



# Safety+Health

Newsletter

May 2024



Water Safety

WILDFIRE AWARENESS MONTH

Climate Change and the Health Effects on Workers

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National Safe Boating Week – May 18-24  
PPE Roadshow





# MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH



*Military Appreciation Month honors everyone who has served in a branch of the U.S. military and reminds us that we owe many of our freedoms to the sacrifices made by military personnel.*

*Thank you to all our Active Duty Service Members and Veterans!*





# WILDFIRE

## Awareness Month

**M**ay is dedicated to the prevention and preparedness of National Wildfire Awareness. Wildfires may not be prevalent in every state, but the responsibility to be aware and alert belongs to us all. The causes of wildfires can occur in every state, and as mobile as our lifestyles have become, every one of us needs to be prepared.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), more than 80% of wildfires are caused by human-related activity, leaving less than 20% that occur in nature. Destruction caused by wildfires in the United States has significantly increased in the last two decades. On average, there are 70,000 wildfires that burn more than seven million acres each year. Preventable wildfires threaten lives, property, and precious natural resources.

As the hotter, drier weather of summer approaches, the risk of wildfire increases. There are some steps that can be taken to aid in the prevention of wildfires from starting and spreading. From fire-resisting building materials, to following the safety protocols for handling fire when camping, heating your home or storing fuel, we can all take part in reducing wildfires.

Wildfire season is year-round in many parts of the country now. What can you do to help support our firefighters and protect your family from wildland fires? The NFPA recommends these tips to help prevent fires from starting in your home or community:

- ◆ Create and maintain five feet of non-combustible space around homes and commercial buildings.





- ◆ Remove pine needles, dry leaves, or other highly flammable materials.
- ◆ Protect your roof: trim branches that overhang and remove any leaves, needles, and sticks from your roof and gutters.
- ◆ To keep sparks and flames from getting underneath, screen under your porch and other open areas with wire mesh no larger than one-eighth inch.
- ◆ Move wood piles and small propane tanks away from your (and your neighbor's) home; thirty feet or more is best.

### **Be prepared to evacuate:**

- ◆ Keep important documents in a fireproof safe, on a USB drive, or store password protected documents online.

- ◆ Check your home insurance to make sure your policy protects your current home value and includes wildfires.
- ◆ Give yourself time and evacuate early if possible. If you can't leave, designate a room that can be closed off from outside air in case air conditions become hazardous.
- ◆ Make an emergency plan and go-kit.
- ◆ Make sure that you know more than one way out of your neighborhood.
- ◆ Sign up to receive emergency alerts and notices for your community.

Another important thing to consider is buying flood insurance. After a wildfire, flood risk increases due to the inability of charred vegetation and soil to absorb water from rainstorms. Flood insurance can protect property owners from catastrophic financial impacts of flooding following a wildfire.

Wildfires can develop and spread quickly, leaving little time to get somewhere safe. Know what to do to keep yourself, your family, and your pets safe, and take steps now to protect your future. □



# CLIMATE CHANGE

## ...and the Health

**M**any workers spend their entire work shift in hot environments, which can be indoors or outdoors. These environments may become hotter because of higher temperatures and more frequent extreme heat events (such as heat waves).

Exposure to adverse climate change-related conditions can exacerbate existing health and safety issues among workers and could potentially cause new and unanticipated harms.

These exposures could lead to heat stress and other heat-related illnesses, occupational injuries and deaths, infections and disease, and health conditions caused by exposure to biological hazards as well as negatively impact mental health.

What does all this mean? Climate change will cause disease-carrying insects like mosquitoes and ticks to move to colder areas. Natural disasters will become less predictable and more severe. Allergens and air pollution will worsen.

Here are some facts with climate-related Occupational Hazards and Exposures.



Research has linked air pollution to acute health effects (such as short-term coughing and eye irritation) and chronic (long-term) health effects (such as heart disease, respiratory diseases, and allergic disorders). Studies have shown air pollutants like ground level ozone and particulate matter from dust and wildfire smoke affect respiratory health.



Heat stress and illness is a major hazard for many workplaces that work outdoors. Most often through the hottest months and jobs requiring intense physical activity even during heat waves and other extreme heat events.



# Effects on Workers



*Ultraviolet (UV) rays are a part of sunlight that is an invisible form of radiation. Complex interactions among greenhouse gases, climate, and atmospheric conditions have increased UV radiation in recent years. Over-exposure to UV radiation can result in skin cancer, eye damage, and immune suppression.*



*In response to concerns about our climate and environment, the economy has shifted. Many businesses are moving towards energy efficiency, environmentally friendly practices, and green jobs. New industries will emerge, like those in solar, wind, biodiesel, nuclear, recycling, and green jobs. Worker safety and health concerns in these emerging industries must be identified and addressed.*



*Increasing extreme weather events or natural disasters include floods, landslides, storms, lightning, droughts, and wildfires. These events contribute to occupational deaths, injuries, diseases, and stress. Workers involved in rescue, cleanup, and restoration are exposed to hazardous conditions both during and after extreme weather events.*



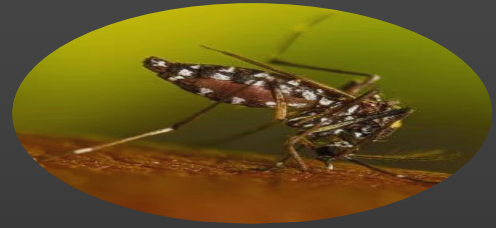
*Higher temperatures increase the need for climate-controlled buildings. As more workers spend their time inside climate-controlled buildings, building-related illnesses (such as tight building syndrome or sick building syndrome) may occur.*

*These illnesses are sometimes related to indoor air quality, especially in buildings with air conditioning or water damage. Energy-efficient “tight” buildings with microbial-contaminated humidifiers or air handlers that use biocides are also at risk for indoor air quality concerns.*

*Tight buildings may also lead to radon buildup in work areas such as smaller rooms, storage areas, or offices.*



*Climate-related difficulties or losses may increase mental health disorders among workers. For example, first responders participating in rescue and cleanup efforts after extreme weather events may be more likely to experience new or worsened post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression.*



*As climate change alters temperatures and weather patterns around the world, the risk of vector-borne diseases will increase.*

*Vector-borne diseases are illnesses that are transmitted by vectors, which include mosquitoes, ticks, and fleas. These vectors can carry infective pathogens such as viruses, bacteria, and protozoa, which can be transferred from one host (carrier) to another.*

*In the United States, there are currently 14 vector-borne diseases that are of national public health concern. These diseases account for more than 17% of all infectious diseases and cause more than 700,000 deaths annually.*





# WHAT'S BEING DONE?

*In recent years, there has been increased recognition of climate change and its impacts on health equity, including among workers, but continued action will be important for mitigating risks.*

*The federal government has taken some steps to prioritize efforts to address climate change and its health risks for workers. In addition to Executive Orders that emphasize the need for a government-wide approach to addressing climate change and advancing environmental justice, in 2022, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) launched the National Emphasis Program for Outdoor and Indoor Heat-Related Hazards, an enforcement program that seeks to identify and eliminate or reduce worker exposures to occupational heat-related illnesses and injuries.*

*This program is an expansion of the agency's heat-related illness prevention initiative. The EPA revoked the use of certain dangerous chemicals, including the use of chlorpyrifos as a pesticide for food, reducing risks for farmworkers and their children in 2022.*

*Some states have also taken steps to protect workers from extreme heat. Minnesota, Washington, Oregon, California, and Colorado have implemented heat standards that seek to prevent heat-related illnesses and deaths among workers.*

*Going forward, continued actions to mitigate climate-related health risks for workers as well as addressing underlying social and economic inequities that drive disparate occupational exposures to climate-related health risks will be of growing importance as these risks are expected to grow due to climate change. □*





# WATER SAFE

**O**n a hot summer day, there's no greater escape than your favorite swimming hole. Whether a pool, lake, or ocean, before you jump in, be aware that there are water safety hazards that could put you and your family at risk for illness or injury.

The greatest risk any time you're near the water is, of course, drowning. Drowning is a tragedy that can happen to anyone. Unfortunately, it is fast, silent, and often not what you would expect. Water is an element that deserves our respect and undivided attention.

The U.S. experiences an average of 11 fatal drownings per day and an average of 22 non-fatal drownings per day. Drowning is fast and silent and can happen in as little as 20-60 seconds. Nearly 80% of drowning deaths are among males due to increased exposure to water, risk-taking behaviors, and alcohol use.

## **Safety precautions:**

- ✧ Don't go in the water unless you know how to swim; swim lessons are available for all ages.
- ✧ Never swim alone.
- ✧ Learn CPR and rescue techniques.
- ✧ Swim in areas supervised by a lifeguard.
- ✧ Don't dive in unfamiliar areas.
- ✧ Never drink alcohol when swimming; alcohol is involved in about half of all male teen drownings.

- ✧ Make sure the body of water matches your skill level; swimming in a pool is much different than in a lake or river, where more strength is needed to handle currents.
- ✧ If you do get caught in a current, don't try to fight it; stay calm and float with it, or swim parallel to the shore until you can swim free.

## **Water Safety hazards:**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there has been an increase in the number of *Recreational Water Illness (RWI)* outbreaks in recent years.

The culprit is germs or chemicals lurking in the water we swim in, which can cause a variety of issues:

- Skin problems
- Diarrhea
- Ear infections
- Eye infections
- Neurological problems

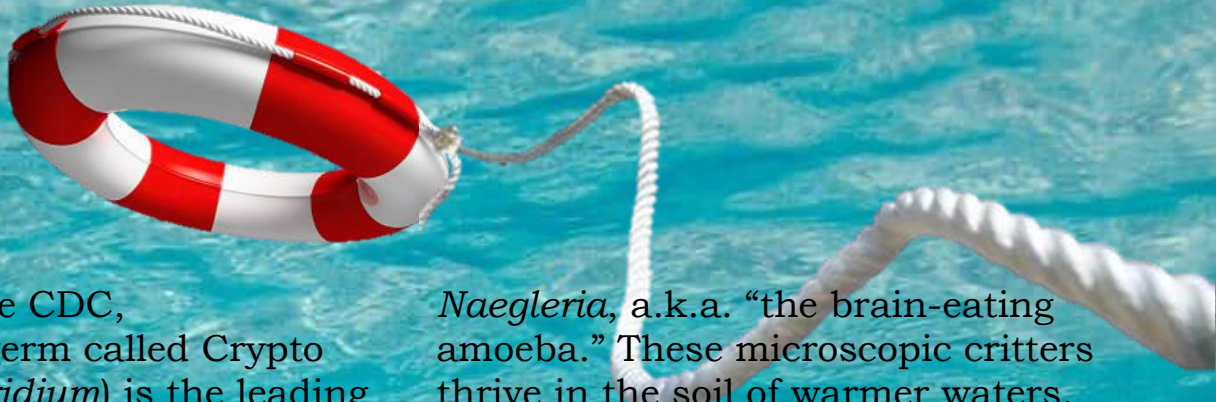
There's no guarantee that the water is clean and safe to swim in. Take precautions depending on the body of water.

## **Pools and Hot Tubs**

Never swim in a pool or bathe in a hot tub that hasn't been treated with chlorine. However, chlorine doesn't have an immediate effect, and some of these germs are chlorine-resistant.



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According to the CDC, a stubborn germ called *Cryptosporidium* is the leading cause of swimming pool-related diarrheal illness.

Don't linger too long in hot tubs as a risk for hot tub folliculitis, a condition that causes inflammation of the hair follicles because of a bacteria commonly found in hot tubs.

## Freshwater Lakes and Ponds

If you're swimming in fresh water like lakes, rivers, and ponds, pollution is a concern, especially during rainy periods. Water may be contaminated with sewage, insecticides, and other chemicals.

Bacteria are also a concern in fresh water. One in particular, *Aeromonas*, is common and can be life-threatening for some people. If you have a deep cut on the skin, the antibiotic-resistant bacteria can invade parts of the body not accustomed to fighting off these invaders. The bacteria multiply and cut off blood flow to parts of the body, which destroys skin, fat, and muscle tissue; hence, the name "flesh-eating" bacteria.

These cases are rare, but they do happen. To be safe, it's best to stay out of the water if you have a deep puncture wound or scratch until the wound is healed.

Another fresh-water nuisance that is extremely rare but scary nonetheless:

*Naegleria*, a.k.a. "the brain-eating amoeba." These microscopic critters thrive in the soil of warmer waters. Should you stir up the dirt and dive into the water, an amoeba may enter the nose and travel to the brain.

*Naegleria* causes primary amoebic meningitis, which is rapidly fatal and there is no treatment.

## Salt Water

Aside from the many sea creatures swimming alongside you in the ocean, you may encounter similar pollutants and bacteria as those found in fresh water. Some bacteria in saltwater cause similar problems to the (flesh-eating) *Aeromonas*. If you're in the water with an open wound, these bacteria can get into the skin more easily.

One type of bacteria in particular found along the Gulf Coast of the U.S. can cause cellulitis, which is life-threatening. It's not super common but it is scary because you get sick rapidly. If caught early, this infection can be treated with antibiotics or surgery, so be sure to mention to your doctor if you've been swimming in salt water prior to becoming ill.

The fact remains that injury and drowning are much more common than infections from the water, so be vigilant. "Supervise your children and learn CPR — this can save a life." □



# MEMORIAL DAY

*Remember and Honor*



**M**emorial Day will be celebrated this year on Monday, May 27, 2024. It is a federal holiday observed on the last Monday in May and commemorates the men and women who died while in military service.

## **Memorial Day History**

Memorial Day began after the Civil War with both formal and informal ceremonies at graves and ceremonies for the soldiers who had fallen in battle. Many places claim to be the birthplace of Memorial Day in 1866, including Waterloo, New York, and Macon and Columbus, Georgia.

On May 5, 1868, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), a Union veterans organization, established Decoration Day, May 30, as a time for the nation to decorate the dead with flowers.

Arlington National Cemetery held the first large observance later that year.

By the end of the 19th century, Memorial Day ceremonies were held throughout the country on May 30.

The Army and Navy adopted policies for proper observances, and state legislatures passed proclamations designating the day. After World War I, the day was expanded to honor those who died in all American wars, and in 1971, Memorial Day was declared a national holiday to be celebrated on the last Monday in May.

## **Memorial Day vs. Veterans Day**

Memorial Day is meant for remembering and honoring military personnel who died in the service of their country, particularly those who died in battle or as a result of a wound sustained in battle.

Veterans Day is intended to thank all those who have honorably served in the military – in wartime or peacetime.



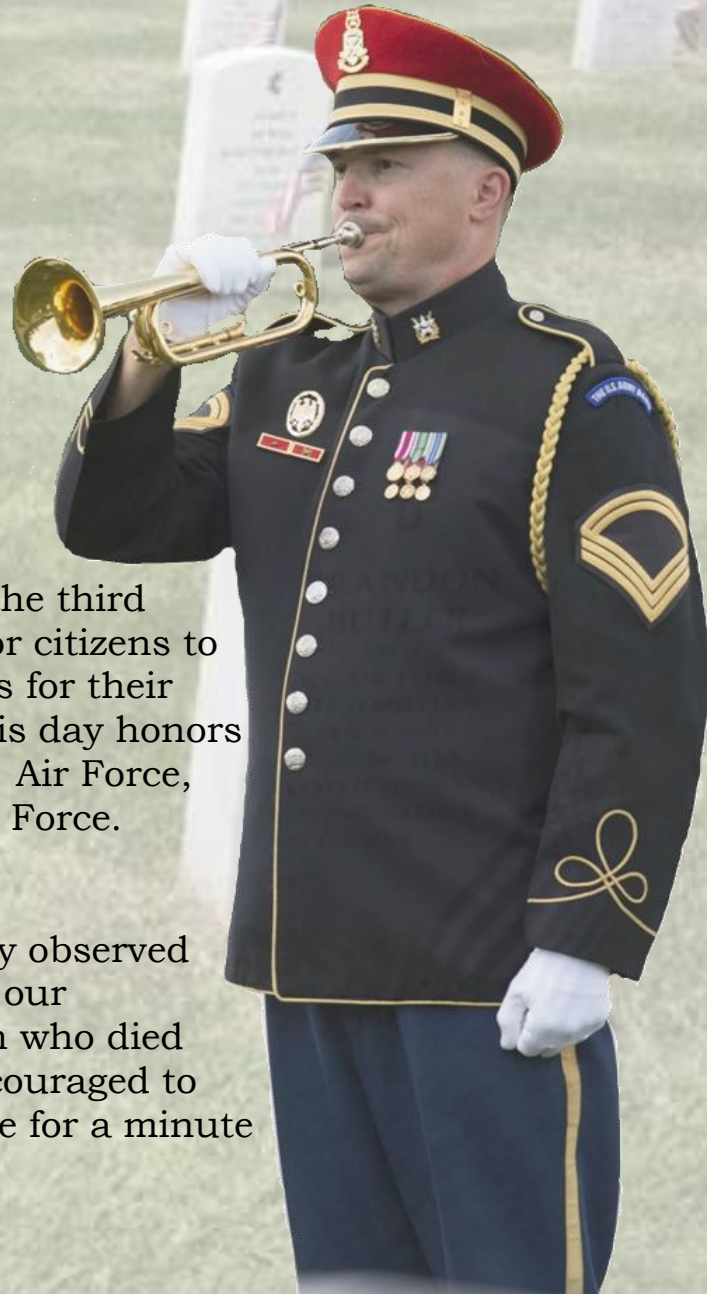
# National Moment of Remembrance

**T**he National Moment of Remembrance is an annual event when Americans pause for a minute of silence at 3 p.m. on Memorial Day. The 3 p.m. time was chosen because it is when many Americans are enjoying their freedoms on the national holiday. It is intended to be a unifying act of remembrance for Americans of all ages. The National Moment of Remembrance Act became law in 2000.

There are many ways to observe the National Moment of Remembrance, both formally and informally. The moment of silence can be observed more formally at places such as a veterans' cemetery, park, or picnic ground and can include playing "Taps," the military bugle call that reflects on

the glory of those who have shed blood for us. A bell can also be rung at the beginning and end of the one minute of remembrance.

Pay tribute to the U.S. men and women who died during military service by observing a national moment of remembrance with a minute of silence at 3:00 PM local time. If you are driving and unable to stop, you can turn on your headlights for a minute. □



## Armed Forces Day

Date: *Saturday, May 18, 2024*. Celebrated on the third Saturday in May every year. A single holiday for citizens to come together and thank our military members for their patriotic service in support of our country. This day honors everyone serving in the U.S. Military branches: Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, Navy, and Space Force.

## Memorial Day

Date: *Monday, May 27, 2024*. A Federal holiday observed on the last Monday in May. A remembrance of our veterans. Commemorates the men and women who died while in military service. All Americans are encouraged to pause, wherever they are, at 3:00 pm local time for a minute of silence.



# Bring Your A-Game -- Every Time

Your toolbox is locked...you finished all your paperwork...you are ready for the weekend! But wait...your crew chief/supervisor catches you and states an aircraft is inbound with what sounds like a simple maintenance problem. Ever been there? Of course you have. Probably more times than you like to think about.

You have a choice to make. The job sounds simple, and you want to finish it up quickly so you can get on with your weekend. You need to give 100% right now, just like you did this morning when you were fresh and ready to conquer the day. Unfortunately, all too often we accept these jobs when we are far from 100% both physically and mentally. Let's face it, you are already dreaming of sitting around the campfire or wetting that fishing line in your favorite lake. The family is packed and waiting for you to get home. You want to beat the crowds and get the best campsite...but now that's all changed.

Stop, step back, take a deep breath and take inventory of the situation. You have to bring your A-game when you meet that inbound aircraft. All your experience, expertise and training won't be enough if your mind is somewhere else. The last job of the day deserves -- no, demands -- the same level of focus you brought to the first job this morning. □





# Upcoming Events

## NATIONAL SAFE BOATING WEEK



Will be held from May 18-24, 2024, reminding all boaters to brush up on boating safety skills and prepare for the boating season. This observance week is the annual kick-off of the Safe Boating Campaign, a global awareness effort that encourages boaters to make the most of their boating adventure by being responsible.



## HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS WEEK



Get ready to batten down the hatches. Experts have predicted an "extremely active" Atlantic hurricane season this year. The week of May 5-11, 2024, reminds us of the importance of preparing for hurricane season and can make a huge difference in how you are able to respond to and recover from a hurricane.

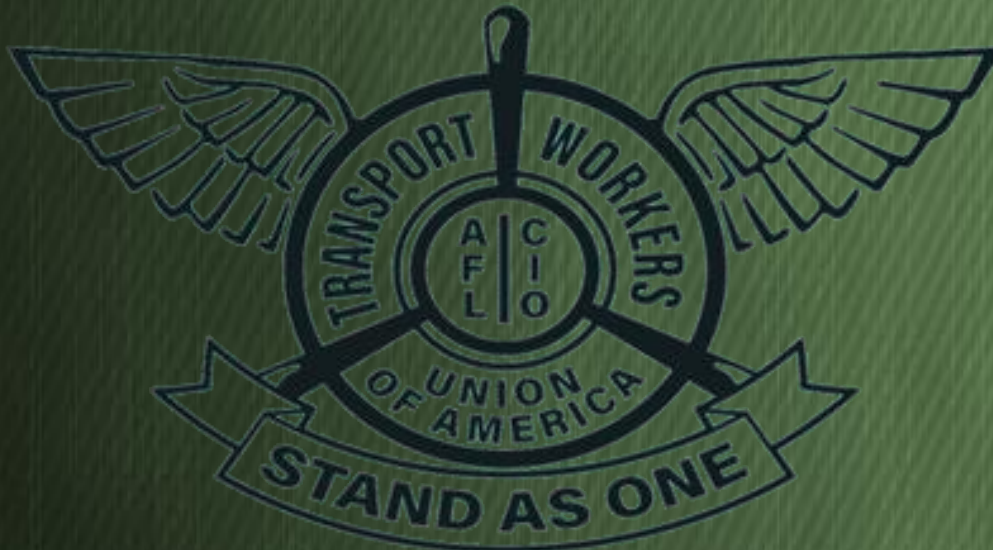
For more information visit: <https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes>



## PPE ROADSHOW

→ LGA – May 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>

→ EWR – TBD



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**Safety+Health  
Matters!**

**Got Feedback?**

Suggestions on Safety topics in upcoming Newsletters?

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