

## Staying safe in the surf

A fun day at the beach with your family can quickly be ruined by an accident or injury. Hidden dangers lurk in the water, even for the strongest of swimmers. Did you know that rip currents account for 80% of all swimmer rescues at the beach? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), drowning (in both pools and natural bodies of water) is the fifth leading cause of unintentional injury death in the United States.

Keep your family safe by following these tips from the U.S. Lifesaving Association:

- If you're going in the water, you should know how to swim.
- Always swim near a lifeguard.
- Don't go alone—swim with a buddy.
- Obey posted signs and flags—flags may be flown on the beach to indicate that the beach is closed or to indicate the presence of hazards like rough surf conditions and/or marine pests, like jellyfish.
- If you are caught in a rip current that is pulling you out, don't fight it by swimming directly to shore. This wastes your energy and is not productive. Swim parallel to shore until you feel the current relax, then swim to shore.
- If you're on a watercraft (i.e., boat, Jet Ski®, or paddleboard), always wear a life jacket.
- Use sunscreen, and drink water to stay hydrated.

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# EMPLOYEE SAFETY NEWSLETTER

June 2019

## Talking trash: Don't get burned

Garbage is not just smelly—it can pose a real threat to facilities. If not handled properly, garbage can lead to a fire that can burn down a whole operation. In one case, a fire broke out in a metal Dumpster® on a loading dock. Flames quickly spread into the building, causing over half a million dollars' worth of damage.

Because trash can't be eliminated altogether, it is important to take action to reduce fire hazards in and around the facility you work in. The following are easy tips to protect against the hazards that trash may cause:

### Trash management

- Keep spaces and storage areas uncluttered, and empty trash cans as soon as they fill up. Remove all garbage at the end of every working day, and transfer it to outdoor containers.
- Cover outdoor trash containers, such as Dumpsters, and make sure they are located away from buildings.
- Don't place outdoor trash containers against a wall unless it is fire-resistant.
- Don't allow paper and other trash to gather outside of garbage or recycling receptacles, and never store this material near hot equipment, electrical outlets, or smoking areas.
- Don't smoke near trash receptacles. Put out smoking materials properly, and throw them away in designated areas.

### Do's and don'ts of what to throw away

- Avoid throwing out materials that could produce toxic or corrosive fumes when they burn, such as rubber, foam plastic, aerosol containers, and PVC wiring insulation.
- Don't throw away combustible materials such as paint thinners, acetone, propane tanks, gasoline containers, used motor oil, automotive batteries, or appliances.
- Oily rags: Place them in a listed oily waste container or an airtight, noncombustible metal container filled with a solution of water and an oil breakdown detergent. Take the container to your local hazardous waste disposal center, or arrange a special pickup by your garbage collection service. Check with your city or municipality and the oil manufacturer for further disposal instructions.

If a fire does occur, be sure you are familiar with your facility's emergency plan and escape routes. Immediately evacuate the building if the fire alarm sounds, unless you have been trained and authorized to put out small fires with a fire extinguisher or if you are designated to perform certain facility operations before evacuating. You may need to help first responders by providing site or building access and by giving information about the location of the fire, the status of the fire systems, and the status of building evacuation.

## Avoid getting sick at your picnic

June 11 is National Corn on the Cob Day. Whatever your favorite summer food, as you prepare for your next picnic or cookout, be smart about food safety to avoid food-borne illness. Follow these tips to stay safe:

- Store perishable foods (especially meats and dairy) in a well-insulated cooler with ice.
- Serve food quickly from the cooler, and return it quickly. Store drinks and edible ice in a separate cooler.
- On hot days above 90 degrees Fahrenheit (F), food should not sit out of the cooler for over an hour. If food stays out longer, *always* throw it out.
- Wash your hands before preparing or handling food—if there is no running water, use wipes and hand sanitizer.
- Serve grilled food on a clean platter—don't reuse the same plate or utensils for cooked food that touched the raw food, especially meats.
- Refrigerate leftover meats and salads that have stayed cold—throw out all food that has become warm.



DISPOSE  
EMERGENCY  
FIRE  
TRASH  
OILY  
WASTE

## Trash fires: QUIZ

1. Oily rags may undergo \_\_\_\_ combustion if improperly stored or disposed of.

- A. Spontaneous
- B. Quick
- C. Instant

2. The improper disposal of rechargeable, lithium-ion batteries has led to fires. TRUE or FALSE

3. Outdoor trash bins or Dumpsters® should be located as close to the building as possible. TRUE or FALSE

1. **A. Spontaneous.** As some substances are naturally exposed to the air, a chemical reaction called oxidization occurs. Oxidization releases heat, and if this heat can't escape (like in a pile or trash heap of oily gloves), it can ignite. **2. TRUE.** Hundreds of waste facility fires in the United States and Canada have been attributed to lithium-ion batteries. The pressure and heat inside of a garbage truck or in a landfill can cause a spark and ignite the flammable electrolyte inside the battery. Due to this high reactivity, these batteries should not be thrown out in your regular wastestream. **3. FALSE.** While it may be less inconvenient, trash bins should be located far away from the building. In the case of a fire, flames can quickly spread from the bin to the building if they are located too close to each other.

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## Extension cord safety

Extension cords are commonly used at the worksite and at home. Did you know that there are many different types of cords for many different uses? You should ensure that you use the right one for your equipment and work conditions to prevent electrical shock and fires by doing the following:

- Make sure the cord's power rating is at least as high as the power tool's or device's power rating. The cord's power rating is a number listed on the cord jacket as either "amps" or the wire gauge (a number followed by "AWG").
- Cords approved for outdoor use are typically identified by "Outdoor" or "W" on the cord jacket. Never use indoor cords outdoors.
- Some cords are designed to resist moisture, heat, or chemicals. For example, cords with plastic jackets are recommended for use around solvents or oils. Oil-resistant cords will have the letter "O" stamped onto the jacket.
- Don't use the flat, two-wire cords meant for light duty that have only a single layer of insulation with any power tools.
- Use a cord of the right length for the job. Don't plug one cord into another to make a longer one—this can cause a fire.

Once you've found the right extension cord for the job, make sure you follow these safety procedures:

- Inspect extension cords before each use to make sure the cord and plug are in good condition. Never use a damaged or frayed cord.
- Insert the plug fully into the outlet, and uncoil the cord to reduce the risk of overheating.
- Make sure electrical equipment is turned off before you plug it into an extension cord.