



# Safety+Health

Newsletter

National  
*Preparedness*  
Month

National Education Month



## Lavatory Hazards

**The Supreme Court  
and  
Workplace Safety**

***COOL IT!***

September 2024

# Contents

---

**02**

## **National Preparedness Month**

September reminds us to be ready for any disaster – man-made or natural, that could affect them, their homes, communities, or businesses.

---

**06**

## **The Supreme Court and Workplace Safety**

The Supreme Court ended its term with several decisions that have big implications for our Safety and Health in the workplace.

---

**08**

## **Lavatory Hazards**

Working on lavatories is hazardous to your health. That's why it's so important to understand the hazards and how to mitigate them.

**10**

## **National Food Safety Education Month**

September is dedicated to National Food Safety Education to raise awareness and educate people on the importance of food safety.

---

**12**

## **Safety Message**

Cool It! Always use the engine run checklist and heed the “Notes, Cautions, and Warnings” for the engine you are working on.

---

**13**

## **Upcoming Events**

Child Passenger Safet Month

Rail Safety Week – September 19<sup>th</sup> thru 25<sup>th</sup>

PPE Roadshow





REPORT PROBLEM  
OR EMERGENCY  
1-800-XXX-XXXX  
X-ING 836 597 H  
XYZ RAILROAD

Every three hours in the United States, a person or vehicle is struck by a train. Grade crossing collision and pedestrians trespassing on tracks account for more than 95% of all railroad fatalities. Much of the public doesn't realize that railroad tracks are private roads for trains and a dangerous place to run, cycle or even walk dogs.

That's why this Rail Safety Week, September 19-25<sup>th</sup>, BNSF (Burlington Northern Santa Fe) reminds us to:

- Obey warning signs and always expect a train on railroad tracks.
- Stay off the tracks, including when taking photos or filming videos, and never walk on or close to tracks.
- Only walk, ride or drive across the tracks at designated crossings.

Reporting unsafe motorists and trespassers is vital to rail safety. If you see unsafe activity near a train, contact your local authorities. If you ever find yourself stuck on a railroad crossing, get out of your vehicle, call the number on the blue and white Emergency Notification System (ENS) sign at the crossing and give them the crossing number so they know your location to alert train traffic.

Law enforcement and first responder partners are promoting rail safety education during *See Tracks? Think Train Week* through *Operation Clear Track*.

***Be careful out there!***



**OPERATION  
LIFESAVER<sup>®</sup>**  
Rail Safety Education



# National *Preparedness* Month



***Natural and man-made disasters can affect everyone, cause severe damage and endanger lives.***

Every year, the United States observes National Preparedness Month in September to remind everyone to be ready for any disaster – man-made or natural, that could affect them, their homes, communities, or businesses.

This month aims to reduce the fallout of large-scale emergencies by preparing everyone and to think about how different disasters could affect you.

It's important to have a planned response when you're at work, on vacation or on the road.

Hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, landslides, wildfires, heat waves, and even cold spells are all natural disasters that can be deadly to people and property. Man-made disasters such as terrorism, train derailments, even water main breaks and power outages in the U.S. affecting millions of people for days.



Police, fire and rescue may not always be able to reach you quickly in an emergency or disaster. The most important step you can take in helping your local responders is being able to take care of yourself and those in your care; the more people who are prepared, the quicker the community will recover.

### **Family First**

Deciding how long a disaster will last and the after-effects are the first step in preparation. Depending on the type of emergency, you may need food and water for a few days. Food that is easily stored and prepared is critical during a disaster.

When disaster strikes, you want to make sure your family has water to last for a specified duration of time.

Safety experts recommend each family member have 1 gallon of water per day to remain hydrated. Packing away essential items and preparing in the event you must go for three days without electricity, water service, access to a supermarket, or local services for several days.

Every home should have an emergency supply kit located in an accessible storage area. It's best if you store the items in plastic containers that are easy to grab and carry. Kits should be checked every six months, and expired items should be replaced. Don't forget to add one to every vehicle.

### **Personal Property**

Finally, personal property is always a concern when a natural disaster hits.



**ARE YOU  
READY?**

Though it's not always possible, you can do a few things to make sure you save the valuable documents including photos that mean the most to you. You can scan documents and put them on an external drive and store them somewhere safe and dry. Most importantly, make sure your insurance policies are up-to-date.

More than half of U.S. residents lack a designated meeting place to fall back to in an emergency. Also, unfortunately, most do not have a list of emergency contact numbers.

Whether at home or work, fire drills may seem silly, but they do serve an important purpose. Practice evacuating your home twice a year. Grab your emergency kit, just like you will in a real emergency, then drive your planned evacuation route. Plot alternate routes on your map in case roads are impassable.

Make sure you have locations and maps saved on devices such as cell phones and GPS units and on paper.

The American Red Cross provides an emergency resource library containing tips for how to prepare for 23 different types of emergencies:

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies.html>

The employer is required to review their emergency action plans and conduct fire drills annually. For more information, please review the ESHM 04.22.

Don't put it off for another time. Take the necessary steps to become informed and develop a family emergency plan for the next disaster. Ensuring you are prepared could **SAVE YOUR LIFE!** □



**OSHA**  
Occupational Safety  
and Health Administration

## The Supreme Court and Workplace Safety

*OSHA was granted power to set safety standards in 1970 when Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act, which was then signed into law by President Richard Nixon.*

*The federal agency survived challenges to its rulemaking authority in 1978 and 2011. Just last year, a divided panel ruled 2-1 that the 1970 law gave OSHA sufficient direction and also set limits on its authority.*

*In the past few months, the Supreme Court ended its term with several decisions that have big implications for our Safety and Health in the workplace.*



### **The Good:**

Allstate's Refractory Contractors, cited \$6K by OSHA for not protecting workers from falling objects, sued OSHA, claiming it "does not have the constitutional authority to set standards and employers do not have a duty to comply with OSHA's standards." It claimed that Congress failed to set proper limits on the agency's authority to issue permanent safety standards when it passed the OSH Act, and so all of these standards are invalid.

The Supreme Court majority declined to take a case that would have gutted OSHA's authority to establish and enforce standards.

### **The Bad:**

A ruling by the Supreme Court in favor of Starbucks and against the NLRB makes it harder for the NLRB to act against employers who violate workers' right to organize. This has a direct impact on





worker safety, because job safety is often a key issue in organizing campaigns. It is now harder for the NLRB to get orders reinstating workers who are illegally fired in the early stages of unionization and has a real impact on workers' ability to join together to improve their working conditions.

### **The Ugly:**

The Court overturned the landmark “Chevron” decision which for 40 years has given federal agencies, like OSHA, the authority to use their judgment to interpret the law and create reasonable regulations. This new ruling gives judges (and, ultimately, Supreme Court justices) the power to rely on their own interpretations of broadly-worded laws and ignore expert judgment from OSHA and other agencies.

This means that even if OSHA has carefully done its job – consulted with workers, employers, and the public before

issuing a reasonable regulation protecting worker safety and health, the Court can throw it out if it doesn't like it.

This change is a big blow to workers, because the Court's conservative majority has been all too clear that it wants less government regulation of business including regulations that protect workers' lives.

So, yes, for workers, their advocates, and the government agencies like OSHA whose mission is to enforce laws that protect workers and the public, this is a very ugly decision, indeed. The floodgates that control lawsuits against worker safety and health protections are now open far wider than they were before.

It leaves the door open for future challenges to the delegation of legislative powers to federal agencies. In turn, this could significantly impact the stability of current workplace safety regulations. □



# Lavatory Hazards

Let's be honest, planes are filthier than ever, and they don't disinfect them. Working on lavatories is even more hazardous to your health. That's why it's so important to understand the hazards and how to mitigate them.

Have you ever been told by management to unclog a sink or toilet stating, "it's no different than unclogging a sink or toilet in your home". Well, I'd have to disagree with that statement as I don't have literally thousands of people using my toilet. The more exposure the more likely of disease. A diverse array of pathogens have been detected in wastewater, including respiratory viruses, antibiotic-resistant bacteria, and enteric pathogens.

Obviously, if blood is in the waste, then you could be exposed to other pathogens which include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV), and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the virus that causes AIDS. Employees exposed to bloodborne pathogens are at risk for serious or life-threatening illnesses.

Blood in most cases can't be detected in lavatory waste unless it's sent out to a lab for testing. Then there's occult blood which can't be seen with the naked eye.

## Did You Know?

*Fecal bacteria can spread throughout the lavatory compartment from the mist caused by flushing.*

*A plugged sink or toilet is hazardous work and if safety precautions are not taken you can be exposed to deadly biohazards such as HIV, Hepatitis, Ebola, and Staphylococcus.*



OSHA standard's requirements protect workers who are occupationally exposed to blood or other potentially infectious materials (OPIM).

Understanding that water, urine, feces, and other reasonably anticipated biological components comprising human wastes in sewage are not included in the definition of "other potentially infectious materials" unless "...visibly contaminated with blood..."

As crazy as that sounds, OSHA does state universal precautions shall be observed to prevent contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials.

Under circumstances in which differentiation between body fluid types is difficult or impossible, all body fluids shall be considered potentially infectious materials. The bottom line is whether you can see blood or not, all waste should be considered biohazard waste and handled appropriately.

Lavatory waste removed from the aircraft is transported to a triturator facility for pretreatment prior to discharge to the sanitary sewage system and publicly owned treatment works (POTW).

So, if it wasn't hazardous, it would not be sent for pretreatment, and you wouldn't need PPE.

Given the confined spaces and all the possible hazards, why wouldn't you want to protect yourself? Splashes, inhalation, absorption is just a few ways you could be exposed. Remember that PPE is the last line of defense from protecting you from hazards. Be smart and protect your health.

Don't be fooled by cheap equipment and unapproved methods from your employer. Protect yourself. Ask questions if you feel it's unsafe! □



# National



# Education Month



*This month is an opportunity to educate ourselves and our communities on the importance of food safety.*

*By understanding the principles of food safety, we can take simple steps to prevent foodborne illness and protect ourselves and our loved ones.*

**F**ood is one of the basic necessities of life. It is essential to our survival, and therefore, it is crucial that we ensure that the food we eat is safe and healthy. The food supply in the United States is among the safest in the world. However, when certain disease-causing bacteria or pathogens contaminate food, they can cause foodborne illness, often called “food poisoning.”

The month of September is dedicated to National Food Safety Education to raise awareness and educate people on the importance of food safety.

The United States alone, it’s estimated

there are about 48 million cases of foodborne illness annually – that’s about 1 in 6 Americans each year. Many of these illnesses result in an estimated 128,000 hospitalizations, and 3,000 deaths.

Although most healthy people will recover from a foodborne illness within a short period of time, some can develop chronic, severe, or even life-threatening health problems. In addition, some people are at a higher risk for developing foodborne illness, including pregnant women, young children, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems.

## 4 STEPS TO FOOD SAFETY



- 1. Clean:** Wash your hands before and after handling food and wash your cutting boards, countertops, dishes, and utensils with hot soapy water. Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water.
- 2. Separate:** Separate raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs from other foods in your grocery cart. Use separate cutting boards for fresh produce and raw meat, poultry, seafood.
- 3. Cook:** Use a food thermometer to ensure that raw meat, poultry, seafood, and egg products are cooked to a safe minimum internal temperature to destroy any harmful bacteria.
- 4. Chill:** Refrigerate or freeze meat, poultry, eggs, seafood, and other perishables within 2 hours of cooking or purchasing. Refrigerate within 1 hour if the temperature outside is above 90° F. Never thaw food at room temperature, such as on the countertop.

Foodborne illnesses can be caused by a variety of things, including bacteria, viruses, and parasites. Some of the more common foodborne illnesses include salmonella, E.coli, listeria, and norovirus.

Consuming dangerous foodborne bacteria will usually cause illness within 1 to 3 days of eating the contaminated food. However, sickness can also occur within 20 minutes or up to 6 weeks later.

Symptoms of foodborne illness can include vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain and flu-like symptoms, such as fever, headache, and body ache. You should seek medical attention if symptoms are severe.



Foodborne illness is preventable, and by practicing safe food handling techniques, we can reduce the number of people who fall sick due to contaminated food. Remember, it only takes one step to make a difference, so take food safety seriously. □

# COOL IT!

We all have heard the saying, “Cool It.” It is slang for relax, calm down, take it easy. And, in this sense, it is safe to say we all need to do this from time to time, to avoid making mistakes. Especially when feeling the pressure and stress from our work environment.

Many engines may require you to “Cool it” down before shutting it down. Improper cool down could lead to sudden damage or even latent damage resulting in future failure.

Whether you operate one specific or a variety of make and model engines, the bottom line is to understand and comply with the manufacturer’s current operating procedures. Always use the engine run checklist and heed the “Notes, Cautions, and Warnings” for the engine you are working on.

As a result, when you “Cool It” properly, you will be able to relax, calm down, and take it easy!



# Upcoming Events

**SAFE  
K:DS**  
WORLDWIDE.

## Child Passenger Safety Month Promotes Car Seat Safety for Parents

Every year during the month of September, Safe Kids coalition members host events across the country to help parents learn how to install and use their car seat correctly.

These events are in celebration of National Child Passenger Safety Month, with the biggest focus being on Seat Check Saturday on September 29. The entire nation gets behind keeping kids safer in car seats, booster seats and seat belts.

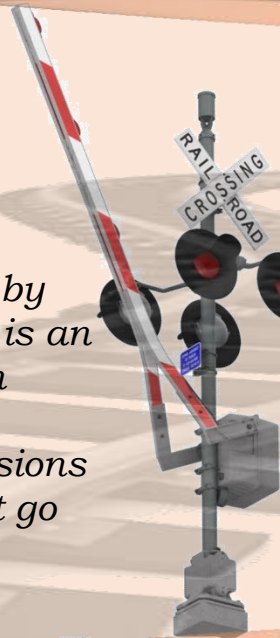
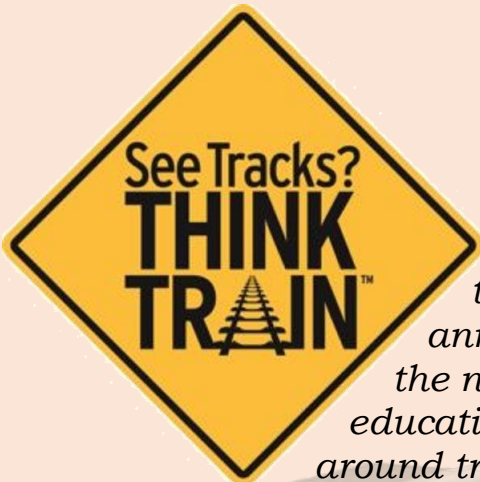
<https://www.safekids.org>



## Rail Safety Week

September 19<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup>

*Railways play an important part of our society by transporting people and goods. Rail Safety Week is an annual event which concentrates public attention on the need for rail safety education and saves lives by educating and empowering the public to make safe decisions around tracks and trains. When the gates are down, don't go around. Always expect a train. Life is worth the wait.*



## PPE ROADSHOW

→ BOS – September 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>



# Safety+Health Matters!

## Got Feedback?

Suggestions on Safety topics in upcoming Newsletters?

Email: [Safety@local591.com](mailto:Safety@local591.com)