Practice Fall Fire Safety

As summer turns to fall, it's a good idea to brush up on fall fire safety tips. Some safety tips are the same regardless of the time of year, but many safety concerns are seasonal, particularly those that involve keeping your home warm. Here are some home fire safety tips as we move into the fall season:

Central Heating System Safety Tips
- Get your central heating system cleaned, inspected and serviced by a certified HVAC (heating, venting and air conditioning) contractor every year before using it.
- If you have a gas heater, make sure that you have a sufficient quantity of fully functioning carbon monoxide detectors installed in your home.

Space Heater Safety Tips
- Make sure that any space heaters are surrounded by at least three feet of empty space.
- Never place clothing or any other objects on a space heater to dry.
- Do not place space heaters near furniture or drapery.
- Turn space heaters off when you leave the house or go to sleep.

Fireplace Safety Tips
- Each fall, hire a chimney sweep to clean out your chimney and have it inspected for safety.
- Never leave a fire unattended.

- For natural gas fireplaces, get all connections and lines inspected before use each season.

No matter what type of device you use to heat your home, making sure your heating devices and/or systems are in good working order is an important part of practicing fall fire safety. Many things can go wrong with heating equipment during the spring and summer months. Verify that everything you need to keep your home warm throughout the fall and winter seasons is in good working order before the cold settles in.

Time Changes Mean Battery Changes
Get in the habit of changing the batteries in your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors every fall and spring when changing the clocks for Daylight Saving Time. Make it standard procedure in your household to verify that all fire extinguishers are fully charged and in working order when you adjust the clocks each season. It’s also a good idea to review fire prevention and escape plans with your family in the fall and several times throughout the year.

New Fire Safety Coordinator Hired
Bruce O’Keefe was recently selected as Fire Safety Coordinator for EH&S. Although new to this position, Bruce is not new to UT Arlington. For the past two years he has been inspecting our apartments and dormitories as our Housing Fire Safety Inspector. Pictured at left, Bruce instructs students in the proper use of fire extinguishers during the Fall Maverick Cookout and Activity Fair. Approximately 200 students were trained at the event.

See Fire Coordinator on page 3 . . .
New Guidelines Emphasize Biosafety in Teaching Labs

On June 5, 2014, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that a total of 41 persons from several states have been infected with *Salmonella typhimurium* since November 1, 2013. Of the 41 ill persons, 62% were 21 years of age or younger.

Epidemiologic and laboratory findings linked these *S. typhimurium* infections to exposure to various clinical and college and university teaching microbiology laboratories. Eighteen (86%) of 21 ill persons interviewed reported being enrolled in either a human biology course or microbiology course (15 were students and 3 employees). Many ill persons reported several behaviors while they were working in the laboratory that would increase the risk of acquiring a *Salmonella* infection. These behaviors included not wearing gloves or laboratory coats, lack of hand washing, and using the same writing utensils/notebooks outside of the laboratory. Additionally, many ill persons did not recall receiving laboratory safety training.

These recent serious outbreaks of *Salmonella* linked to clinical and college/university teaching microbiology laboratories highlight the dangers of working with laboratory pathogens and emphasize that safe handling of microorganisms in teaching laboratories must be a top priority. The outbreaks of *Salmonella* infections triggered the Education Board of the American Society for Microbiology (ASM) to charge a Task Committee to develop a uniform set of biosafety guidelines for working with microorganisms in teaching laboratories.

Throughout the process, the Task Committee relied on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) publication *Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories (BMBL)*, the standard for biosafety in laboratories. The final version of the guidelines, *Guidelines for Biosafety in Teaching Laboratories*, along with a discussion of their development, was subsequently published in ASM’s *Journal of Microbiology & Science* in 2013. These guidelines are not mandatory, but they represent best practices for safely handling microbes at both biosafety level 1 (BSL-1) and at biosafety level 2 (BSL-2). The guidelines are brief by design for ease of use and provide educators with a clear and consistent way to safely work with microorganisms in teaching laboratories.

Educators need to be aware of the risks inherent in using microorganisms in the laboratories and must use best practices to minimize the risk to students and the community. The guidelines and appendix are designed to encourage awareness of the risks, promote uniformity in best teaching practices, and protect the health and wellness of students. Even though organisms manipulated in BSL-1 laboratories pose a low level of risk to the community and are unlikely to cause disease in healthy adults, most of the microorganisms used in the microbiology teaching laboratory are capable of causing an infection given the appropriate circumstances. Many best practices should be adopted to minimize the risk of laboratory-acquired infections and to train students in the proper handling of microorganisms.

The *Guidelines for Biosafety in Teaching Laboratories* and Appendix to the *Guidelines for Biosafety in Teaching Laboratories* cover the following topics for BSL-1 and BSL-2 teaching laboratories:

**Personal Protection Requirements** (eye protection, face protection, gloves, clothing and shoes for the laboratory)

**Laboratory Physical Space Requirements** (architectural and furniture requirements, engineering controls)

**Stock Culture Requirements** (traceability, verification and safe-keeping of used cultures of microorganisms)

**Standard Laboratory Practices** (general rules for best practices and behaviors, and good microbiological techniques in labs handling biotic materials)

**Training Practices** (applicable regulations, training of instructors/student assistants, demonstration of competency at BSL-1 before working in a BSL-2 laboratory)

**Document Practices** (proper signage, incidents/accidents/spills, emergency procedures, a biosafety manual specific to the laboratory and/or course in the laboratory)
Decorate Safely this Holiday Season

Here on campus, fall is the time to review the [Guidelines for Decorative Displays](http://example.com) at UT Arlington. Go to the link to see complete directions and a list of specifically prohibited items. In general, exits, hallways, stairways and fire equipment must not be blocked.

1) No decorations are permitted within stairwells, lobbies, or elevators; laboratories and/or shop areas should not contain holiday decorations.

2) Decorations are not to be hung from the ceiling, ductwork, or suspended from overhang pipes.

3) Decorations may not cover more than 20 percent of the wall area, or exceed 50 percent of a door area on either side.

4) Candles and other sources of open flame are not permitted inside University buildings.

5) Natural cut trees are prohibited in buildings. Flame resistant artificial trees under 6 feet tall are permissible.

6) All holiday lighting should bear a “UL” testing lab seal of approval or Factory Mutual (FM) rating.

7) Use hooks or clips specially designed for handling light strings instead of nails, staples, or thumbtacks.

8) Do not connect more than three strands of light sets together.

9) Multi-plug adapters are prohibited in University buildings and may not be used. Power strips with surge protection are allowable, but may not be daisy chained (linked together).

10) All Christmas decorations should be removed prior to the University closing for the Christmas holiday.

**Other holiday and travel safety tips:**

- Set timers on interior and exterior lights.
- Don’t leave spare keys outdoors.
- Stop mail and newspaper deliveries, or have them regularly picked up by a neighbor.
- Check your tires for air pressure and wear, also have brakes checked.
- Wear your seat belt and have your passengers do the same.
- Do not drive if you have been drinking. Designate a driver in advance or call a taxi.
- No status updates: Never broadcast your location on Facebook or Twitter.
- Don’t let your garbage advertise your new gadgets. Make sure to recycle the boxes of any expensive items you received over the holidays.
- Protect your pipes: Make sure pipes in vulnerable areas such as attics and basements are insulated, and cover outdoor faucets.

Fire Coordinator
(continued from page 1)

Bruce has a bachelor’s degree in Public Safety Administration and a master’s degree in Executive Fire Service Leadership, with over 30 years experience in fire and life safety. His military service includes the Marine Corps Reserve and 24 years with the Air Force Reserve, retiring as a Chief Master Sergeant in 2007.

Bruce’s duties as fire safety coordinator will include conducting academic building inspections; reviewing and approving plans for special campus activities, including tent permitting and outdoor grill use; reviewing specifications for new construction and renovation projects to ensure compliance with NFPA codes; coordinate and help provide fire safety training such as fire extinguisher, fire drills, Great Escape, and hot work training; assisting with outside agency requirements and coordinating emergency pre-planning with the City of Arlington Fire Department.
At the quarterly Department Safety Liaison (DSL) meeting in September, UT Arlington was recognized as a Storm Ready University by the National Weather Service. StormReady®, a program started in 1999, helps arm America's communities with the communication and safety skills needed to save lives and property—before and during a storm event. StormReady communities are better prepared to save lives from the onslaught of severe weather through advanced planning, education and awareness. Eric Martello, Senior Meteorologist with the Weather Forecast Office, visited to present the designation.

Also at this meeting, all current UT Arlington Department Safety Liaison members received a commemorative coin thanking them for their service. Those DSL members who have completed 100% of the safety courses prescribed for the program were also honored with a special training award. To be eligible, DSLs had to attend all training sessions on these topics: CPR/AED, Bloodborne Pathogens, Evacuation Chair, Fire Extinguisher, Great Escape, Building Evacuation, and Hazard Reporting.

Special guest speaker Natasha Rogers from UT System gave an overview of the DSL Programs at all UT System institutions.

In Photo: Robert Smith presents an award to DSL John Gerik in recognition of his completion of every training course required of DSL representatives. John is an administrative assistant for the Military Science and Tactics Department in College Hall.

Clean Hands Save Lives!

Hand hygiene is a simple thing and it's the best way to prevent infection and illness. Keeping hands clean helps to prevent illness at home, school, and work. Handwashing is like a "do-it-yourself" vaccine—it involves five simple and effective steps you can take to reduce the spread of illness so you can stay healthy. 1– wet; 2– lather; 3– scrub; 4– rinse; 5– dry. **Regular handwashing** particularly before and after certain activities, is one of the best ways to remove germs, avoid getting sick, and prevent the spread of germs.

If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of microbes on hands in some situations, but they do not eliminate all types of germs. Hand sanitizers are not as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.