

Safety Newsletter

March

Clearing the Clutter

By Sherrie Bandy

When I was a wee lass, ok, not really – I was in my 20s – I was working a 2nd job at the McDonald movie theater in downtown Eugene. If you ever saw a movie there, you are aware how it was laid out with the box office and concessions in the lobby, two sets of doors that led to the floor seats, and two ramps that led up to the bathrooms and balcony. What you may not be aware of is what was behind the theater's nooks and crannies. There was an office where the manager had a desk, an area to put our coats and bags, and a small storage area under one of the ramps that lead to the balcony. The area under the ramp held candy, popcorn, and soda syrup. Behind the screen was a large area where popcorn tubs, cups, lids, straws, etc. and all cleaning supplies were stored (not next to each other, mind you).



The area under the ramp was small and therefore, cluttered. There was a narrow path to walk down to find the items that were needed to restock, and inevitably, someone would leave a box or twelve in that path. Once, during a particularly busy time (I think we were showing Pocahontas), I had to run in there to get another box of red vines and tripped over an open box that was halfway into the path. Luckily, I caught myself by grabbing a shelf so I didn't fall. I did have some soreness in my arm and, of course, it took me longer to get the red vines out to waiting customers.

Trips and falls are only one reason why we should clear the clutter from our offices and surrounding areas. In addition to that safety hazard, stacks of materials or heavy boxes loaded up on tall shelves can fall and injure people.

Some other reasons why clearing the clutter is a good idea are:

- Clutter can make you sick – mold, dust, and pathogens cling to clutter
- Clutter degrades productivity – excess time is spent sifting through the clutter at your workstation, taking time and focus away from your work
- Clutter can block access to exits and safety equipment
- Clutter is expensive (Dawson, 2008)

What can you do at the ESD?

- If you find yourself with a cluttered workspace, take some time to go through your things to see if you really need them. Recycling bins are available in various areas at both the main ESD campus and at Westmoreland.
- If you have loose items that you need for specific tasks, consider organizing them into bins.
- If you store food that is not sealed, store it in bins to reduce the possibility of rodents and pests getting into the food and leaving their waste behind.
- If you have questions contact the Safety Committee.

References: Dawson, L.C. (2001, July 6). 6 reasons to clean out the clutter. Retrieved from: <https://www.ishn.com/articles/87360-6-reasons-to-clean-out-the-clutter>

Preventing Workplace Injuries with Proper Footwear

Most of us at Lane ESD do not work in environments requiring industrial-grade protective footwear (e.g. steel-toe or heat resistant shoes), but choosing the right shoes for our daily work assignment still helps prevent workplace injuries.

Open-toed shoes or sandals should be avoided, since objects – even in the relative safety of an office environment – can always fall and injure feet and toes. Those working in the classroom face additional hazards that can lead to foot injuries and/or slips and falls, so closed-toe shoes for school-based employees are a must.

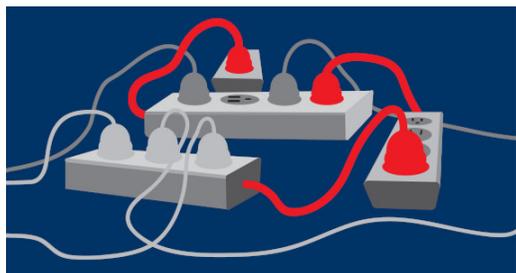
In addition to how well shoes protect our feet, we should also consider our shoes' traction level – to minimize slips and falls, but also to be prepared for times when we may need to help lift or move items.

SAIF offers a helpful tip to determine when shoes need to be replaced: Replace your shoes when the worn area of the sole is larger than two pennies placed side-by-side. ([see flyer](#) for more details).

Our friends in Australia also have some useful recommendations for “sensible shoes:”

- flat shoes and enclosed shoes
- well fastened and firmly grip the foot
- flexible, cushioned sole
- support and grip around the heel
- comfortable to wear all shift
- sole tread suited to likely 'contaminants' without the tread becoming clogged
- tread kept clean and in good condition

(Source: [WorkCover Queensland: Footwear](#))



Daisy Chaining Power Strips

One of the most common safety issues we come across during our inspections of Lane ESD facilities is the improper use of power strips. Daisy chaining power strips means having one power strip plugged into another powerstrip to allow for more power outlets or a longer reach from the main power source.

Daisy chaining power strips is a potential fire hazard and it also violates many safety codes included by OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) and NFPA (National Fire Protection Association).

If you are in need of a longer power strip on one that provides more connections, please contact the facilities department and they will provide you with the appropriate equipment.
