STEELCASE CHAIR RECALL

Steelcase has issued a recall for two chair models: the Criterion (Model 453XXX) and the Rally (Model 457XXX) bought between 10/15/96 and 3/12/97.

If you have a chair of this type, examine it carefully (see picture below). If there are cracks in the welding, STOP using it.

None of us would willingly give up our eyesight, but many of us may be guilty of taking it for granted. Many workers who sustain injuries didn’t think they needed eye protection, or were wearing eyewear inappropriate for the job. Ninety percent of all job-related eye injuries can be prevented by simply wearing proper protective eyewear.

Eye fatigue is a burgeoning problem. Anyone who spends long hours looking through a microscope and staring at a computer screen is at risk. Symptoms include difficulty focusing and general discomfort or soreness of the eyes. The computer screens themselves don’t cause physical damage to the eye, but overuse can result in eye strain.

The American Association of Ophthalmologists (AAO) suggests taking more frequent breaks to rest the eyes, and having your eyes tested for corrective eyewear.

Environmental conditions can cause another common problem: dry eyes.

Each day of the year an average of two thousand American workers sustain a job-related eye injury. That adds up to roughly 730,000 eye injuries per year, a number large enough to make workplace injury the leading cause of ocular trauma. Between 10 and 20 percent of these injuries result in temporary or permanent loss of vision, and all of them can result in years of visual disability and lost work days, not to mention high medical bills and often costly litigation.

The number of job-related eye injuries can be reduced with the implementation of a proactive eye care program.

Keeping an Eye on Eye Safety

WAGING GERM WARFARE AT WORK

With flu season coming, we could all use a reminder to practice good hygiene. No employee looks forward to getting sick and no employer wants to watch productivity drop while work days turn into sick days. With Americans facing a shortage of flu vaccine, the flu war on germs has become more important than ever. When untidy or unhygienic workplace behaviors combine with ineffective cleaning procedures for the buildings where people work, bacteria and viruses can gain ground.

A recent survey conducted by a nationwide institutional cleaning company found that a majority of American office workers believe that workplace is making them sick. Of a thousand American office workers surveyed, 64 percent believe there is a connection between a clean building and the number of times an employee calls in sick. Some of those surveyed noted that though they were working longer hours, there was no corresponding increase in the amount of cleaning that took place.

The cleanliness of a workplace depends in large part on the habits of the people that work there. Of survey respondents, 85 percent said they had witnessed coworkers sneezing, coughing or yawning.
3. We strongly advise against the use of cheater adapters at home when connecting electrical components.

4. If you need further information or advice on electrical issues, contact Facilities Management at 476-2021 or the Campus Fire Marshall at 476-0570.

PRPARING YOUR HOME FOR ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Can you imagine life without electricity? Most people can’t. Along with the huge advantages of electricity, however, come some very real dangers. Nearly 400 Americans (on average) are killed by electricity each year. In addition to this, overloaded circuits, faulty or outdated wiring and appliances, exposed live wires and inadequate training annually cause nearly 10,000 fires.

In spite of improvements in the design and manufacture of electrical products and updated OSHA and NFPA regulations, accidents still occur.

The Electrical Safety Foundation warns that light dimming or flickering or a circuit breaker tripping when an appliance is turned on are signs of an overloaded circuit. Faulty or outdated outlets cause the same symptoms. A discolored or deformed faceplate is another indication that an outlet should be replaced. Any of these signs are good reason to get an evaluation from your local electrician.

Potential Electrical Shock Hazard

Recently, a fatal electrocution occurred at a large mid-western state university. A professor was attempting to connect a three-pronged electrical plug from a fluorescent light to a two-pronged un-grounded timer. He used a so-called “cheater” adaptor.

Unknown to the professor, the light fixture had a wiring defect. When he plugged the timer into the electrical outlet, the light shorted. He died from electrocution.

REMEMBER:

1. Cheater adapters are not authorized for use at UCSF.
2. Use appropriately grounded conduits and devices to ensure your safety and the safety of others.
3. We strongly advise against the use of.gif in your home. Homes built before 1970 are unlikely to have them, but the National Electric Code now requires GFCIs in bathrooms, kitchens and other “wet” locations.

If you have young children in your home, put child safety plugs in outlets.

Maintenance on electrical components should be performed only by qualified technicians. Anyone working on or near electrical equipment should use insulated tools and wear the correct level of arc protective apparel.

Parents are responsible for teaching children about the dangers of electricity. Employers are responsible for training those employees who are exposed to electrical hazards in the appropriate procedures and work practices and personal protective equipment.

Here are some useful tips:

• If you find bare wires on an appliance, turn off the circuit breaker before unplugging the appliance. Never assume that you are safe from a shock.
• Never walk into a flooded room or other “wet” locations. Water that reaches an outlet becomes energized and can electrocute. Wait for water to subside before starting cleanup.
• Install ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) for protection against electrocution in your home.
• Safety equipment must be worn whenever there is a chance that machines or activities present a hazard of flying objects, chemical splashes, radioactive contamination, or a combination of three of these or other hazards.

ALERT! DO YOU SHIP BIO MATERIALS TO OTHER INVESTIGATORS?

If you exchange materials with collaborators in other research facilities and those materials fall into Risk Groups 2 or 3, there are special regulations you must comply with.

The Biosafety Officer is distributing a letter and a survey to ALL laboratories—please complete it whether or not you ship Risk Group 2 or 3 material.

Contact Peili Zhu at 476-9457 or peili@ehs.ucsf.edu or your DSA for more information.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

(Eye Safety continued)

which includes encouraging the use of safety glasses.

• The critical components of an occupational eye care program include: 1) determining potential threats to vision on the job; 2) determining eye hazards that are present; 3) performing vision testing; and 4) requiring appropriate personal protective equipment.

Day-to-day enforcement of safety rules is imperative with appropriate discipline and penalties for non-compliance.

Ninety percent of all job-related eye injuries can be prevented with proper protective eyewear.

• Keep eyes protected from dangers, such as flying fragment and chemical splashes, safety eyewear must have ANSI Z87.1 (designating it as impact resistant for the workplace) marked on the frame or lens.
• Request anyone who enters a worksite where eye hazards are present, wear adequate protection.

Keep shoes on the floor. E. coli bacteria can travel from restrooms on shoes and from there to workers’ desktops.

• Clean up your own dust bunnies, but if you see dust buildup on air diffusers, alert your janitor staff.

Lab Ergonomics: Pipetting Tips

In today’s research laboratory, transferring small volumes of material from test tube to test tube is a common procedure. These transfers are mostly done using manual pipettes. Laboratory workers using manual pipettes for long periods sometimes experience the problems of pain, numbness, or tingling in their hands. Why do pipette users have these problems that in some cases lead to injury? How can pipette injuries be prevented?

Pipette use problems arise from several factors. The use of pipettes that are heavy or require a lot of thumb pressure make muscles work harder than they should. Pipettes that do not fit the user because they are too long or too thin make users grip the pipette with too much force. Workers who spend long hours pipetting with few breaks or without taking time to make muscles work properly can make them sore in the long run.

KEEPING YOUR WORK AREA CLEAN AND TIDY:

• Adopt a clean work area philosophy. Make it a priority to put away all materials before leaving the area.
• Keep equipment and supplies organized and neat.
• Clean and wipe work areas at the end of the day.
• Never leave any biohazard material on the floor.
• Regularly use cleaning supplies to clean your work area.
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