. For outdoor lights make

sure they are for this use and use a ground fault circuit interrupter for the lights.



3. Motor Vehicle Accidents- Keep your car in good working order. Battery, lights, tires, defrosters, windshield wipers and washers may all be needed this year. Seat belts and a designated driver are a must.

4. Slip/Trip and Falls- Three things come to my mind on this subject (Ice, darkness and clutter). Ice can show up even in the valley so be on the lookout. We might be out moving around later than we normally are. Some of our night vision might not be as good as it was last year. Use a flash light and watch where you are walking. Clutter and kids go hand and hand. During the holidays this can get worse. Practice good housekeeping both inside and out for everyone's safety.

5. Children's Toys- Yes, toys can injure and kill. Buy them for the proper age child

and watch the little ones to make sure they do not get into something that they are too young for. Kids and fire can be a danger. Keep candles and the fireplace under adult supervision at all times. Little ones and the kitchen can also cause some problems. We kept our children out of the kitchen when we were cooking. Stoves, hot water, and knives all seemed to us to be too dangerous to mix kids with them. Last is child proofing your home for guests. It takes some time but it is a must.



6. Personal Safety- Shopping centers have both dangers and thrills that are special to themselves. The best way to enjoy these centers is to always be aware. Thieves are looking for an easy target. Do not be complacent about anything. I have witnessed families lose their whole Christmas from one single auto burglary. DO NOT LEAVE PACKAGES VISIBLE IN THE CAR OR STORE PACKAGES IN THE TRUNK IN PUBLIC VIEW.

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Did you know...

- After Fred Astaire's first screen test, a 1933 memo from the MGM testing director said, "Can't act. Slightly bald. Can dance a little." Astaire kept that memo over the fireplace in his Beverly Hills home.
- A relatively unsuccessful marketer of restaurant equipment, he didn't sell his first hamburger until age 52. At a time when many people prepare for retirement, Ray Kroc built McDonald's from a handful of hamburger stands into the world's largest food chain.
- When his older brother was killed during WWII, he first withdrew into a shell. Then he began to listen to the radio to ease his pain. Soon he was dreaming about hosting his own radio show. That led Dick Clark to start American Bandstand.
- Walt Disney was fired by a newspaper for lacking ideas. He also went bankrupt several times before he built Disneyland.
- Nathaniel Hawthorne went home to tell his wife that he had just been fired from his job. "Good," she said. "Now you can write your book." "What do we live on meanwhile?" Hawthorne asked. His wife open a drawer filled with money. "I have always known that you are a man of genius," she said. "So I have saved a little each week, and now I have enough to last for a year." Hawthorne used the time to write *The Scarlet Letter*, one of the great masterpieces of American literature.

**A true friend knows
your weaknesses
but shows you your strengths;
feels your fears but
fortifies your faith;
sees your anxieties
but frees your spirit;
recognizes your disabilities
but emphasizes your
possibilities.**

~ Will Arthur Ward—Educator

Safety Corner

Poisoning

By: Kevin Watson, Safety Analyst/Trainer



Before assisting in any emergency, please remember to follow the basic rules of:

Assess – the scene. If safe, approach and then **Assess** the victim

Alert – call or have someone call 9-1-1

Attend – to the injured to the best of your abilities with the resources available to you at the time

It is our opinion that virtually *all* poisonings are preventable ! As such, an effort should be made to keep chemicals – cleaning prod-

ucts, insecticides, herbicides, pool chemicals. . . out of the reach of potential victims. Also, you should know how to handle emergencies with the chemicals you do use / keep at home. At work we have MSDS information on all hazardous chemicals. At home we do not have this information. It is only as far away as your computer in most cases; however, it is not something that is done for some reason.

Current teachings discourage the use of Syrup of Ipecac and Activated Charcoal. If you have these items in your First Aid Kit, you should consider getting rid of them.

In discussions with our Regional 9-1-1 staff, they suggest calling them in the event of a poisoning emergency. They can connect you with the National Poison Control Center *and* dispatch an ambulance to your location. The minutes they save you may be the difference between life and death or permanent disability / disfigurement.

For anyone who is not comfortable with their level of technical expertise and would like to learn more about the current CPR / AED / First Aid instruction, please contact the CEO-Risk Management Division, Safety Unit at 525-5781 to sign-up for a class.