

# The Safety Net

Eastern Virginia Medical School’s Environmental Health and Safety Newsletter  
[https://myportal.evms.edu/research/safety/environmental\\_health\\_and\\_safety](https://myportal.evms.edu/research/safety/environmental_health_and_safety)

Summer 2023  
Volume 129



## Special Interest Articles:

- Heat Stress and You
- Stormwater
- “Black Mold” vs black mold
- Fit Test Fee Changes

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## September is Campus Fire Safety Month

The Center for Campus Fire Safety and the National Fire Protection Association have designated September as [Campus Fire Safety Month](#). September is the month to raise awareness about the dangers of fires on college campuses and student housing. In 2011-2015, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated annual average of 4,100 structure fires in campus buildings and housing. There have been 92 fatal fires documented since January 2000 on college campuses and housing resulting in 132 fatalities and \$14 million in direct property damage. Of these fires:

- Most fires started in the kitchen or cooking area
- 87% involved cooking equipment
- Structure fires in off-campus housing were more common during the hours between 5 p.m. and 9 p.m. and on weekends

To help reduce risk, the following tips are recommended:

- Cook in designated areas only and **never leave cooking equipment unattended**
- Test smoke alarms monthly, **do not remove or disable smoke alarms**
- Keep combustibles away from heat sources and do not overload electrical outlets
- **Do not use extension cords** as permanent wiring
- Do not place anything in front of, or near, exits.
- Learn the buildings evacuation plan and practice drills

Practice these fire safety tips at all times, not just in September. They could save your life or those you work and live with. Remember that fire can spread very quickly, so the best course of action is prevention.

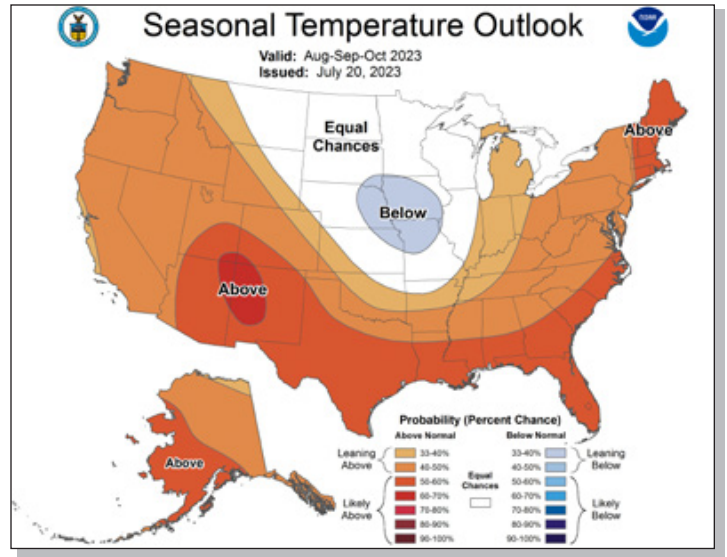
Direct questions about campus fire safety to EVMS Fire and Life Safety at 757-446-5990.



## Heat Stress and You!

June 21st marked the first official day of summer and temperatures are on the rise. For the east coast, it is predicted that summer temperatures will once again be above average.

High heat and humidity can cause illness and death. Make sure you take steps to protect yourself, loved ones, neighbors and pets from the heat. Persons most at risk are the elderly, infants and children, outside laborers, athletes and persons with chronic disease. Be aware of the heat related illnesses associated with this time of the year. Learn the symptoms of the more serious types of heat stress and the first aid that is given for recovery



### Types of Heat Stress

Type	Description	Symptoms	First Aid
<b>Heat Stroke</b>	Occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hot, dry skin or profuse sweating</li> <li>Hallucinations</li> <li>Chills</li> <li>Throbbing headache</li> <li>High body temperature</li> <li>Confusion/dizziness</li> <li>Slurred speech</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Call 911 and notify their supervisor</li> <li>Move the sick worker to a cool shaded area</li> <li>Cool the worker slowly by: Soaking them and/or their clothes with water                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fanning their body</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Heat Exhaustion</b>	Body's response to an excessive loss of water and salt, usually through excessive sweating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heavy sweating</li> <li>Extreme fatigue</li> <li>Dizziness, confusion</li> <li>Nausea</li> <li>Clammy, moist skin</li> <li>Flushed complexion</li> <li>Muscle cramps</li> <li>Slightly elevated body temperature</li> <li>Fast and shallow breathing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rest in a cool, shaded or air-conditioned area</li> <li>Drink plenty of water or other cool, nonalcoholic, non-caffeinated beverages</li> <li>Take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath</li> </ul>
<b>Heat Syncope</b>	A fainting (syncope) episode or dizziness that usually occurs with prolonged standing or sudden rising from a sitting or lying position.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Light-headedness</li> <li>Dizziness</li> <li>Fainting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sit or lie down in a cool place</li> <li>Slowly drink water, clear juice, or sports beverage</li> </ul>

## Stormwater

### *What is Storm Water Runoff?*

One of the most significant, yet unrecognized groups of water contaminants is storm water pollutants. When it rains storm water runs over yards, streets, roads, highways, parking lots, parks and playgrounds, carrying with it everything in its path, including debris and pollutants.

Eventually the water will travel to a lake, river or stream, either over land or via storm drain. Storm drains are frequently located alongside streets and parking lots. Unlike sanitary sewers that divert water to a treatment plant directly from your home, storm drains lead directly to surrounding lakes, rivers or streams without any type of treatment. All the debris and pollutants that were picked up by the storm water runoff end up in your lakes, rivers or streams!



### *Where Does the Pollution Come From?*

Most contaminants are made up of common items used by residents, businesses and visitors, such as fertilizers, car oil and greases, yard clippings, soil, and pet wastes. Below are some tips you can follow to help keep pollution from entering lakes, rivers and streams via storm water runoff.

### *Tips to Keep Our Lakes, Rivers and Streams Clean*

Never dump anything down a storm drain!

Use an oil pan when changing oil to keep fluids off the pavement. Check local body shops and quick lubes to find a place to appropriately dispose of used oil.

Bag pet waste and dispose of it in a trash can.

Leave grass clippings on your lawn as an alternate nutrient to fertilizer. If a fertilizer is necessary, choose a slow-release product and test your soil to find out how much fertilizer your lawn actually needs.

Wash your car on your lawn so excess water, chemicals and dirt are filtered through your lawn.

Keep household hazardous wastes such as harsh cleaners, paint, car fluids and batteries from entering lakes, rivers and streams by disposing at a household hazardous waste center. Try using environmentally-friendly alternatives or recipes with non-hazardous ingredients.

Use a broom rather than a hose to clean up grass clippings and dirt.

Keep a trash bag in your car.....and use it!

## “Black Mold” vs black mold

If you find a growth patch of mold that happens to be black in color, do not immediately jump to the conclusion that it is toxic. Many times, urgency comes into play when visual black mold is seen. This is because of the confusion with the common term “Black Mold,” which actually refers to all the molds that have the potential to produce toxins that cause sickness. The truth is – the color of the mold to the naked eye cannot tell you anything about whether it is toxic or not. With over 100,000 species, mold comes in a variety of colors, shapes, and sizes. In fact, toxic mold can come in many different colors (not just black) and black mold is not always toxic. It is virtually impossible to tell what type of mold you have without having it professionally tested by an expert.



*Aspergillus niger*

The most commonly found non-toxic indoor molds, that are black in color, are *Aspergillus* and *Cladosporium*. *Aspergillus* is found in air conditioning systems and on foods. *Cladosporium* is pepper like and can grow on the back of toilets, on painted surfaces, and in fiberglass air ducts. Neither can cause any significant harm. However, they should be removed to prevent growth because both can cause allergy symptoms, such as red and watery eyes, rashes, and a sore throat.



*Cladosporium herbarum*

The most uncommon, but most infamous, black mold species is *Stachybotrys chartarum*. Growth of *S. chartarum* usually arises after a building has been stricken with water damage. Its presence will cause very poor indoor air quality as the mold releases spores as it feeds on wet organic building materials like drywall, carpet, and insulation. The spores from *S. chartarum* contain unforgiving mycotoxins that when inhaled or ingested, cause a range of unpleasant and even dangerous symptoms. Chronic coughing and sneezing, irritation to the eyes, mucus membranes of the nose and throat, rashes, chronic fatigue and persistent headaches can all be symptomatic of this “Black Mold” exposure. In severe cases of prolonged exposure, the health effects can be more dangerous. These symptoms can include nausea, vomiting, and bleeding in the lungs and nose.

But don't worry, *S. chartarum* is not common! Therefore, if you happen to come across a patch of mold or smell a musty-like mold smell, don't get worried, just drop EHS an email or a quick call. We will be happy to come to your location and inspect. Many times, we take an air sample or swab the area so that the specific mold species can be identified. Once the results come back from the analytical laboratory we can advise you with remediation methods. We are here to help; contact us!



*Stachybotrys chartarum*

### Resources:

CDC Mold Basics - <https://www.cdc.gov/mold/faqs.htm>

CDC Stachybotrys Facts - <https://www.cdc.gov/mold/stachy.htm>

NIH Mold - <https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/mold/index.cfm>

## 2023 Virginia Sales Tax Holiday

Sales tax holidays are a temporary exemption from sales tax. These holidays often only apply to a small number of taxable items for a very limited time. These holidays usually take place in August during the traditional “back to school” season. In Virginia the 2023 sales tax holiday is August 4th – 6th. These dates fall over a long weekend- Friday through Sunday.

There are three categories that the sales tax holiday covers. The first is back to school supplies. In recent years, certain states have provided tax exemptions for energy efficient appliances and storm preparation equipment. Virginia is among these states by including hurricane and emergency preparedness supplies as the second category. The 2023 Virginia state tax holiday also includes Energy Star products priced at \$2,500 or less.

### ***School Supplies, Clothing and Footwear:***

- School Supplies: \$20 or less per item
- Clothing and footwear: \$100 or less per item

### ***School Supplies, Clothing and Footwear:***

- Portable generators: \$1,000 or less per item
- Gas powered chainsaws: \$350 or less per item
- Chainsaw accessories: \$60 or less per item
- Other specified hurricane preparedness items with a sales price of \$60 or less per item

### ***EnergyStar or WaterSense items:***

Qualifying items carrying either the EnergyStar™ or WaterSense™ label with a sales price of \$2,500 or less, purchased for noncommercial home or personal use.

- Qualifying Energy Star™ items include dishwashers, clothes washers, air conditioners, ceiling fans, light bulbs, dehumidifiers, and refrigerators
- Qualifying WaterSense™ items include bathroom sink faucets, faucet accessories such as aerators and shower heads, toilets, urinals, and landscape irrigation controllers

## Fit Test Fee Changes

EH&S is not funded for the supplies or other costs associated with performing this service, thus cost-recovery is necessary. Beginning **July 01, 2023**, the respirator fit testing cost will be increased to **\$8.75** per person. This reflects the rising costs of materials, supplies and equipment maintenance that are used for this service.

Be aware, EH&S will charge departments for “no show” appointments and “turn away” tests. OSHA requires men to be clean shaven in order to wear a respirator and all to be medically cleared before being fit tested. Therefore, students and employees will be turned away when arriving for their fit test appointment if (1) they arrive with facial hair and/or (2) if their prerequisites are not complete. Fit test prerequisites are the Respiratory Protection training course located on the [BioRAFT](#) site and the Medical Questionnaire completed and cleared by Occupational Health.

We encourage you to plan for this increase in the upcoming budget cycle. If you have any questions about the EVMS Respiratory Protection Program, please contact Kristi Olivar at 446-7928.



## Ask the S.O.B.

Instead of a question, the Safety Office Boy has an announcement for this edition of the Safety Net.

Eastern Virginia Medical School earned a **Platinum Achievement** - 9 years for 2022! This award recognizes HRSD permittees with a perfect compliance record who have been subject to compliance requirements for at least one full calendar year. Recipients of these awards have demonstrated a commitment to environmental excellence.



Safety Office Boy to the rescue!

The pretreatment awards are based on the following criteria:

- DIAMOND EXCELLENCE AWARD - 11 or more consecutive years of perfect compliance.
- DIAMOND AWARD - 10 consecutive years of perfect compliance.
- PLATINUM ACHIEVEMENT AWARD - 6 to 9 consecutive years of perfect compliance.
- PLATINUM AWARD - 5 consecutive years of perfect compliance.
- GOLD AWARD - 1 year of no administrative or technical violations; perfect compliance.

If you have questions or need assistance with the process, please contact EH&S at x5798 or [ehs@evms.edu](mailto:ehs@evms.edu).

## Notes from the Office

### *EH&S Training Courses.*

Course	Date/Time	Location
Chemical Hygiene Plan	July 20, 2023 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM	Lewis Hall 2162
	August 25, 2023 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM	Lewis Hall 1184
	September 21, 2023 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM	Lewis Hall 2162
Radiation Safety in the Laboratory	Contact EH&S	
Biosafety in the Laboratory Biological Materials Shipping Autoclave Safety Training OHSP Training Respiratory Protection	Available on BioRAFT!	<a href="https://evms.bioraft.com/">https://evms.bioraft.com/</a>
HAZCOM Bloodborne Pathogens Biological Safety in the Clinical Laboratory	Available on Blackboard!	<a href="https://evms.blackboard.com/">https://evms.blackboard.com/</a>