

HEALTH & SAFETY

A NEWSLETTER FOR NYSUT'S HEALTH AND SAFETY LEADERS

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Register NOW for Health & Safety Conference March 4 - 5

March 2011 is the 100th anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire

There is a great lineup of workshops at the 2011 statewide health and safety conference March 4 and 5 in Saratoga Springs. Friday night's opening dinner will feature labor historian Alex Blair. We are especially happy to welcome Professor Blair since March 2011 marks the 100th anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist fire. He will discuss the importance of that event in the evolution of worker protections and the challenges faced today.

The Unsung Hero Award, which recognizes a health and safety activist for his or her efforts to improve the workplace for their members, students and clients, will also be presented at the dinner.

Friday afternoon workshop selections include extended sessions on workplace stress, emergency preparedness and response, and negotiating health and safety language. Saturday sessions include safe student lifting, workplace bullying, health and safety 101, and indoor environmental quality. The closing session will highlight luncheon speaker Dr. Gary Namie, founder of the Workplace Bullying Institute.

Come join more than 200 fellow health and safety activists and leaders to learn, share and connect! Register online by visiting www.nysut.org/healthandsafety

Unsung Hero Award nominations open!

Nominate your local activist for NYSUT's health and safety award

The Unsung Heroes Award recognizes a health and safety activist for his or her efforts to improve the workplace for members, students and clients. We need nominations from you so that a deserving NYSUT member will be given the award at the statewide health and safety conference March 4 in Saratoga Springs.

NYSUT members may also submit nominations for non-member allies who have contributed significantly to improving the health and safety of a NYSUT-represented workplace.

Nominations must be postmarked by Jan. 4. Download the form at www.nysut.org/healthandsafety

Help ensure a deserving NYSUT activist is recognized at our statewide conference by submitting your nomination today!



NYSUT Vice President Kathleen Donahue presents the 2009 NYSUT Unsung Hero Award to Jan Montesano, a member of the Ballston Spa Education Association.

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Representing more than 600,000 professionals in education and health care
For more, see www.nysut.org.



Holiday season decorating safety tips

From School Health Service e-newsletter

Each year approximately 12,800 people are treated in hospital emergency rooms for falls, cuts, shocks and burns involving faulty holiday lights, Christmas trees and other decorations. Here are this year's Consumer Product Safety Commission tips for decorating safety.

General rules for holiday safety include:

- Keep matches, lighters and candles out of the reach of children.
- Make an emergency plan to use if a fire breaks out, then practice it.
- Avoid wearing loose clothing — especially long sleeves — near open flames.

- Never burn candles near evergreens.
- Don't burn evergreens in the fireplace. Flames can flare out of control.

Trees and decorations:

- Look for the label "Fire Resistant" when purchasing an artificial tree.
- Check for freshness when purchasing a live tree. A fresh tree is green and the needles are difficult to pull off the branches.
- In homes with small children, avoid sharp or breakable decorations, trimmings that resemble candy and trimmings with small removable parts.

Lights:

- Check lights for cracked sockets, frayed wires or loose connections.
- Make sure extension cords are rated for the intended use.
- Turn off lights when you go to bed or leave the house.

Candles:

- Keep burning candles within sight and away from flammable items.
- Keep lighted candles away from trees or other decorations.
- Extinguish all candles before you go to bed.

Get free brochures with holiday decorating and toy safety tips at www.cpsc.gov.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Health & Safety is a newsletter published periodically for New York State United Teachers' Health and Safety Committee members. NYSUT locals and staff have permission to reprint all Health & Safety content.

President

Dick Iannuzzi

Executive Vice President

Andy Pallotta

Vice President

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Secretary-Treasurer

Lee Cutler

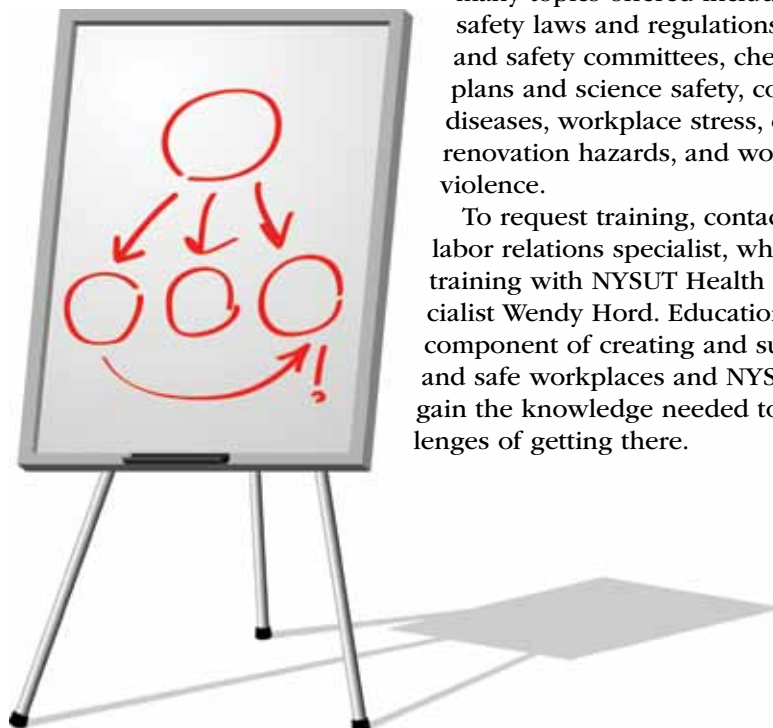
New York State United Teachers
800 Troy-Schenectady Road
Latham, NY 12110-2455
(518) 213-6000
(800) 342-9810

Contact: Wendy Hord

H&S training available to locals

With help from a New York state Department of Labor grant, NYSUT provides health and safety training directly to locals and regions across the state. The many topics offered include: health and safety laws and regulations, effective health and safety committees, chemical hygiene plans and science safety, communicable diseases, workplace stress, construction and renovation hazards, and workplace/school violence.

To request training, contact your NYSUT labor relations specialist, who will arrange the training with NYSUT Health and Safety Specialist Wendy Hord. Education is an important component of creating and sustaining healthy and safe workplaces and NYSUT can help you gain the knowledge needed to tackle the challenges of getting there.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Both federal and state legislatures are in lame-duck sessions and there is no expectation for movement on any health and safety bills.

Special commentary:

H&S watchdogs needed urgently



NYSUT VP
Kathleen Donahue

The Bureau of National Affairs (BNA) reported that the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has begun a campaign to challenge federal regulations — including Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards — that it says curb economic growth and job creation.

The chamber's campaign includes a website called *www.ThisWaytoJobs.com*. The president of the chamber, Thomas Donahue, has said that the chamber will, when it deems appropriate, advocate "aggressive use" of

the Congressional Review Act to overturn regulations in Congress. The Congressional Review Act allows Congress to overrule federal regulations and forbids agencies from subsequently promulgating any "substantially similar" regulation. It was only used once: to overturn the Clinton-era OSHA ergonomics regulation issued in 2001.

Tom O'Connor, executive director of the National Council for Occupational Safety and Health, strongly rejected the

chamber's assertion that the Obama administration is overreaching in its regulatory efforts.

"We've had a whole generation of deregulation, starting in the Reagan years, and what it brought us was complete financial disaster because of under-regulation of the financial industry, the worst environmental disaster in our history because of inadequate oversight and regulation, and a series of major workplace disasters this year," O'Conner told BNA. "So I wouldn't say that deregulation has done a lot of good for American consumers and workers."

It's very clear that the chamber will pull an all-out war against OSHA's planned Injury Prevention Program Rule. This planned rule would make employers responsible for identifying workplace hazards and planning, implementing, evaluating, and continually improving activities to protect worker safety and health (40 OSHR 353, 4/29/10). This sounds like common sense, but the chamber has argued that it will prevent jobs from being created and doesn't match weaker workplace safety laws that other countries have, which makes U.S. based businesses less competitive.

"It is outrageous for the chamber to begin this campaign in the wake of a year which brought multiple fatalities in workplace tragedies," said NYSUT Vice President Kathleen Donahue, whose office oversees health and safety issues for the union. "Let us not forget these deaths; the 29 miners in West Virginia, 11 workers in the BP gulf explosion, 7 workers in a Washington state refinery fire and 9 others in a workplace homicide in Connecticut. With budget problems throughout the country, all union members have to be very vigilant about workplace health and safety to ensure budget cuts do not compromise their safety."

NYSUT will make sure members get information about any efforts to reduce their workplace health and safety protections. Look for updated information in this newsletter and other NYSUT publications.

In February, look for injury and illness summaries

A reminder that PESH and OSHA regulations require that beginning Feb. 1, all New York state public employers and all private employers must post a summary of the total number of job-related injuries and illnesses that occurred during 2010. Employers are only required to post the summary SH Form 900.1 or OSHA Form 300A (private sector), not the SH 900 log or OSHA 300 log (private sector). The summary must be posted from Feb. 1 to April 30. Employees and their unions also have the right to examine the full injury and illness logs at any time.

It is a good opportunity for health and safety committees to review employer logs to help determine where injuries and illnesses are occurring and develop strategies to reduce or eliminate hazards.

The summary must list the total number of job-related injuries and illnesses that occurred in 2010 and were logged on the SH 900 or OSHA 300 form. Information about the

annual average number of employees and total hours worked during the calendar year also is required to assist in calculating incidence rates.

Employers with no recordable injuries or illnesses in 2010 must post the form with zeroes on the total line. All summaries must be certified by an agency official.

The form is to be displayed in a common area wherever notices to employees usually are posted. A copy of the summary must be made available to employees who move from worksite to worksite, such as construction employees and employees who do not report to any fixed establishment on a regular basis.

Copies of the forms and regulations can be downloaded at: www.labor.state.ny.us/workerprotection/safetyhealth/DOSH_PESH.shtm (for public sector) and www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/index.html (for private sector).

WEB RESOURCES

TerraChoice releases results of greenwashing study

TerraChoice, a leading North American environmental marketing company and part of Underwriters Laboratories' global network, released its 2010 study: "The Sins of Greenwashing: Home and Family Edition." Greenwashing is the act of misleading consumers about the environmental practices of a company or the environmental benefits of a product or service.

- There are 73 percent more green products on market today than in 2009.
- More than 95 percent of products claiming to be green are guilty of at least one of the "sins" of greenwashing.
- The percentage of "sin-free" products has risen to 4.5 percent, compared to only 1 percent in 2007.
- One hundred percent of toys and 99.2 percent of baby products surveyed are guilty of some form of greenwashing.

Product categories studied in the 2010 report include baby care products, toys, office products, construction products, cleaning products, housewares, health and beauty products, and consumer electronics.

You can download the study at:

<http://sinsofgreenwashing.org>.

Poster available for infection control in health care facilities

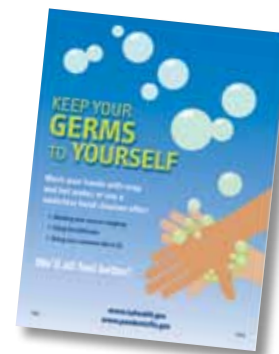
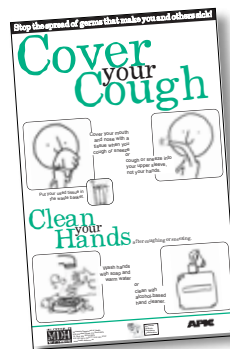
EMLab P&K, in collaboration with strategic alliance partner Philders Group International Inc., created an infection control poster, entitled "Infection Control Risk Management in Medical Facilities."

The wall poster highlights more than 30 critical point areas in hospitals that are considered high-risk for superbugs and cross contamination. Hospital areas featured on the poster range from administration to terrorism first responders. The poster lists the possible hospital superbugs in each area.

To order your posters and for information about testing services, contact EMLab P&K by email information@emlabpk.com or by phone at 800-651-4802.

Online ladder safety game geared to young and new workers

British Columbia's workers' compensation board is using a new online game to get the message out to young and new workers about the hazards of ladders at a residential construction worksite. The objective of the game is to identify the correct order of procedures for using a ladder to reach the roof of a house safely. The game reinforces ladder safety basics and practices, which may help prevent serious injury at work. Find the game at www.LadderChallenge.com.



Flu season is here – Protect yourself and others

Influenza infection can cause serious illnesses that can sometimes become life threatening to all age groups. The symptoms of flu include fever, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headache, muscle aches and extreme fatigue. Some of the medical complications triggered by flu include bacterial pneumonia, dehydration and worsening of chronic conditions, such as asthma.

The Centers for Disease Control expects that the H1N1 flu virus will continue to spread, along with regular seasonal flu.

Schools and campuses are perfect breeding grounds for diseases like the flu. During the flu season, nearly 20 percent of the student body and staff in a typical school will contract the flu or a flu-like illness. The number may be significantly reduced if school employees and students practice the basics of infection control:

- Improve ventilation — increase the flow of outdoor air;
- Reduce crowding in classrooms and portables;
- Remind staff and students to wash their hands frequently; and
- Develop comprehensive communicable disease prevention policies.

To get more information and download resources go to www.flu.gov or www.health.ny.gov and look for the link for influenza. Order posters by calling 800-342-9810 ext. 6260.

