

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

SAFETY DISPATCH

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY

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WINTER FIRE SAFETY

The statistics are daunting. The season of celebrations, family gatherings, holiday decorations, and wonderful meals is also the most prevalent time for house fires.

Between 2009-2014, an estimated 860 home structure fires started from lights, candles, and other holiday decorations. According to the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA), though only 40% of home heating fires involve space heaters, they are involved in almost 80% of home heating fire deaths. December, January, and February are peak months for heating fires. Most of the US is at risk for winter storms that may cause power outages, giving reason for people to use alternative means to heat their homes. Using portable generators, space

heaters, and cooking equipment indoors poses risks associated with both fire and carbon monoxide poisoning.

Taking certain safety precautions in your home and at the office while following these safety guidelines can help ensure a safe and happy winter season.

- Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant and place away from heat vents.
- Consider using battery-operated flameless candles. If you use lit candles, make sure they are in stable holders, 12 inches from



anything that can burn, and cannot be easily knocked over. Never leave a room or go to bed with candles burning. Remember that candles are prohibited in all buildings on campus, whether or not you intend to light them.

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Kidde Fire Extinguisher Recall

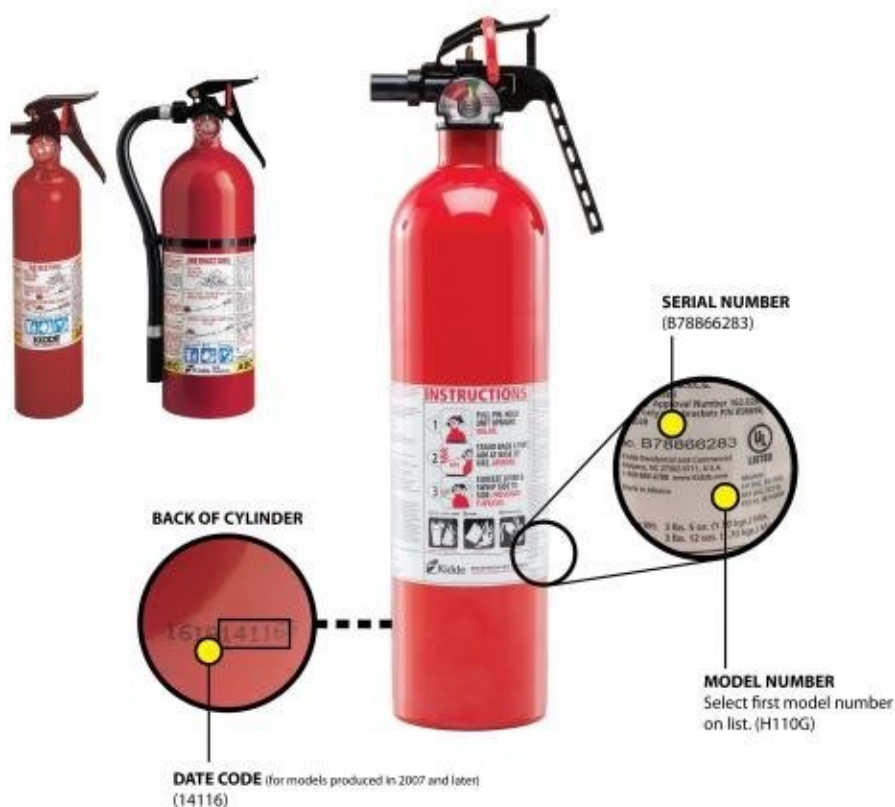
Kidde has recalled more than 40 million fire extinguishers with plastic handles due to failure to discharge and nozzle detachment. The recall includes 134 models manufactured as far back as 1973 and as recently as August 2017.

All extinguishers being recalled have a plastic handle or plastic push button that can break or detach with enough force to pose an impact hazard. The fire extinguishers can also become clogged or require excessive force to discharge and can fail to activate during an emergency. The recalled fire extinguishers came in red, silver, and white and were sold nationwide in stores as well as some commercial trucks, recreational vehicles, and boats. One death has been reported as well as numerous injuries.

Contact Kidde toll-free at 855-271-0773, or online at the www.kidde.com Product Safety Recall page.

Safety Soundoff!

A shout-out to Sri Immadi and other lab personnel in Dr. Dai Lu's lab at the Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy in Kingsville for their efforts to correct safety deficiencies identified in the lab. It was evident during their recent lab inspection that they have made great strides since their previous inspection to reduce the quantity of flammable chemicals in the lab, store chemicals properly, and clean up and organize the lab. Keep up the good work!



Smoke alarms save lives. Here's what you need know:

- A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat and fire. Install smoke alarms in every sleeping room and outside each separate sleeping area. Install alarms on every level of the home.
- Smoke alarms should be interconnected when possible. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Large homes may need extra smoke alarms.
- Test your smoke alarms at least once a month and replace batteries at least once a year. Press the test button to be sure the alarm is working.
- There are two kinds of alarms. Ionization smoke alarms are quicker to warn about flaming fires. Photoelectric alarms are quicker to warn about smoldering fires. It is best to use both types of alarms in the home.
- Some people, especially children and older adults, may need help waking. Special alarms with strobe lights and bed shakers are available for those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.
- When a smoke alarm sounds, get outside and stay outside. You should designate a meeting area outside your home where all occupants will gather and stay until the fire department arrives.
- Replace all smoke alarms in your home every 10 years.
- Visit the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) [website](#) for more information about smoke alarms in your home.



KBTX news anchor suffers major burns

A KBTX News Anchor shared her story this past October as she received 2nd and 3rd degree burns from a wax fire. Kathleen Witte tried to put out a fire from a wax candle in her kitchen one evening by dousing it with water, and instead the jar exploded. She suffered deep burns on her face, hands, legs, torso, and hips. Although she is now on the mend, she has scars that will take a long time to heal. Kathleen shares her story in hopes to educate the public about fire safety, more specifically wax fires, so that they do not make the same mistake.



Never throw water on a wax fire. Wax fires must be put out by suffocation by using a dry chemical extinguisher or baking soda to put out the flames. Kathleen also credits the **“Stop, Drop, and Roll”** method for not allowing the fire to spread to other parts of her body and possibly saving her life. Finally, she believes that if a **fire extinguisher** was not present, that she would have suffered a total loss of her home.

See the full news story [here](#).

See the [full list of safety tips](#) from the National Candle Association.

Pedestrian Safety on Campus



Our campus is growing! Things are changing! With the large number of construction projects and contractor vehicles on campus, it is imperative to stay alert to your surroundings.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in the next 24 hours, on average, 430 people will be involved in a traffic-related pedestrian injury.

Be aware of construction and maintenance projects on or near pedestrian and travel areas at all times. Watch for construction signage and barricades, and stay away from

equipment. If a site is closed to pedestrian or vehicle traffic, DO NOT ENTER. Avoid distractions such as electronic devices that take your attention off the roadway. Familiarize yourself with the layout of campus to map out the safest route to your destination beforehand. Always use crosswalks when possible and check for traffic. Do not assume drivers will yield to a pedestrian who enters the crosswalk. At night, plan the safest route by choosing adequately lighted walkways, parking lots, and streets.

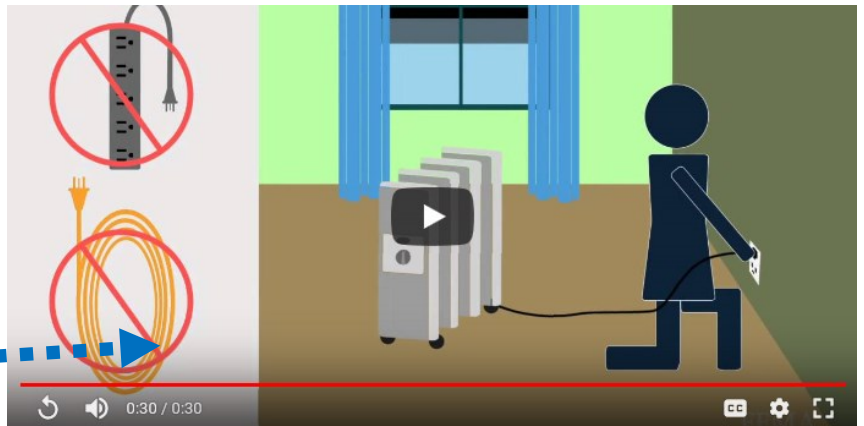
If you must walk alone, you may contact the Corps of Cadets Guard Room (845-6789) for a free 24-hour escort to most locations on campus.

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- Do not use the kitchen oven/range to heat your home. It is a fire hazard and can be a source of toxic fumes.
- Keep anything flammable at least three feet away from space heaters. Make sure portable heaters have an automatic shut-off when tipped over.
- Blow out lit candles and turn off all light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.
- Plug only one heat-producing appliance into an electrical outlet at a time, and never use an extension cord or power strip.
- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home inside bedrooms and in common areas. Test all smoke alarms monthly and replace batteries at least once a year.
- Install carbon monoxide alarms near sleeping areas and anywhere you may have a potential source (fireplaces and gas powered furnaces, stoves, dryers, etc.).

For more information, visit the US Fire Administration's [Heating Fire Safety](#) page or the NFPA's [Put a Freeze on Winter Fires](#) campaign.

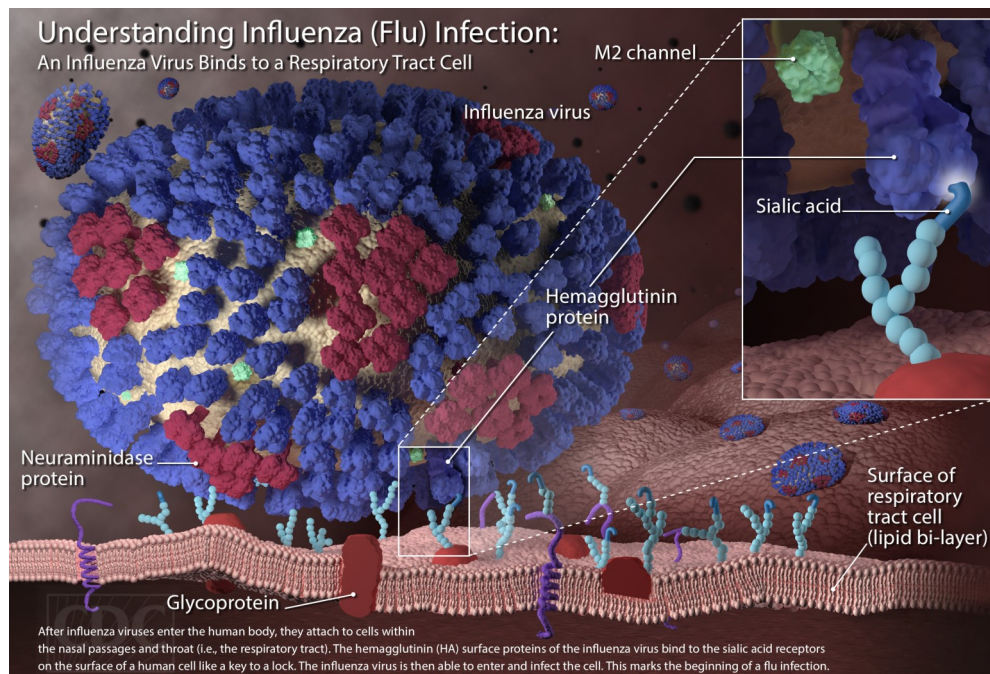
Click here for a short video about space heaters



Flu Season Is Here! Get your flu shot or not?

While Influenza (flu) can be detected year-round in the United States, flu viruses are most common during the fall and winter, peaking in the months of January and February. The flu is a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes death. Every flu season is different, and influenza infection can affect people differently, but millions of people get the flu every year.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months and older, but wait...*can the flu vaccine give me the flu?*



The short answer...No. Flu vaccines that are administered with a needle are currently made in two ways: the vaccine is made either with a) flu vaccine viruses that have been 'inactivated' and are therefore not infectious, or b) with no flu vaccine viruses at all (which is the case for recombinant influenza vaccine). The nasal spray flu vaccine does contain live viruses. However, the viruses are weakened, and therefore **cannot cause flu illness**. The nasal spray vaccine is not being administered this year based on data showing relatively lower effectiveness than the flu shot.

While the flu vaccine cannot give you the flu illness, there are side effects associated with getting the vaccine. These side effects include soreness, redness, or swelling at injection site, low grade fever, and aches. These symptoms are mild and short-lasting.

So how do flu vaccines work? Flu vaccines cause antibodies to develop in the body about two weeks after vaccination. These antibodies provide protection against infection with the viruses that are in the vaccine. This season's flu vaccine will protect against the influenza viruses that research indicates will be most common during the season. This includes an influenza A (H1N1) virus, and influenza A (H3N2) virus, and one or two influenza B viruses, depending on the flu vaccine. For the 2016-2017 season, CDC recommends the use of the flu shot (inactivated influenza vaccine or IIV) and the recombinant influenza vaccine (RIV).

The ideal situation to combat influenza is for the viruses in the vaccine and the viruses circulating throughout the season to match. That way the antibodies produced by vaccination will ultimately protect against infection. However, if the vaccine is not a good match to the circulating viruses, antibodies made in response to vaccination with one flu virus can still provide protection against different but related viruses. Also, even when there is a poor match or reduced effectiveness against one virus, it's important to remember that the one flu vaccine is designed to protect against three or even four flu viruses at a time, depending on the vaccine. Therefore, the CDC recommends an annual flu vaccine.



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Active Shooter

With a number of tragic events unfolding this year and the images and stories in the news lately, it is always good to be prepared in the event of an active shooter.

Although University Police officers are specially trained and equipped to rapidly intervene in active shooter events, these situations often end before law enforcement arrive on scene. Individuals must be prepared both mentally and physically to respond and protect themselves. If you find yourself in an active shooter situation, try to remain as calm as possible and use the suggested actions below to help plan a strategy for your survival.

HOW TO RESPOND

WHEN AN ACTIVE SHOOTER IS IN YOUR VICINITY

1. RUN

- Have an escape route and plan in mind
- Leave your belongings behind
- Keep your hands visible

2. HIDE

- Hide in an area out of the shooter's view
- Block entry to your hiding place and lock the doors
- Silence your cell phone and/or pager

3. FIGHT

- As a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger
- Attempt to incapacitate the shooter
- Act with physical aggression and throw items at the active shooter

CALL 911 WHEN IT IS SAFE TO DO SO

HOW TO RESPOND

WHEN LAW ENFORCEMENT ARRIVES

- Remain calm and follow instructions
- Put down any items in your hands (i.e., bags, jackets)
- Raise hands and spread fingers
- Keep hands visible at all times
- Avoid quick movements toward officers such as holding on to them for safety
- Avoid pointing, screaming or yelling
- Do not stop to ask officers for help or direction when evacuating

INFORMATION

YOU SHOULD PROVIDE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT OR 911 OPERATOR

- Location of the active shooter
- Number of shooters
- Physical description of shooters
- Number and type of weapons held by shooters
- Number of potential victims at the location

For more information about what to do in an active shooter situation and how to recognize and prevent workplace violence, visit Texas A&M's active shooter preparedness webpage [here](#).

For links to videos with guidance on surviving an active shooter situation, visit UPD's Active Shooter webpage [here](#).

DID

Humans take about 23,000 breaths a day.

Paper products make up the largest part (approximately 40 percent) of our trash.

The highest point in Ohio is said to be "Mount Rumpke," which is a "mountain" made up of trash – at a sanitary landfill! [Rumpke](#) is one of the nation's largest waste and recycling companies.

YOU

From 2013 to 2015, an average of 45,900 home heating fires occurred in the United States each year.

KNOW



One tree can filter up to 60 pounds of pollutants from the air each year.

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What should you do if you become ill?

- Stay away from coworkers, as not to spread the virus
- Consider antiviral medications to take as prevention (such as Tamiflu) for individuals you live with or work closely with. These medications are 70%-90% effective in preventing the flu if started within 48 hours of exposure to the flu
- Drink plenty of fluids and treat your symptoms
- Get plenty of rest, particularly while you have a fever
- Avoid drinking alcohol and smoking
- Texas A&M University students: Visit the A.P. Beutel Health Center to talk with a physician if you are feeling ill. Appointments can be made by phone at (979) 458-8250, or online at <http://shs.tamu.edu/appointments>
- Faculty, Staff, and dependents: Visit your primary care physician

Flu Resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Texas Department of State Health Services
- Texas A&M Student Health Services
- Brazos County Health Department

December Safety Topic/November Winners

We had over 800 completions for our November safety team training topic, *Shots Fired*. Ten names were randomly selected for a prize of their choice. Congratulations to these winners!

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Mary Adam, IT | • Bradley Julson, IODP |
| • Robert Aduddell, IODP | • Hannah Langenkamp, VMTH |
| • Logan Dodd, VMTH | • Mindy Phillips, Athletics |
| • Sarah Earnest, CMP | • Leigh Roye, Transportation |
| • Margaret Hastedt, IODP | • Joel White, VMTH |



The December training topic was TrainTraQ Course# 2112937 – [AED Awareness Training](#). This training is provided by EHS and provides an explanation of the basic functions of an automated external defibrillator (AED) and how and when it should be used. This course was highlighted in January 2017 and will be repeated each year as a refresher for how to operate these life-saving devices found in many Texas A&M facilities.

Get to Know Us



Dr. David C. Breeding is an Assistant Director for EHS and leads programs for the Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station (TEES) and Texas A&M's Look College of Engineering. He conducts Project Safety Analysis (PSA) to identify hazards and assess risks of engineering research, academic, and service projects. Dr. Breeding also oversees the Education and Training function of the EHS Department and chairs the committee identifying critical emerging hazards facing the university. He was formerly Director of Engineering Safety and Security for TEES and a Division Head with TEEX over Environmental & Occupational Safety and Hazardous Materials Emergency Response training, and was Director of the OSHA Training Institute's Southwest Education Center. He holds a PhD in Safety Engineering & Environmental Engineering from Texas A&M. He also holds an MBA in strategy and the economics of regulation from

Vanderbilt University, an MS in industrial hygiene, and a BS in environmental health and safety from Tennessee. Dr. Breeding is a prolific writer and has published four books (one of which was used as a text at Texas A&M), over 150 technical articles, and over 300 EH&S training presentations. He also dabbles in amateur guitar and vintage car restoration, and he "fixes broken stuff." He is an authentic "Appalachian Hillbilly" from East Tennessee's Smoky Mountains.



Brad Urbanczyk is an Assistant Director for EHS and has over 20 years of experience in the health and safety field. Brad manages all departmental inspections across campus including lab safety, fire and life safety, shops, and radiation safety inspections. He also oversees Hazardous Materials Shipping for Texas A&M and assists Texas A&M System components. In addition, Brad serves as the Safety Officer for Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, overseeing the Environmental Health and Safety programs for 13 Research and Extension centers across Texas as well as the Texas 4-H Center in Brownwood. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1997 from Texas A&M University and worked for TVMDL for 6 years before joining EHS in September 2003. When not at work, you can find Brad on the baseball field with his two sons. Both play for the nonprofit organization

Twelve Baseball in College Station where Brad assists as the general manager for both teams. When not on the baseball field, he enjoys time with his family, taking his boat to Rockport Bay, and deer hunting.

Safety Dispatch is distributed electronically and published online only, but EHS will consider requests for printed copies. If you or your department is interested in receiving a printed version of our newsletter, please email safetydispatch@tamu.edu and include your department, mail stop, and number of requested copies.

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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Industrial Hygiene
Laboratory Safety
Occupational Health
Occupational Safety
Radiological Safety
Respiratory Protection

Environmental Health & Safety is a department within the Office of Safety and Security in the Division of Finance and Operations. Click [here](#) to provide feedback.

EHS Training Schedule

Click on a date below to register for classroom training:

General RAM	2/16
Introduction to Laboratory Safety	1/24, 2/7, 2/22
General Awareness DOT/IATA	2/8

Interested in other trainings?
See the list of currently offered courses (online and classroom)
on the [EHS training page](#) or call 979-845-2132
to inquire about additional topics.

Click any link to stay connected.



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! We need to hear from you !

Notice a safety concern that affects you or your department? Have an environmental, health, or safety question you would like answered? Have a topic in mind that you want to see in the next issue of *Safety Dispatch*? **Let us know!**

Enter to win a great spring prize...

Can you count how many fire extinguishers appear in this newsletter? Be sure to count the hidden ones, too! For a chance to win a prize, email your answer to safetydispatch@tamu.edu.

