The Environmental Health and Safety Institute will be offering OSHA 10 hour Safety Training at Cape Fear Community College this May 9th and 10th. There is no cost to attend and all members of your community college’s safety organization are invited. The purpose of this training is to teach college safety officials the specific requirements set forth in OSHA 1910 General Industry Occupational Safety Standards that apply to their workplace. Community colleges are very unique because they have so many examples of different types of working environments.

Each different environment, whether it is a chemistry lab, an autobody shop or a cosmetology salon, has its own set of safety requirements that directly address the hazards present in each area. This training will cover the core OSHA standards that apply to every community college in North Carolina and will give you the tools and knowledge you need to ensure that your college’s safety program meets those standards. Attendees will learn recognition, avoidance, abatement, and prevention of safety and health hazards in workplaces.

The training is intended for:
- College Safety Officers
- Security Officers
- Maintenance Supervisors
- Human Resources Staff
- Facilities Directors
- Safety Committee Members
- Chemical Hygiene Officers

Hazards are present on community college campuses in a variety of degrees and forms. That is why the OSHA 10 hour class is so important: so that you have a basis for understanding the variety of standards that apply to your workplace. The following topics will be covered in the class:
- Electrical Safety
- Lockout Tagout
- Confined Spaces
- Walking Working Surfaces
- Hazard Communication

- Chemical Safety
- Fire Prevention
- Flammable/Combustible Liquids
- Bloodborne Pathogens
- Machine Guarding
- Emergency Action Plans
- Exit Routes
- Personal Protective Equipment

Seating is limited to 40 attendees so please be sure and register as soon as possible. To reserve seats for the event on May 9 and 10 at Cape Fear Community College, please email Tamara Heinemann at t_heinemann@blueridge.edu.

We have reserved some rooms at the state rate at Hilton Wilmington Riverside right next door to CFCC. To reserve a room at the Hilton, go to Hilton.com, and enter the reservation dates for checking in on either the 8th or 9th of May and checking out on the 10th. Enter the group code “BRI” in the section “Group/Convention Code”. If you have any questions about the conference, please feel free to contact Tamara Heinemann at 828-694-4738. We are very excited about this year’s event, and we hope to see you there!
Take The Hazards Out Of Your Office

When you think about hazardous areas at your community college, the last place you might consider is your office. Just by walking through an office and observing the workers, you don’t see any obvious dangers. No sparks are flying, no hammering or sawing noises; we don’t see any open flames. But having just recovered from a bout of severe back pain, where I lost three days of work and made a trip to the doctor, I am now becoming more aware that my office set-up might be silently causing me injury. Now I am trying to adjust my keyboard, monitor, chair, and telephone to fit me, instead of vice versa.

For those who type a lot, a document holder placed to the side of the monitor not only relieves neck strain, but allows for better typing efficiency. Some offices have benefited from reduced eye strain by using individual desk lamps and turning off some of the overhead fluorescent lights, but be sure lights and windows are shaded properly so not to cast a bright glare on your monitor.

My own back pain issue came after a long car trip where I didn’t stop enough to “stretch my legs.” I don’t want any of you to experience the same back pain that I did, so get up and move. For more information, search Computer Workstations at OSHA.gov.

Our friends who work in the vocational areas have their own hazards to deal with, but for the most part they are up, moving around and not sitting still for long periods of time. Long periods of time spent in sedentary activities have been linked to many chronic diseases, such as, obesity, cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. Going to the gym after work or exercising during your lunch hour is not enough to make up for these long idle times. It is recommended that everyone should get up and walk around for at least 10 minutes every hour. Not only does this get your blood flowing, but the change of scenery can reduce stress and allows the eyes to refocus on objects of varying distances. At our offices here at Blue Ridge, we have to exit our building and then reenter at another hall to go to the rest room. Although some may find this inconvenient, it does allow us to walk a little and get a breath or two of fresh air occasionally.

If your keyboard and mouse are on your desk surface, they might be too high for your comfort and may cause shoulder and arm strain. The keyboard and mouse on top of your desk also may cause you to raise the chair higher so that now your feet are not comfortably resting on the floor. This can lead to lower back pain. An under-the-desk mounted tray for both the keyboard and mouse might be a wise investment.

Mom used to tell us to “Sit up straight.” She really knew what she was talking about. Adjust your chair so your hips and knees are level with each other, maybe with the knees slightly lower. Your back and upper legs should form a 90 degree angle at your hips and your knees should allow your upper and lower legs to be at 90 degrees also. If you don’t know how to adjust your chair, look at the manufacturer’s’ website or call them for instructions.

By: Chuck Arrowood
Spring is here and many of us are heading outdoors to enjoy the weather on these first sunny days. As the temperatures heat up, insects begin to emerge and the likelihood of contracting a vector-borne disease increases. Anyone heading outdoors, whether for work or recreation, needs to stop and consider the potential dangers of heading outdoors unprotected.

The most common vector-borne diseases in North Carolina are carried by ticks and mosquitoes. In 2010 there were 300 cases of tick and mosquito borne illnesses reported in the state. Due to the serious health risks both to adults and children, and the preventability of these diseases, in 2011 May was declared Tick and Mosquito Awareness Month.

The tick-borne illnesses that occur in the state of North Carolina include Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Ehrlichiosis, Lyme Disease, and Southern Tick-Associated Rash Illness (STARI). In 2009, the state reported more than 450 cases of tick-borne diseases to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The majority of those were Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever which has topped 250 cases each year for the past three years. The symptoms of these tick-borne diseases are varied and can include fever, chills, rash, headache, muscle aches and fatigue. I contracted Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever after a fishing trip in 2002, but I was fortunate to be diagnosed early after the symptoms first appeared. The long term health effects of these diseases can be very serious and even fatal if left untreated.

The state also sees a number of mosquito-borne illnesses each year. La Crosse Encephalitis makes up the majority of these cases and occurs more frequently in western counties. Eastern Equine Encephalitis is found primarily in the eastern part of the state, while the West Nile virus and Saint Louis Encephalitis can occur statewide.

While many mosquitoes are most active at dawn and dusk when the air is calm, some species including the mosquitoes that spread La Crosse encephalitis are most active during the daytime.

Outdoor workers are at a higher risk of exposure to vector-borne diseases and should wear long clothing when feasible and use a repellent on exposed skin as well as on clothing (mosquitoes will bite through thin cloth). Repellants should be applied to exposed skin according to the manufacturer’s instructions, while avoiding the face area.

To lower the risk for employees and students, keep the grass mowed, remove leaf litter, and prune trees and shrubs in walkway areas to reduce the favorable habitat and opportunities for contact with ticks. Eliminating areas where standing water can accumulate will eliminate mosquito breeding sites.

Enjoy the beautiful weather this season, but be vigilant and protect yourself. For more information check out the following websites:

- www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/tick-borne/
Ask EHSI - Thunderstorms & Lightning

Answers to standards or regulations questions that are researched by the EHSI staff.

Q: When a thunderstorm approaches, when do outdoor workers need to come inside and how do we know when it is safe to return outside?

A: Lightning is the #2 cause of weather-related deaths in the country (flooding is #1). It is essential that all outside workers stay aware of changing weather conditions while they are on the job. It would also help to have someone at the college monitor a weather alert radio and alert workers as storms approach. The 30/30 rule is a useful guide to know when to come inside. If you see a flash of lightning and can count less than 30 seconds before you hear the thunder, then it is time to come indoors. When 30 minutes have passed since you heard the last clap of thunder, then it is safe to return outside. An open-sided structure like a picnic shed does not provide enough protection; you should be in a building with four walls, a roof and a floor. If necessary, take shelter in a car or the cab of a truck.

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EHSI SafetyNet Training Schedule

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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Hazard Communication &amp; Bloodborne Pathogen Awareness</td>
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EHSI 2012 Fall Conference (West)
The 2012 fall conference will be held on August 8 & 9 at Blue Ridge Community College in Flat Rock. This year the conference will offer OSHA 10 Hour for General Industry training. More details to come.