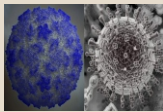




Health & Safety News



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As environmental consultants, it is our goal to provide the highest quality environmental services to our clients. In order to provide the best service, it is paramount to ensure the continuing health and safety of our employees and subcontractors. The health and safety success of our team assures the success of our projects. At Roux, we are dedicated to promoting a positive safety culture in the field, within our offices, and throughout our personal lives.

Cooking Safety Tips

By Christine Pietrzyk, Project Scientist – Illinois

Whether you're a seasoned chef or your 2019 resolution is to cook for the first time, it's never a bad time to brush up on the dos and don'ts of kitchen safety. Below are a few tips to keep you and your household safe:

- Try to limit clutter in the kitchen. While it's nice to have multiple cooking tools on hand, having too many appliances plugged in and surrounded by pot holders, wooden utensils, hand towels, and other flammable objects on the counter can be a fire hazard.
- It is important to stay in the kitchen while food is cooking. Most fires in the kitchen occur because food is left unattended.
- Never wear loose fitting clothing when cooking. Long, open sleeves could ignite and catch fire from a gas flame or a hot burner. Wear short, close fitting or tightly rolled sleeves when cooking. If you have long hair, be sure to tie it back.
- As a host, don't be afraid to exercise crowd control to keep your cooking space free, clear, and accessible.
- Most importantly, keep smoke alarms connected while cooking. Cooking is the second leading cause of home fire deaths in the United States, and smoke alarms can and do save lives.
- Flours, sugars, oils, cooking alcohols, milk, and creamer are all flammable ingredients that can combust if not prepared and monitored carefully.
- Fires involving oils can spread if extinguished with water. A fire extinguisher should be kept in your home kitchen in case of emergency. If possible, wear heat resistant gloves and move the object on fire to the sink so it can be extinguished with minimal damage to your property.
- If you have a toaster, pull it out from underneath the cabinet. The oils and grease that are released from the toaster can build up on the base of the cabinet and cause combustion if heated.



How to Manage and Prevent Colds & The Flu

As we experience some of the shortest, coldest days of the year, we also find ourselves at the peak of cold and flu season. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the common cold causes the most missed work days in the United States, and the contagious nature of the flu, if not properly prepared for, can lead to office-wide outbreaks. Luckily, there are some very simple and effective mitigative steps we can take to help avoid getting sick, limit the duration and severity of the symptoms, and prevent transmissivity to our family, friends, and coworkers.

The Culprit

The common cold and the flu are both caused by respiratory viruses—rhinovirus for the common cold, and a seasonally changing influenza virus for the flu. Both can be contracted throughout the year, though flu cases peak between December and February.

Rhinovirus is the most common infections virus in humans, with most severe infections affecting children and the elderly. Rhinovirus infections occur rapidly, within 15 minutes of entering the respiratory tract and lasting, on average, 2 days.

In general, the flu is worse than the common cold, and symptoms are more intense. Colds generally do not result in serious health problems, while flu-related complications, such as pneumonia, can be life-threatening. Both diseases can be passed from person to person by contact with respiratory droplets or direct contact, such as shaking hands, and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

Prevention

The single best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated each year. There are several vaccination options, including flu shots, jet injections, nasal spray, and high-dose vaccines. Studies show that flu vaccination reduces the risk of flu illness by up to 60% among the overall population. Vaccines cause antibodies to develop in the body about two weeks following vaccination.

There are also common-sense guidelines to protect yourself and others from the flu or common cold and stop the spread of germs:

1. Avoid close contact with people who are sick. If you are sick, keep your distance from others.
2. If you are sick with the flu, if possible, stay home from work, school, or errands to prevent spreading your illness to others.

By Peter Shimer, Project Geologist
Long Beach, California

3. Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
4. Wash your hands often with soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand rub.
5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth, where germs you may have touched can enter your respiratory tract.
6. Practice other good health habits: clean and disinfect surfaces at home, get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

Symptoms and Treatment

Symptoms of the common cold onset gradually and include sneezing, stuffy nose, sore throat, and a hacking cough. Flu symptoms develop abruptly, including fever, aches, chills, fatigue, sneezing, chest discomfort, and headache. People at high risk of developing flu-related complications include children younger than 5 or adults older than 65, pregnant women and women up to two weeks postpartum, residents of nursing homes or other long-term care facilities, and people with high-risk medical conditions such as chronic lung disease or asthma. Antiviral drugs are prescription medications that your doctor may prescribe if you fall into one or more of those categories. In most cases, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people except to get medical care.

The CDC recommends that those with the flu stay home (except to get medical care or other necessities) for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone without the use of fever reducing medicine. People aged 18 and younger should not be given aspirin to avoid a rare, serious complication called Reye's syndrome. If any of the emergency warning signs of flu sickness listed in the table below are observed, go to the emergency room:

Infants	Children	Adults
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Being unable to eat• Trouble breathing• No tears when crying• Significantly fewer wet diapers than normal• Any signs from the next column	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fast breathing• Bluish skin color• Not drinking enough fluids• Not waking up or interacting• Irritability• Symptoms improve but then return with worse cough and fever• Fever with a rash	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty breathing• Pain or pressure in chest or abdomen• Sudden dizziness• Confusion• Severe or persistent vomiting• Symptoms improve but then return with worse cough and fever

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/consumer/symptoms.htm>

Daylight Savings Time & Our Health



Sleeping is something we do every night; however, it may not be something we think about often. Having a good night's sleep is crucial to a productive and safe work day. Daylight Savings Time (DST) can affect our sleep even though it is simply an hour change

to our schedule. DST begins at 2:00am on the second Sunday of March and ends at 2:00am on the first Sunday of November.

Each time this change in our sleep schedule occurs, it increases hazards in our daily lives. Poor sleep can affect our concentration, stress levels, mood, and decision making, which can impact our workday and our interactions with coworkers, clients, and subcontractors. This added stress to our bodies can be linked to negative or depressive feelings (Seasonal Affective Disorder) as well as vulnerability to illness. It is important to not only recognize these changes in yourself, but also your coworkers and subcontractors. Look out for each other and take breaks throughout the workday as needed.



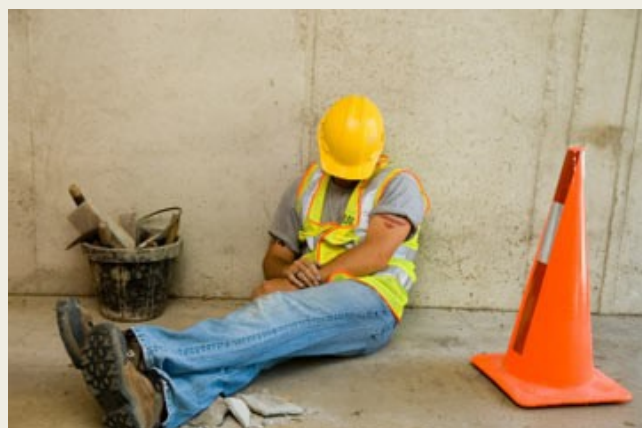
Commuting also poses increased hazards, as studies show there is a spike in car accidents in the few days following DST. When the days get darker, more melatonin is produced, which induces sleep. Watch for fatigued drivers and changes in driving conditions or traffic patterns. Also, according to the National Safety Council, depth perception, color recognition, and peripheral vision can be compromised in the dark, and

By Emma VanDelinder, Staff Engineer
Massachusetts

the glare of headlights from an oncoming vehicle can temporarily blind a driver. Even with high-beam headlights on, visibility is limited to about 500 feet (250 feet for normal headlights), creating less time to react to something in the road, especially when driving at higher speeds.

Below are a few measures we can take in the days leading up to DST to prevent negative effects and injuries:

- Plan field activities with respect to DST and talk about it in your health and safety tailgate meetings before and after the time change occurs.
- Go to bed earlier in the days leading up to DST to allow your body to adjust faster,
- Be aware of your stress and fatigue levels. Know your limits and recognize changes in mood/stress with your colleagues.
- Practice good sleep hygiene:
 - o Don't eat right before bedtime.
 - o Don't drink caffeine after 2PM.
 - o Don't nap right before bedtime.
 - o Turn off all screens at least 1 hour before bedtime (TV, phone, laptop, etc.).
 - o Develop a bedtime routine.
 - o Maintain a consistent exercise routine.



Safe Driving Techniques

Driving is one of the most hazardous tasks we do on a daily basis. During the winter months, we are faced with a number of unique driving risks that make our commutes more dangerous than usual. Snowy and icy weather, limited daylight hours, crowded roadways, and tired drivers in are just a few conditions that we face during this season. As we drive during the next few months, we need to continue to focus on safe driving techniques. Below are some tips for driving safely.

Always Wear a Seat Belt and Wear It Properly

Studies have shown that if you are in a crash while wearing your seat belt, your chances of being hurt or killed are greatly reduced. Before you start your drive, always fasten your seat belt and make sure all other passengers are using seat belts as well. To properly wear a seat belt, the shoulder harness should be worn across the shoulder and chest with minimal slack, and the lap belt should be adjusted so that it is snug and lies low across your hips after fastening. You should be seated upright with your back against the seat and feet on the floor. The simple act of buckling your seat belt increases your chance of surviving a crash and will help keep you safe as you travel.

Plan Ahead

Before you start driving, check the weather to ensure the roads are safe to drive on. Make sure your vehicle is in good shape for driving, especially if you will be driving in wintery conditions. If snow is in the forecast, be sure you have a windshield scraper. You should also keep an emergency prep kit in your car for the winter season, including a flashlight, food, water, and blanket in case of major road delays. Always clear all snow and ice from your car (don't forget the top!) before starting your drive. Check the traffic reports and if possible, try to avoid the busiest travel hours by leaving a few hours earlier or later. If you are expecting to sit in traffic, make sure you fill your gas tank before starting your trip to prevent running out of gas in the middle of the road. Prior planning prevents poor performance!

Travel at Safe Speeds

The difficult winter weather paired with shorter, darker days can lead drivers to feel stressed and anxious while driving, which could result in aggressive driving, following too closely, or speeding—all potentially resulting in dangerous accidents. Give yourself extra time to get where you need to go and take your time getting there, especially when the roads are slick.

Drive Defensively

You may encounter aggressive drivers; here are a few things you can do to drive defensively this season, and all year round:

By Veronica Smith, Project Engineer
Logan Township, New Jersey

- Look ahead at the road in front of you rather than focusing on the car in front of you.
- Continuously look for hazards (e.g., other vehicles, pedestrians, animals, etc.). Be on alert for these hazards so you are ready to react quickly if they appear.
- Keep your eyes scanning the road and try not to have a fixed stare at any one thing. Use your peripheral vision to see the big picture.
- Do not let yourself get boxed in by other vehicles on the highway. Monitor the space around you for an escape route in case you need to merge to avoid a hazard.
- Use your signals to let other drivers know your next move.

Stay Well Rested and Alert



According to a AAA traffic safety study, “people who slept 6-7 hours a night were twice as likely to be involved in a crash as those sleeping 8 hours or more,” and people who slept for fewer than five hours were even more likely to be involved in a traffic collision (*Acute Sleep Deprivation and Risk of Motor Vehicle Crash Involvement*, December 2016). Signs of drowsy driving include trouble focusing, heavy eyelids, drifting from your lane, yawning constantly, bobbing your head, and being unable to remember the last stretch that you drove. If you're feeling tired and drowsy while driving, pull over and grab a cup of coffee or take a 20-minute power nap in a parking lot before continuing on your trip. If you have someone else in the car, switch drivers. To prevent drowsy driving, remember to get lots of sleep!

Avoid Distractions

When we hear the phrase “distracted driving,” many of us think of drivers texting on a cell phone, checking emails, talking to other passengers, or searching for music on a phone or changing the radio station. But did you know distracted driving does not necessarily mean taking your eyes off the road? Distracted driving can occur when you are looking at the road but thinking about other things. After a long day of work, it is common to have trouble focusing on only driving while we are behind the wheel. Be conscious of potential distractions and remember to focus on safe driving every time you get in your car.