



Welcome to the Fall 2018 edition of the Safety Dispatch

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Bats, Animals on Campus



The beautiful landscape of Texas A&M provides a natural home to birds, squirrels, and other wildlife you may see while walking and driving around campus. Did you know Texas A&M is also home to a significant number of bats, as well as numerous feral cats that live on campus property?

Benefits of bats

Bats are an important part of our campus environment, and a few species found in Texas are considered endangered or threatened. Though we should approach with caution and avoid direct contact, bats should not be harmed. They eat many disease-carrying insects and are a beneficial component of our local ecosystem.

What do I do if I come in contact with a bat?

Bats are considered high risk for rabies and should never be touched. If you come in contact with a bat, find one dead or alive in a campus building, or see a live bat anywhere that cannot fly, call the Facilities Services Communications Center immediately at (979) 845-4311.

For more information about bats and rabies, please visit the Texas Department of State Health Services Infectious Disease Control website: <u>http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/disease/rabies/</u>.

Other animals on campus

According to the Aggie Feral Cat Alliance of Texas (<u>AFCAT</u>), the population of feral cats on campus is estimated to be in the hundreds, with reports of cats in multiple locations: Kyle Field, the Central Utility Plant, Facilities Services parking lot, Sbisa Dining Center, Biological Sciences Building East, around campus dormitories, and in and around trash dumpsters.

Though it may be tempting to interact with squirrels, cats, and other animals that seem friendly, it is important to avoid trying to touch or hand feed any wildlife. The animal can bite you, provoked or not, and you could be conditioning it to approach other passersby who may not be as comfortable as you are with the interaction.

Remember to close all windows and doors, especially in the evening, to help keep bats and other animals from entering buildings. Contact the Facilities Services Communications Center at (979) 845-4311 if you see any wild animal in a campus facility.

Chemical Waste System Update



EHS has transitioned to a new chemical waste tracking program for campus. The new program, Dakota, is online and works in real time, eliminating any lag time the tags would spend in the mail and being processed. EHS is also changing to a new Hazardous Waste Disposal Tag. The new green tag requires less handwritten information – only the constituents of the waste are handwritten on the tag. • The Principal Investigator's (PI) Name (not a lab tech or student in charge)

· PI's email address and phone number

·University or Agency (Agrilife, TEEX, TTI, etc.)

· Department (Chemistry, Biology, etc.)

·Room and Building number

Every area that produces chemical waste will need to be registered. The new program is easier to use, faster to process, and safer for all involved.

Lesson 3 of 18

Stream Clean 2018

It's that time of year again to sign up your student organization (or yourself!) for Stream Clean, EHS's annual effort to pick up trash in our campus creeks and waterways. This year's event will be on October 27th from 8:00 to 11:00 AM.

Use the @SignUp link <u>here</u> to register, and contact Tassie Hermann at thermann@tamu.edu if you have any questions.



Lesson 4 of 18

Call Before you Dig!



Utility Locates at Texas A&M: Knowing is Key -- Call Before You Dig!

Odds are favorable that some type of ground disturbance occurs daily on the Texas A&M campus. Digging can damage any of the miles of buried utility lines that contain the flow of electricity, water, natural gas, communications, and sanitary sewer throughout campus and to

and from our facilities. Damage to any one of these utilities can be devastating to a building and the people who occupy and visit our campus.

To ensure optimum safety, Texas A&M's Utility Locate Procedure (Rule <u>24.99.99.M0.01</u>) is more stringent than state law and requires an advanced locate be performed for:

- 1. Any ground penetration on campus, to any depth, when mechanized equipment such as augers, trenchers, excavators, etc. will be used, and
- 2. All other ground penetrations to a depth greater than 12 inches. Hand-digging or soft excavation is required whenever any excavation is performed to a depth less than 12 inches without a utility locate. An advanced utility locate is always required if the excavation will be deeper than 12 inches.



Courtesy of Atmos Energy

In cases where these utility lines have been damaged, TAMU Utilities & Energy Services (UES) investigates these incidents and implements changes to protocols designed to prevent future recurrence. UES shares these best practices with other groups who dig on campus, so they can also implement the lessons learned. For example, formal approvals are needed before anyone can dig to ensure all steps are followed in locating utilities beneath the intended excavation.

Line strikes have been occurring less frequently this year due to improvements in training and utility line mapping and raising awareness about utility locations. Our campus environment seems to always be growing and changing, and construction is part of that activity. Project managers and contractors should be continually trained and reminded to "Call Before You Dig" (dial 811). Workers must think on their feet, follow the rules, and not rush through a project – making adjustments for changes in scope, personnel, and delays if they occur.

Click on the graphic for a better view of the underground utility line color marking code. For more information, see the <u>Texas Call811 website</u>.

Decommissioning Laboratory and Clinic Equipment for Surplus or Transfer

Equipment used in research or teaching labs and clinics has been potentially exposed to chemical, biological, and/or radiological hazards. This equipment is sent to Surplus for disposal through property auctions to the public or through other means when it is no longer needed. When a researcher leaves the University or transfers to another TAMU or TAMHSC building or campus, the move often requires the transfer of this equipment via commercial movers. It is the responsibility of those initiating the transfer of potentially contaminated equipment to ensure the equipment has been properly decontaminated before it is released to the public or to non–laboratory personnel.

The recently updated <u>Laboratory Decommissioning Standard Administrative Procedure (SAP)</u> now includes a section specifically related to the decommissioning of lab and clinic equipment. This procedure applies to equipment that is:

- Part of a lab decommissioning process
- Being removed from service and/or stored (whether temporarily or permanently)
- Leaving Texas A&M University
- Moving to another laboratory or building on any TAMU/TAMHSC campus
- Being released to TAMU Surplus Property or otherwise disposed of in a proper manner

The equipment decontamination procedure is explained in Section 3.2 of the SAP, while decontamination methods are described in Section 4. Decontamination must be documented using a <u>TAMU Equipment Decontamination Form</u>. This form must be completed for lab and clinic equipment even if decontamination is not required (such as for equipment used in a simulation lab).

Please visit Environmental Health and Safety's "<u>How do I get laboratory equipment approved for</u> <u>surplus</u>?" webpage for more information on decommissioning lab equipment.

Industrial Vehicle Safety

Texas A&M has a wide variety of industrial vehicles on campus, including forklift trucks and various "slow-moving vehicles." Individuals operating these vehicles and equipment must complete operator training to develop skills, learn safe techniques, and reduce risk to themselves, other people, and our campus community.

If you are an employee, student, contractor, or temporary worker who will use a forklift or other industrial vehicle on university property or in university operations, you must complete an EHS approved training.

For more information and for access to online Forklift and Slow Moving Vehicle Training courses, see the Training Opportunities section of the EHS <u>website</u>.



Radiation Producing Devices at Texas A&M

Handheld Radiation Producing Device (RPD)

The EHS Radiation Safety group maintains a master registration with the State of Texas of all radiation producing devices for the University. Texas regulations also require all x-ray devices to be registered with EHS for possession and use. Also, any equipment containing an x-ray source must be routed through EHS Radiation Safety before it can be sent for surplus or disposal.

Radiation Producing Devices (RPDs) come in all shapes and sizes. One type of RPD is the handheld X-ray Fluorescence (XRF) Analyzer. XRF RPDs work by bouncing x-rays off of their target material and analyzing the changes in the x-rays that come back. They can be particularly useful for research given their portability.

Because they look so much smaller than the big x-ray units that we are all used to seeing in our doctor's offices, it is easy to forget these XRF RPDs emit radiation and can be harmful if not used properly. EHS's Radiation Safety office will provide the safety training necessary to use these types of devices safely and correctly. EHS will also provide technical guidance, inspect the units for interlocks, and provide radiation surveys to ensure everyone is kept safe while working with this great technology. Radiation dosimetry badges may be issued to personnel to track individual doses.

EHS Radiation Safety issues permits for radiation producing devices and provides ionizing and non-ionizing radiation safety consultation. Questions? Ask us! If you have equipment that

should be registered, please contact radiological-safety@tamu.edu or 979-845-1361 to receive a permit. More information on radiation safety at Texas A&M can be found <u>here</u>.

West Nile Cases in Texas

In mid-July, The Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) confirmed its first three (3) cases of West Nile disease, as reported by local health departments in Austin, Dallas, and Galveston. As of September 15, 2018, there have been 45 human cases of West Nile reported in various counties in Texas.

People can be infected by West Nile virus through the bite of an infected mosquito. Last year, Texas reported 135 cases of West Nile illness that resulted in six deaths. There have been more than 3,500 illnesses and 167 deaths in Texas over the last 10 years. To protect themselves and their communities, people should take steps to avoid mosquito bites and reduce mosquito populations:

- Regularly apply EPA-registered insect repellent while outdoors
- Dump out all standing water inside and outside homes and businesses so mosquitoes can't lay eggs
- Use air conditioning or make sure window and door screens are in good repair to keep mosquitoes out
- Cover up with long sleeves and long pants to help prevent bites

Most people who get infected with West Nile virus do not get sick. About 20 percent develop West Nile fever, a fever that can be accompanied by a headache, muscle, and joint aches, nausea, diarrhea, and fatigue. People with this form of the disease usually recover on their own, though symptoms may last for several weeks. Less than one percent of those infected will develop the more severe West Nile neuroinvasive disease, in which the virus infects the nervous system. Symptoms can include those of West Nile fever plus neck stiffness, muscle weakness, vision loss, tremors, convulsions, disorientation, coma, and paralysis. Recovery can take months, and some effects on the nervous system may be permanent. About 1 in 10 die from West Nile neuroinvasive disease.

People experiencing West Nile symptoms should contact their healthcare provider for possible testing. There is no vaccine to prevent West Nile and no specific treatment, though over-the-counter and other medications may help relieve some symptoms.

See <u>TxWestNile.org</u> for more information on West Nile surveillance and current human cases.

(Article source: <u>TDSHS</u>)

When to Pull the Fire Alarm

A recent occurrence on campus warrants a reminder of how to initiate a building's fire alarm system and notify the TAMU Communications Center to get fire personnel rolling.

If the smoke detector does not set off a building's fire alarm system, there are manual pull stations for activation. Regardless of the size of the fire, our primary concern is the safety of all persons on campus, so it is important to utilize the fire alarm system to get the building evacuated and fire authorities moving. If you see smoke or flames but do not hear an alarm, activate the nearest pull station. If your building does not have an alarm system with pull stations, call 911 immediately. There is no way to predict the outcome of a fire, and you can help keep everyone safe and prevent property damage.

We are also required by the State Fire Marshal to report any fires that occur on TAMU property. If you are aware of a fire that occurred in or near a campus facility without a fire alarm or fire department response, contact EHS immediately at (979)845-2132.



Longhorned Tick: A New Species in the U.S.

Dr. Sonja Swiger of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service warns that the Longhorned Tick has been confirmed in several states. This tick is a relative newcomer to the U.S., and though it has not been confirmed in Texas, it was found in neighboring Arkansas in June. The Longhorned Tick, or Haemaphysalis Longicorn, is named for the distinctive "horns" sprouting from a portion of its head. This tick is not choosy about who or upon what mammal it feeds. It originated in China and has moved to Australia, across the Pacific, and now to the U.S. It thrives in climates ranging anywhere from tropical to cold. It is not known to be a Lyme disease carrier but is a known vector of several bacterial, viral, and protozoan disease agents affecting both livestock and humans. Homeowners and hunters this fall are encouraged to conduct surveillance of ticks on their livestock, pets, and harvested game and submit any suspicious ticks they find to the <u>Texas Animal Health Commission</u>. For more information on this and other ticks, access the Tick App at <u>http://tickapp.tamu.edu</u>.



Environmental News

| SUSTAINAE | BLE |
|-----------|-----|
| CHEMISTRY | R&D |

PLASTIC STRAW BANS

ARE WE PREPARED?

NATIONAL WATER QUALITY MONTH

The American Chemical Society (ACS) has endorsed the Sustainable Chemistry Research and Development Act as proposed by Senators S. Collins and C. Coons. This legislation, which would coordinate U.S. research and development efforts is critical to the future of the chemical sciences. The act would create a government-wide coordinating body to help guide federal investment in sustainable chemistry research, as well as a new public-private partnership program. I would also authorize a broad review of existing chemistry programs to give Congress a better understanding of the government's role in sustainable chemistry and the chemical enterprise. The ACS feels that supporting fundamental science, improving coordination and creating public-private partnerships will better leverage the government's support for sustainable and green chemistry to enhance the work being done at the academic and industrial levels. ACS recognizes the importance of environmental sustainability and that modern civilization depends on it. Environmental considerations and economic growth are not mutually exclusive, and the chemistry enterprise must continue to provide leadership in forging the science and technology that will provide humanity with a sustainable path into the future."

Further details are in the ACS Sustainability and the Chemical Enterprise publication, at https://www.acs.org



| SUSTAINABLE CHEMISTRY R&D | PLASTIC STRAW BANS | ARE WE PREPARED? | NATIONAL WATER QUALITY MONTH |
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The U.S. uses millions of plastic drinking straws every day. The movement to ban plastic straws is spreading rapidly. Many companies and municipalities are banning straws, but phasing them out can be more complicated than it seems at first glance. All wildlife and sea life are put at risk by ingesting small bits of plastic. Though just a small fraction of all plastic pollution, straws have become a symbol of waste to rally behind and are a feasible way for consumers to feel like they are making a difference.

The basis of plastic straw bans is grassroots energy, with community groups approaching their city councils and employee groups lobbying with management. Straws themselves are a product of convenience, and one that can be abated with reasonable behavioral changes. A public policy can guide what the market wants and prevent our straws from ending up in the environment, especially in our waterways. Consumers can use compostable straws and other single-use items, or they can just drink directly from their beverage cup. More than 40% of our plastic is used only once and winds up clogging our landfills and choking our waterways. Early straws were made of paper products and are still available. For more information on this issue:

A Brief History of Drinking Straws: <u>https://www.nationalgeographic.com</u>

Further Information on Plastic Pollution: <u>https://www.nationalgeographic.com</u>



SUSTAINABLE CHEMISTRY R&D

PLASTIC STRAW BANS

ARE WE PREPARED?

NATIONAL WATER QUALITY MONTH

There is a global consensus in the scientific community that we are living in a period of climate change caused by human activity. Global leaders at the 2015 Paris Agreement came together and agreed to limit the increase of the global average temperature to below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels to reduce extreme weather and climate-related events such as longer heatwaves, severe drought, intense hurricanes, stronger wildfires, and destructive floods.

Experts recently warned Congress that the U.S. is NOT ready for the public health problems climate change will bring. From the spread of insect-borne disease to the increased loading of public health centers and outpatient facilities from environmental disasters, public health professionals on Capitol Hill told congressional staffers there is much work to be done to prepare

for potential health risks to the American public at the federal, state and local levels. "Climate change isn't the singular cause of the catastrophe, but it has widened the expanse of social vulnerability to disasters," said Marcus Hendricks, an assistant professor in the urban studies and planning program at the University of Maryland. Hendricks outlined how the series of Western wildfires, intense rainfall in Houston, and wind and storm surge events in South Florida and Puerto Rico in 2017 were all devastating illustrations of the "collision of climate-related risk and the human-built environment." He and the other speakers stressed the need for an advanced investment in public health preparedness so that communities can prepare for risks ahead of time, whether that means developing evacuation plans or creating a way to monitor where diseases spread. Officials note a disconnection between the knowledge of the risks of climate change to health and the ability to actively prepare for those risks due to limited funding and collaboration with officials involved in disaster planning. Health equity and community engagement must underlie all the work we are doing. You can't just go in and tell a community what they need. Engagement and collaboration need to happen well before disaster strikes.



For more information: <u>https://www.scientificamerican.com</u>

| SUSTAINABLE CHEMISTRY R&D | PLASTIC STRAW BANS | ARE WE PREPARED? | NATIONAL WATER QUALITY MONTH |
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At Texas A&M, we know that maintaining clean water sources is important for both our environment and public health. Stormwater runoff can cause serious problems, and without proper training and equipment, our water sources can easily become polluted.

1. Learn about where your water comes from, the threats to keeping it "drinkable" and what we can do to prevent pollution by checking out the article: Clean Water, Clean Earth, <u>www.calpaclab.com</u>

2. Learn about what we're doing in the Texas A&M Stream Clean Program, to clean and protect our campus water bodies and streams at <u>http://ehs.tamu.edu/</u> or call (979) 845-2132. See the Stream Clean section of this newsletter - the next event is October 27th!

3. Learn about national programs to clean up America's waterways at the Living Lands & Waters Foundation, <u>http://livinglandsandwaters.org/</u>. Consider participating in their "Alternative Spring Break" activities, and do your part.



Lesson 12 of 18

FAA Says Avoid Drone Registration Schemes



UAV

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is warning owners of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) – especially hobbyists – to avoid services offering to "help" owners register their devices with the agency. All UAV's must be registered with the FAA and receive a "tail number" to be installed on your vehicle. A variety of services, businesses, and consultants are offering to help drone owners and operators file an application for a registration number, at quite exorbitant prices. Some spoof the official FAA website with similar graphics and even the FAA logo, or suggest they are approved" by the FAA. The FAA neither approves these entities nor will FAA speculate on their legitimacy. The "FAA Drop Zone" is all drone owners need – and it costs only \$5 to register. For the 5 dollar fee, hobbyists receive one ID number for ALL the units they own. Find out more at the FAA Drop-Zone, at <u>https://faadronezone.faa.gov/#/</u>. To request permission to fly a UAS on campus (or to hire a third party to fly a UAS on campus), complete the UAS <u>Flight Authorization Application</u>.

After the Supervising Authority has reviewed the application and determined that flights can be conducted safely, the pilot in command will be given permission to fly in accordance with the details on the application.

To fly UAS for educational purposes, faculty members will be given an expedited review by the Supervising Authority. Contact ehsd@tamu.edu to initiate a request for educational use of a UAS.

Lesson 13 of 18

Safety Shout Out



On Sunday, July 15, Texas A&M Utilities & Energy Services (UES) employee Michael Birgen observed a vehicle high-centered on the railroad tracks off Wellborn Road at the former railroad

crossing of Wade Road, which has been closed for over a year. The driver of the vehicle was following directions from her GPS, which indicated that the Wade Road crossing was still in place. The driver attempted to cross the tracks anyway and became stuck on the tracks. Mr. Birgen stopped, helped the pregnant driver exit the vehicle, and then proceeded to run down the railroad tracks to alert an approaching train of the vehicle. The train was able to come to a stop a very short distance from the stranded vehicle.

Other motorists stopped to help, and together they were able to free the truck from the tracks. Michael Birgen showed courage and initiative to help someone in need and provide a solution to a problem that could have ended very badly.

EHS Changing Software Systems

EHS will be moving toward a web-based software system that will allow us to automate and manage requirements for safety, training, and compliance. The BioRAFT Enterprise, Compliance and Training Software will integrate people, locations, job activities, and the hazards they are exposed to. It will include software modules for inspections, equipment management, chemical inventory, and training delivery and management.

BioRAFT will provide a login that is integrated with Single Sign-on, a crisp user interface, clear compliance reminders, convenient online training capabilities, and easy to follow workflows. The real-time dashboard allows users to easily see the entire picture of the people, spaces, and hazards associated with their job activities.

EHS is currently in the contractual and purchasing phase for this software. Stay tuned for more information as we move forward and begin working with the BioRAFT implementation team.

Lesson 15 of 18

New EHS Website



Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) has implemented an entirely new website at http://ehs.tamu.edu/. EHS strives to help Texas A&M fulfill its mission of providing the highest quality undergraduate and graduate academic and research programs in a safe, healthful, and secure environment. Please visit our new site to access University safety manuals and more information about our safety programs. You will also find our current EHS training opportunities, Safety Dispatch newsletters, and additional hot topics. Check it out!

Training Opportunities

See below for upcoming EHS training opportunities.



General Awareness DOT/IATA Hazardous Materials Contact Marianna Wood at (979) 845-2132 to register.

Training Opportunities

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General Awareness DOT/IATA Hazardous Materials Contact Marianna Wood at (979) 845-2132 to register. Upcoming sessions: September 20th; 3 – 4:30 pm October 18th; 10–11:30 AM November 15th; 3–4:30 AM

General Radiation Safety

Go to the <u>Radiation Safety Training Page</u> to register, and contact (979) 845-1361 with any questions.

Upcoming sessions: October 11th; 1-5 PM November 13th; 8:30-12:30 PM





Introduction to Laboratory Safety

Register through TrainTraq (<u>Course #211126</u>), and contact (979)845-2132 with any questions.

Upcoming sessions: September 20th; 9:30am to 11:30am October 13th; 1:30-3:30 PM October 24th; 9:30-11:30 AM November 14th; 1:30 - 3:30 PM

New Injury Prevention Program - Coming Soon!

Over many years, EHS has coordinated an Injury Prevention Program in various forms for a select group of departments on campus. These departments have worked diligently to support our goals to increase awareness of health and safety topics, train their staff, and promote other injury prevention efforts, and we appreciate the efforts of the departments, their safety teams, and especially their safety team leaders.

What's new?

EHS has decided to open the Injury Prevention Program to all of campus, hoping to reach as many in our campus community as we can while promoting safety topics that are important, timely, and applicable to our work environments. The new program will highlight different online courses available in TrainTraq, and one topic will be announced via campus-wide email at the beginning of every month. 12 winners will be chosen each month for a prize – 10 random names will be selected from the training completions for that month's topic, and 2 additional winners will be selected from social media followers – 1 each from Facebook and Twitter.

How do I participate?

- Look for a monthly email announcing the new training topic. It will link you to the TrainTraq course you should complete by month's end.
- Follow EHS on <u>Twitter</u> and <u>Facebook</u>.
- You may be one of 12 winners selected each month 10 from training completions and 1 each from Facebook and Twitter followers.
- Monthly topics will also be posted on the EHS website.

The first topic will be announced soon, so watch your email!

About Us

Reveille Says



"Safety is something that happens between your ears, not something you hold in your hands."

~ Reveille 2018

Meet EHS Team Members

Each issue of the Safety Dispatch introduces two members of the EHS team to you, our campus family. This issue highlights the skills and background of Stephanie Colman and Sean Speed. Make sure to say "howdy" if you see them around!



Stephanie Colman, MS, CHMM

Stephanie Colman serves as the Environmental Health & Safety Coordinator III at the Institute of Biosciences and Technology in Houston. Stephanie holds a Bachelor of Science in Meteorology from the University of South Alabama and a Master of Science in Atmospheric Science from Texas A&M University. She is also a Certified Hazardous Materials Manager. Prior to joining Texas A&M, Stephanie worked as an Environmental Standards Coordinator for Orange County Public Schools in Orlando, FL where she managed the storage tanks, remediation, and regulated waste programs. She has also worked for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality in their Small Business and Local Government Assistance Program and as an Environmental Compliance Administrator for Greyhound.

Sean Speed is a Safety Supervisor for EHS, assigned to the Utilities & Energy Services (UES) department since 2007. Before this he worked in private industry on the Gulf Coast for eighteen years. Sean conducts monthly safety inspections at UES locations and around campus. He conducts training, serves on committees related to safety, reviews and creates standard operating procedures and guidelines, and tracks key performance indicators for the UES Safety Observation and Near Miss reporting program. Additionally, he tracks injuries and incidents, and coordinates safety improvements through the campus Aggieworks system. He holds a number of safety-related certifications. When not on campus, Sean enjoys spending time with his wife and son. He enjoys live music, visiting the grandkids, taking walks with his dog, and visiting with the neighbor's Longhorns and donkey.



Sean Speed



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Please click any of the following EHS programs to discover more information.

| <u>Agricultural Safety</u> | <u>Indoor Air Quality</u> |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <u>Asbestos</u> | Industrial Hygiene |
| AEDs | <u>Laboratory Safety</u> |
| <u>Chemical Waste</u> | Occupational Health |
| Emergency Management | <u>Occupational Safety</u> |
| <u>Engineering Safety</u> | <u>Radiological Safety</u> |
| <u>Environmental Management</u> | Respiratory Protection |
| <u>Ergonomics</u> | <u>Safety Manual</u> |
| <u>Fire & Life Safety</u> | Tent Application |
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Hearing Conservation