

HOT CORNER

News in the EOC
*Issues and Answers About
the Environment of Care*

3 fire alarms caused by cooking

Employees contributed to three fire alarms during October. Each time, the fire department responded.

Two of the alarms occurred when employees burned microwave popcorn. The microwaves were permanently removed from the work areas.

Another alarm occurred at an off-site building when an employee burned toast. Under hospital policy, toasters are prohibited.

The Hospital has steadily reduced false alarms since 1997, when it had an all-time high of 125. Last year, the Hospital had 33 false alarms. The goal: less than 25.

It's important for hospital employees to understand the impact of a fire alarm. Every time the fire alarm sounds, except during fire drills, fire fighters respond. Although PPD and Security workers are dispatched immediately to the alarm location, University employees are not authorized to reset the alarm until its cause has been determined and the alarm has been cleared by the fire department.

Two years ago, the campus fire marshal requested that microwaves be removed from patient care areas. The Hospital negotiated a compromise because we understand that often caregivers have too little time to go to the cafeteria for their meals. The compromise: Remove the microwave if it contributes to a false alarm.

If we are going to allow microwaves in work areas, every employee must act responsibly. That means:

- Never leave a microwave unattended while in use.
- Do not bring toasters, grills, or other unauthorized appliances into the Hospital.

Aim High on Safety Survey

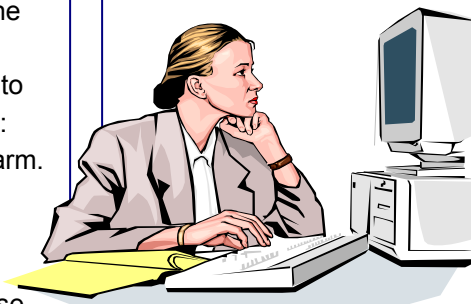
In 2003, employees averaged 84.5 percent on the safety survey, down from 95 percent in 2002.

Although the survey is designed to assess employees' basic knowledge of safety information, the lower scores can be attributed in part to a change in the way the survey was administered. Last year, the survey was conducted through Net Learning for the first time. In previous years, it was distributed as a paper survey.

This year, employees will be taking the survey on Net Learning again, but they've had time to adjust to that system as more and more employees use the computer for continuing education.

This year, we expect employees to score high on the survey. We've done lots of safety continuing education during the year—through newsletters, poster sessions, and classes. Now, it's time for employees to show us what they've learned.

The safety survey will cover six basic topics—hazardous materials and waste, fire prevention and response, medical equipment, utilities, security, and emergency management. As in past years, it will also include questions on "hot topics"—new information that was introduced within the last year or that is currently of high importance.



The safety survey is now on NetLearning. All employees are required to complete the survey by January 15, 2005.

After an employee completes the survey, he should print a copy of the transcript for his supervisor.

Decorations Must Comply with Fire Regulations

As you decorate your work area for the holidays, remember that the Hospital has specific rules designed to keep building occupants safe and the Hospital in compliance with life safety code and JCAHO. The rules are outlined in Hospital Policy 04-17, and they are summarized below for your convenience.

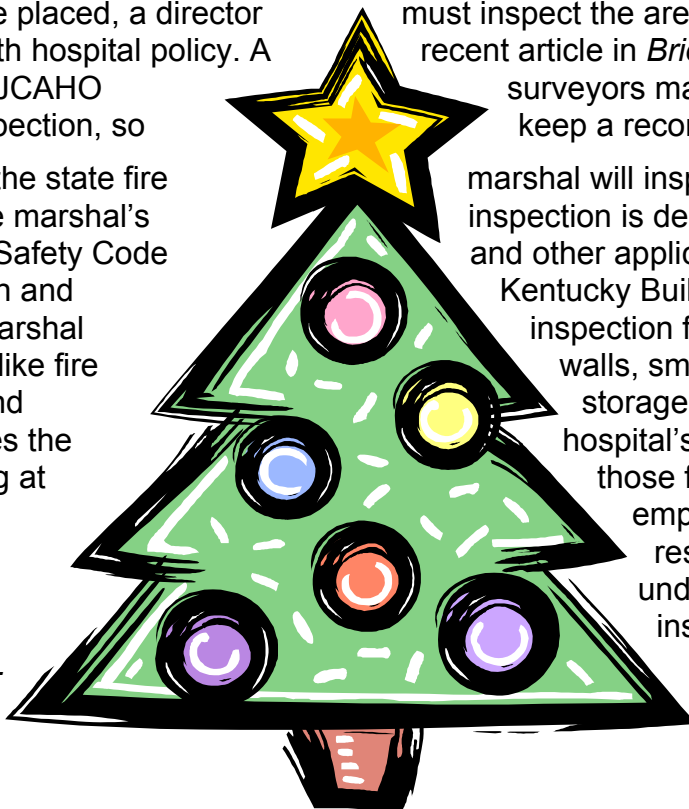
- Decorations, including greenery, must be artificial and flames retardant or noncombustible.
- Only miniature, UL approved holiday lights are allowed.
- Extension cords must be UL approved. Extension cords used in patient care areas must be hospital grade.
- Decorations, including cords, cannot obstruct, restrict, or transverse a walkway or corridor.
- Decorations cannot cover or be mounted on fire or smoke doors.
- Decorations cannot obstruct access to or visibility of exits, exit signs, fire alarm pull stations, alarm panels, or fire extinguishers.
- An 18" clearance must be maintained between sprinkler heads and decorations.
- Decorations must be affixed or mounted in such a way as to prevent damage to doors, walls, ceilings, or floors.
- All decorations must be removed by one week after the holiday.

When decorations are placed, a director they are compliant with hospital policy. A *Safety* indicated that JCAHO documentation of inspection, so

Also, remember that the state fire December 2. The fire marshal's compliance with Life Safety Code Protection Association and standards. The fire marshal environment—things like fire trash chutes, exits, and marshal also assesses the compliance by looking at for which individual departments are corridors, clearance fire extinguisher **holiday decorations.**

must inspect the area to ensure that recent article in *Briefings on Hospital* surveyors may ask for keep a record.

marshal will inspect the hospital on inspection is designed to ensure and other applicable National Fire Kentucky Building Code inspection focuses on the built walls, smoke and fire doors, storage areas. But the fire hospital's commitment to those fire safety issues employees or responsible—clear under sprinkler heads, inspection, and



This newsletter is distributed to Hospital leaders to help them fulfill their safety responsibilities.

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