



# Alaska Chapter NECA

March 29, 2004  
Alaska Chapter, NECA  
[www.alaskaneca.org](http://www.alaskaneca.org)

## Chapter Calendar

April 6	Anchorage JATC Meeting
April 13	Safety Committee Meeting
April 14	Board Meeting 4:30pm Membership Meeting 6pm
May 31	Memorial Day Holiday
October 16-19	National Convention
December 11	Annual Meeting

## Tool Box Talks

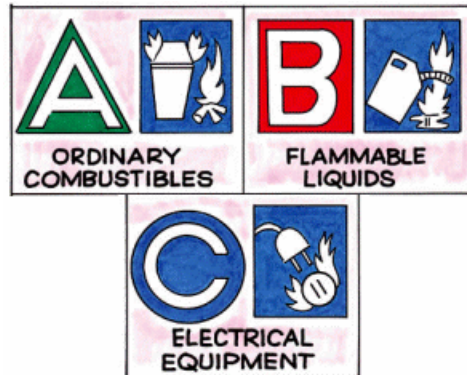
April 05, 2004	Exit Strategies
April 12, 2004	Fall Protection
April 19, 2004	Falling Objects Hard Hats
April 26, 2004	Fire Evacuation

## Dealing with electrical fires

Electricity is one of the most common causes of fires and thermal burns in homes and workplaces. Defective or misused electrical equipment is a major cause of electrical fires. If there is a small electrical fire, be sure to use only a Class C or multipurpose (ABC) fire

extinguisher, or you might make the problem worse.

All fire extinguishers are marked with letter(s) that tell you the kinds of fires they can put out. Some extinguishers contain symbols, too.



The letters are explained below (including suggestions on how to remember them).

- A (think: Ashes) = paper, wood, etc.
- B (think: Barrel) = flammable liquids
- C (think: Circuits) = electrical fires

### **Training is a must**

Keep in mind that you should not try to put out fires unless you have received proper training. If you are not trained, the best thing you can do is evacuate the area and call for



help.

## **Man's best friend may bite you**

Many utility workers are challenged with the task of working around many different homes and locations. In these locations, workers are likely to encounter pets, such as dogs.

It is important to follow safety procedures when encountering a dog to avoid being bitten or attacked.

### **Avoid dog bite situations**

There are several things you can do to avoid dog bite situations. These include:

- Watch out for dogs along your route and be aware of places a dog can hide.

- Never hand something to a child or adult while in view of a dog.
- Place one foot at the base of doors that open outward to prevent a dog from rushing out.
- Learn to recognize the warning signs that a dog is about to attack: tail high and stiff, ears up, hair on back standing up, and teeth showing.
- Don't approach a strange dog, especially one that's tethered or confined.
- Dogs are very territorial animals who react aggressively when someone invades their territory or "danger zone." When you find yourself in a dog's danger zone, you should stop immediately and remain still, allowing the dog's anger to subside.
- If confronted, face the dog without making direct eye contact and back away slowly. Be submissive, but don't run. If you run, the dog is going to try to knock you to the ground and you could be seriously hurt.
- If a dog threatens you, don't scream. Avoid eye contact. Try to remain motionless until the dog leaves, then back away slowly until the dog is out of sight.
- Put something between you and the dog if possible. Don't try to make friends with the dog, pet it, or put your hands or face near it. And if the dog does bite, try not to pull away because that may cause further injury. Instead, try to make the dog release its hold.
- Quickly obtain medical attention and report all injuries.
- Report all incidents regarding dogs to supervisors.

## How do I wear and care for my hard hat?

OSHA requires that head protection (hard hats) be worn if there is a risk of head injury from electrical burns or falling/flying objects. Because the hard hat serves such an important function (protecting you) it is crucial that you wear it and care for it properly.

### Can I wear it backwards?

Always wear your hard hat with the bill forward, unless your safety manager or supervisor verifies that the hat has been specifically tested in another position. (Hats are usually tested in the bill forward position.) If you wear a hat differently, you may not be fully protected.

### How should it fit?

The hat should fit snugly without being too tight.

### How do I clean the hat?

You should clean your hard hat regularly according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use only mild soap and water for cleaning. Heavy-duty cleaners and other chemicals can damage the hat.



### What about inspections?

Check the hat according to the manufacturer's instructions. Generally, you should look for:

- cracks,
- dents,

- frayed straps, and
- dulling of the finish.

These conditions can reduce protection.

### **Other tips**

- Never “store” anything in the top of your hard hat while you are wearing it. The space between the inside harness and the top of the hard hat must remain open to protect you.
- Do not put stickers on your hat (the glue can weaken the helmet).
- Don’t wear another hat under your hard hat!
- Keep your hard hat out of direct sunlight when you are not wearing it!

## **Insect bites pose tularemia hazard to outdoor workers**

You don’t hear the term “tularemia” often, but if you’re an outdoor worker you should become familiar with it. Tularemia, also known as “rabbit fever,” is a disease caused by the bacterium *Francisella tularensis*. Tularemia is typically found in animals, especially rodents, rabbits, and hares. Tularemia is usually a rural disease and has been reported in all U.S. states except Hawaii.

Typically, people become infected through the bite of infected insects (most commonly, ticks and deerflies), by handling infected sick or dead animals, by eating or drinking contaminated food or water, or by inhaling airborne bacteria.



About 200 human cases of tularemia are reported each year in the United States. Most cases occur in the south-central and western states. Nearly all cases occur in rural areas, and are caused by the bites of ticks and biting flies or from handling infected rodents, rabbits, or hares. Cases also have resulted from inhaling airborne bacteria and from laboratory accidents.

### **Signs and symptoms of tularemia**

The signs and symptoms people develop depend on how they are exposed to tularemia. Possible symptoms include skin ulcers, swollen and painful lymph glands, inflamed eyes, sore throat, mouth sores, diarrhea, or pneumonia. If the bacteria are inhaled, symptoms can include abrupt onset of fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, joint pain, dry cough, and progressive weakness. People with pneumonia can develop chest pain, difficulty breathing, bloody sputum, and respiratory failure. Tularemia can be fatal if the person is not treated with appropriate antibiotics.

Consult your doctor at the first sign of illness. Be sure to let the doctor know if you are pregnant or have a weakened immune system.

### **Preventing infection**

Use insect repellent containing DEET on your skin, or treat clothing with repellent containing permethrin, to prevent insect bites. Wash your hands often, using soap and warm water, especially after handling animal carcasses. Be sure to cook your food thoroughly and that your water is from a safe source.

Note any change in the behavior of your pets (especially rodents, rabbits, and hares) or livestock, and consult a veterinarian if they develop unusual



symptoms.

## Computer work: It's not as safe as you think

Computer work, whether it's for a job or for fun, may appear to be a low effort activity when viewed from a total body perspective, but maintaining postures or performing highly repetitive tasks for extended periods can lead to problems in localized areas of the body. For example, using a mouse for a few minutes should not be a problem for most users, but performing this task for several uninterrupted hours can expose the small muscles and tendons of the hand to hundreds or even thousands of activations (repetitions). There may not be adequate time between activations for rest and recuperation, which can lead to localized fatigue, wear and tear, and injury. Likewise, maintaining static postures, such as viewing the monitor, for a prolonged period of time without taking a break can fatigue the muscles of the neck and shoulder that support the head.

### Possible solutions

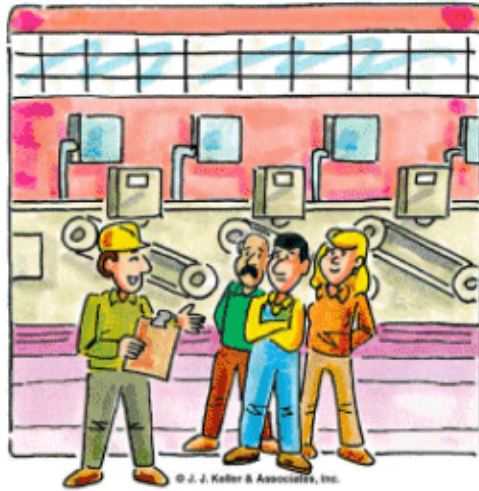
Provide variation in tasks and workstations so there is time to recover from the effects of activity. There are several ways to provide recovery time for overused muscles.

- Utilize an adjustable workstation so users can easily change their working postures. The use of easily adjustable furniture, for example, allows you to frequently change seated postures, which allows different muscle groups to provide support while others rest.
- Ensure that there is enough work space so you can use each hand alternately to perform mouse tasks. This allows the tendons and muscles of the free hand to rest.
- Substitute keystrokes for mousing tasks, such as Ctrl+S to save, Ctrl+P to print. Especially if your job is highly mouse intensive.

High repetition tasks or jobs that require long periods of static posture may require several, short rest breaks (micro breaks or rest pauses). During these breaks users should be encouraged to stand, stretch, and move around. This provides rest and allows the muscles enough time to

recover.

Alternate tasks whenever possible, mixing non-computer-related tasks into the workday. This encourages body movement and the use of different muscle



groups.

## Why is OSHA at my workplace?

In the unlikely event an OSHA inspector is at your workplace, you may wonder why he or she is there. The initial thought is that something bad has happened or else your workplace has safety problems. While that may be the case, the mere presence of an OSHA inspector doesn't necessarily mean something bad is going on.

In some cases, OSHA will conduct planned or programmed inspections aimed at specific industries. In these cases, your workplace may be performing safely, but fall within a high-hazard industry, thus leading to the inspection.

So the reasons for an inspection vary.

### Inspection priorities

OSHA cannot inspect all 7 million workplaces it covers each year. The agency seeks to focus its inspection resources on the most hazardous workplaces in the following order of priority:

- 1. Imminent danger situations**—hazards that could cause death or serious physical harm—receive top priority. Compliance officers will ask employers to correct these hazards immediately—or remove endangered employees.
- 2. Fatalities and catastrophes**—incidents that involve a death or the hospitalization of three or more employees—come next. Employers must report such catastrophes to OSHA within 8 hours.
- 3. Complaints**—allegations of hazards or violations also receive a high priority. Employees may request anonymity when they file complaints.

4. **Referrals** of hazard information from other federal, state or local agencies, individuals, organizations or the media receive consideration for inspection.
5. **Follow-ups**—checks for abatement of violations cited during previous inspections—are also conducted by the agency in certain circumstances.
6. **Planned or programmed investigations**—inspections aimed at specific high-hazard industries or individual workplaces that have experienced high rates of injuries and illnesses—also receive priority.