May Is Motorcycle Safety Month

Each year, May is designated as Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Many organizations across the country will be holding events or distributing material throughout the month to help remind motorists to be aware they are sharing the road with motorcycles.

That awareness alone could help prevent the most common fatal crashes. The Traffic Safety Facts 2008 Data for motorcycles indicates that 5,290 motorcyclists were killed and 96,000 were injured. Most of those accidents involved motorcycles and another vehicle (41%) and happened when the other vehicle was turning left while the motorcycle was going straight, passing, or overtaking the vehicle.

Make the Right Choice, the Smart Choice—Always Wear Your Helmet!!!

The following link provides some information on helmet use in 2009:
http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/811254.PDF

Injuries and Accidents

In 2007, there were 5 OSHA reportable incidents at Alvernia. In 2008, there were 7 reportables. In 2009, there were 9 reportables. As of April 26, 2010, there were 5 OSHA reportable incidents: 2 employees slipped and fell on ice, 1 employee hit her toe on a safe, 1 employee sprained her wrist moving items, and 1 employee slipped and fell on wet grass.

There is a saying that “Accidents will happen”. There is also a saying that “There’s no such thing as an accident”. Maybe some people really do have unavoidable bad luck but, if we’re honest, we would probably have to admit that we’ve caused at least one accident through our own carelessness. “I’ve always done it this way and I’ve never been hurt before”. “I need to finish this job right now. I don’t have time to think about safety”. “I know a shortcut that will help me get done quicker”. We’ve all used at least one of these excuses at one time or another.

Why is it important to think about safety on the job? The goal is to go home at the end of the day in the same condition that you came. As the numbers above show, our reportable incidents are going up. We need your help to keep our accident rate low. Be aware of your surroundings and potential hazards. Stay alert. Take responsibility for yourself. However, if you should have an accident, always report all accidents and injuries to Human Resources.

Annual Fire Safety Inspection

On Monday April 19, 2010, Alvernia had our annual campus-wide Fire Safety inspection by the City of Reading Fire Department. Overall, we did okay. There were a couple of issues that the inspector noted.

First, Fire Doors were propped open. This was found in almost all buildings. Fire doors are designed to withstand fire, heat and smoke for a period of 20 minutes to 3 hours. They are designed to prevent fire, heat, and smoke from spreading beyond the origination point. They usually (but not always) have a label on the side of the door saying that it is a listed fire door. Any glass or window in the door will usually have wire mesh. Fire doors should have a door closure that pulls doors completely shut after the door has been opened and have positive latching (a positive latch locks a door in place so it cannot swing open freely.) Fire doors must be kept closed at all times and kept free from obstacles.

Second, items stored on shelves are within the 18 inch clearance space of a sprinkler head. Fire code states that “the minimum vertical clearance between sprinklers and materials below must be 18 inches (45.7 cm) whether the materials are stored directly below the sprinkler.
Barbecuing Safety

Barbecuing, it's a rite of summer virtually as old as the season itself. This is generally a fun and tasty way of preparing meals in the Spring & Summer months, but there are certain hazards one must be aware of. Three safety considerations are protective equipment, safety guidelines and maintenance.

Protective Equipment—no outdoor chef should ever step up to the barbecue grill without certain essential pieces of personal protective equipment. Barbecue mitts or hot pads and preparation utensils with long, heat-resistant handles are the outdoor chef's primary defense against painful burns. An apron is also a good idea in order to protect your clothing from unsightly splatter and ash stains.

Safety Guidelines—whether you are using a charcoal grill or gas grill, they must only be operated in well-ventilated areas. Using grills in enclosed areas such as breezeways, basements or even garages could lead to a build-up of deadly carbon monoxide gas. The result could be personal injury or even death for those exposed. When igniting your charcoal grill one should never use gasoline or other highly volatile fluids as a substitute for commercially prepared lighter fluids. These lighter fluids are formulated to penetrate the briquettes and ignite in a slow, controlled fashion. Gasoline is formulated to power internal combustion engines and under the wrong conditions may ignite the charcoal briquettes, the chef and surrounding area with the drop of a match. You should never operate a barbecue grill on a wooden deck or patio. Never move a barbecue grill while it's operating. Never leave a grill unattended, especially if children or pets are present and never operate a grill under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Maintenance—in order to ensure efficient and safe operation of your grill, a thorough cleaning should be done annually if not more. All of the ashes and built up grease needs to be removed to allow the grill to perform efficiently and eliminate the possibility of a grease fire. The vent tubes on gas grills need to be checked/cleaned periodically as insects and spiders can build nests inside these tubes. The nests in turn could block gas flow and cause a fire in and around the operating valve.

Be Safe and enjoy some Good Eats!!!

Poison Ivy, Oak & Sumac

Poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac are plants that can cause a skin rash called allergic contact dermatitis when they touch your skin. The red, uncomfortable, and itchy rash often shows up in lines or streaks and is marked by fluid-filled bumps (blisters) or large raised areas (hives). It is the most common skin problem caused by contact with plants (plant dermatitis). The rash is caused by contact with an oil (urushiol) found in poison ivy, oak, or sumac. The oil is present in all parts of the plants, including the leaves, stems, flowers, berries, and roots. Urushiol is an allergen, so the rash is actually an allergic reaction to the oil in these plants. Indirect contact with urushiol can also cause the rash. This may happen when you touch clothing, pet fur, sporting gear, gardening tools, or other objects that have come in contact with one of these plants. But urushiol does not cause a rash on everyone who gets it on his or her skin.

Click on the link below to view a technical bulletin on these toxic plants:
PMA Risk Control Services—Poison Ivy, Oak and Sumac.

Questions, comments, suggestions?
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