



April

Safety Message



...From the Division Chief

Hello,

I hope everyone is enjoying the spring weather and is getting some quality outdoor activities in. With ever increasing time spent outdoors it is important to keep safety in mind at all times. One serious safety issue people rarely think about is the effect of stress not only on our health but distracting us at work.

I thought I would take time this month in the spirit of April being National Stress Awareness Month to discuss stress and ways to cope with stress. Please take a few minutes to get informed about stress and reflect on how stress fits in your life. There are several links listed with some great tips that we can all practice to relax both at work and at home.

If you are feeling overwhelmed with stress and would like to talk to someone do not hesitate to contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

<https://members.mhn.com/home>

Sincerely,

Dean Messer, Chief
Division of Environmental Services

Safety Suggestions Box:

The dessafety@water.ca.gov received a concern. Sewer gas smell at Bryte Lab. A drain was found under a cabinet that had been in the lab for over twenty years. The drain was permanently plugged and the other floor drains in the lab are filled with water monthly.

Stress Awareness

Do you know the difference between good and bad stress?

There are two kinds of stress:

1. **Good stress:** Acute, short term stress commonly associated with the fight or flight response.
2. **Bad stress:** Chronic, long term stress that can lead to health problems.

Our bodies react to stress by releasing hormones making our brains more alert, muscles tense and pulse to race. In the short term these reactions help us handle dangerous situations. However, over long periods of time these reactions can lead to serious health problems.

Health problems associated with chronic stress:

high blood pressure • heart disease • depression • anxiety

Signs of too much stress:

forgetfulness • headaches • fatigue • insomnia • upset stomach • excessive drug or alcohol use • weight issues

Tips to reducing stress:

plan your time • prepare ahead of time for a stressful event • practice deep breathing or meditation • stretch your muscles • exercise • eat healthy foods • talk to friends and family

Links:

Relaxation Techniques

<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/relaxation-techniques-for-stress-relief.htm#breathing>

Meditation

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/meditation/in-depth/meditation/art-20045858?pg=1>

Exercises & Stretches

<http://www.ors.od.nih.gov/sr/dohs/HealthAndSafety/Ergonomics/Pages/exercises.aspx>