**Poisoning Deaths Increase**

In 2004, poisoning surpassed firearms for the first time as a cause of injury death in the United States, and in 2005, poisoning became the second leading cause, according to the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). From 1999-2005 (the years for which data are available), the majority of poisoning deaths were due to unintentional drug overdoses, with methadone-related deaths increasing more than other narcotic-related deaths. The distribution of methadone, which is prescribed for pain as well as for opioid dependence, is on the rise. Methadone's half-life is longer than its effect, making proper dosing difficult, although prescribing practices have not been identified as causing the increase in narcotic-related deaths.


**Prevent Workplace Poisoning**

The workplace is full of poisons, which are essentially any substances that cause harm to the body. A basic safety talk on poisoning can cover how poisons enter the body and methods to prevent poisoning, from use of MSDSs and PPE to reporting and emergency.

*safetyXchange (“Overview of Poison Prevention”) - www.safetyxchange.org/article_print.php?id=737

**Cement Workers Vulnerable to Skin Injuries**

OSHA estimates that more than one million employees work with portland cement—a generic term for concrete, mortar, plaster and other building materials that have strong adhesive properties when mixed with water. The caustic, abrasive, and moisture-absorbing properties of those materials can damage skin, accounting for an estimated 25% or more of work-related skin problems. A new OSHA guidance document on ways to prevent those skin injuries has been released. It covers proper selection and use of PPE and proper skin care and work practices.

*OSHA - www.osha.gov/dsg/guidance/cement-guidance.html

**Tornado Time**

The National Weather Service (NWS) estimates that in an average year, 800 tornadoes nationwide result in 80 deaths and over 1,500 injuries. Not only families but workers need to be clear on a safety plan. A large employer like the University of Iowa educates employees on the emergency notification system, the outdoor warning (siren) system, and shelter recommendations. While protecting human life during a tornado is the highest priority, the vulnerability of your business extends to your equipment as well. Adequate insurance coverage and assorted protective technology (like surge protectors) will help you minimize loss.

*National Weather Service - www.nws.noaa.gov/om/brochures.shtml

University of Iowa (Critical Incident Management Plan) - www.uiowa.edu/~pubsfty/cimp.pdf

State Farm Insurance- www.statefarm.com/learning/be_safe/work/learning_work_protect_equipment.asp

**UI HealthWorks and WORKSAFE IOWA**

UI HealthWorks is a member of the WORKSAFE IOWA Occupational Medicine Associate Network, the only university-affiliated network of occupational health providers. WORKSAFE IOWA is an outreach program of the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health in the College of Public Health at the University of Iowa (www.public-health.uiowa.edu/worksafe).