Safety Matters

Don't forget: Change your clocks, change your batteries!

What is Ergonomics?

Ergonomics is the science of “designing the job to fit the worker, instead of forcing the worker to fit the job.” In other words, arrange your work area to fit you. If applied correctly, ergonomics makes your job easier, safer, and more efficient.

For those who work in an office, do you find yourself

- Leaning forward at your desk
- Typing with your wrists at an odd, uncomfortable angle
- Raising your shoulders while typing
- Reaching to use the mouse
- Twisting your neck to look at the monitor or phone
- Lifting objects from below your waist or above your shoulders?

Ergonomics can make your workstation a little more pleasant. Try these following comfort tips:

Set Up an Ergonomic Workspace

These tips come courtesy of Steve Meagher, from ergonomics consulting firm Site Solutions.

November 2nd starts Eastern Standard Time. Remember to change the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors when you change your clocks.

Did you know...

In Pennsylvania,

- headlights must be used from sunset to sunrise, when wipers are in use, when visibility is less than 1000 feet, and in conditions of insufficient light or adverse weather.
- Headlights must be turned on in construction zones.
- Snow and ice must be removed from a vehicle prior to operation.

Laptop users: see page 2.
Ergonomics continued from page 1

Laptop computers are lightweight, portable and convenient. Unfortunately, the laptop’s compact design, with attached screen and keyboard, forces laptop users into awkward postures. When the screen is at the right height, the keyboard position is too high; when the keyboard is at the right height, the screen is too low. This creates an ongoing trade-off between poor neck/head and hand/wrist postures.

Ergonomic Laptop Computer Use

Check out this quick and fun 3 minute video on computer workstation ergonomics from the Mayo Clinic: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K88q_oEwRS8
Fireplace Safety

Get cozy by the fireplace this winter, but with safety in mind. Before you strike that match, make sure your fireplace and chimney are clean and free of creosote buildup, a carbon-based substance that’s highly flammable. U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) experts recommend an annual fireplace and chimney cleaning and inspection — more often if you use the fireplace daily or weekly. You can clean it with a wire chimney brush or hire a professional. The USFA also offers these guidelines:

- Clear the fireplace area of decorations, debris and any flammable materials before you light a fire.
- Open the damper; don’t restrict air supply to the fireplace.
- Contain the fire with a metal mesh screen. If you have glass doors, keep them open while the fire burns.
- Burn only dry, seasoned hardwood. Burning moist and soft woods can cause creosote buildup.
- Don’t burn cardboard boxes, papers or trash in your fireplace.
- Never leave a fire unattended. Make sure the fire is completely out (no smoldering ashes) before you leave the room or go to sleep.

Driving Safely in the Dark

In the winter, we spend more time driving when it’s dark. Here are some steps for safer nighttime driving:

- Clean your vehicle lights and windows weekly. Make sure your headlights are properly aligned. In the north keep your windows free of frost and ice.
- Turn your headlights on low beam as soon as it starts to get dark. Use your high beams later when needed.
- Slow down. Allow plenty of space between you and other cars.
- If traveling a distance, stop frequently to stretch and have a snack. Don’t drive if you feel tired.
- If you need to pull over, get as far off the road as possible.
- Avoid distractions such as cell phones and smoking while driving.

Remember drinking and driving never mix.