

EMS STAFF SAFETY NEWSLETTER

MAAS Fund Newsletter for Field Staff

APRIL 2016

CELL PHONE CALL OF NATURE

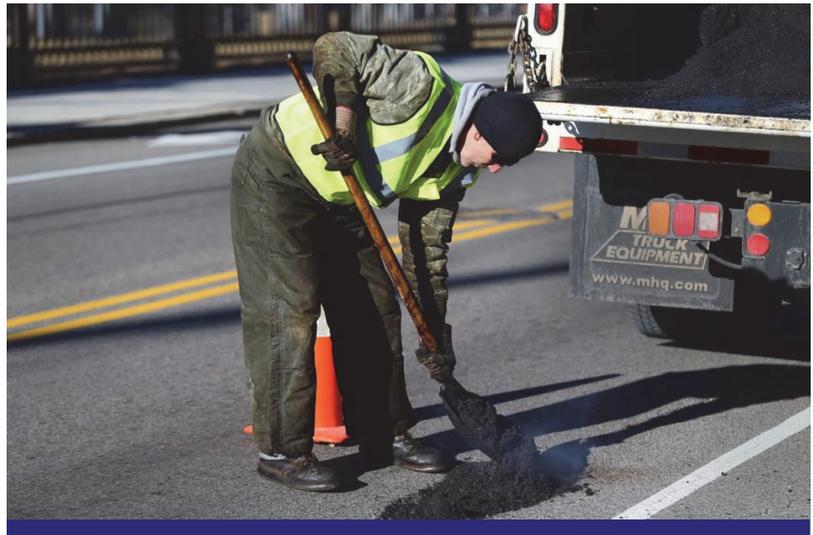
The results of the 2016 Healthy Hand Washing Survey conducted by Bradley Corp ration, a maker of commercial washroom equipment and accessories, are downright cringe-worthy.

The survey found that the majority of Americans are comfortable using their cell phone in a public or workplace restroom stall. And nearly 80 percent say they frequently or occasionally see others leave a public restroom without washing their hands.

Jon Dommissé, Bradley Corporation's director of global marketing, said given that London scientists found that one out of six cell phones has fecal matter on it, the fact that people use their phones in the stall and leave without washing their hands is "disconcerting."

Even though Americans don't mind using their phones in the restroom, they are squeamish about touching other items. Nearly 60 percent of survey respondents say they operate the toilet flusher with their foot to avoid coming in contact with germs. And more than half use a paper towel to cover the door handle when opening the door.

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POTHOLES, CONSTRUCTION & MUD IT'S SPRINGTIME IN MICHIGAN

The rites of spring, as they say. The frost leaves the ground, and so does (it seems) half of the pavement in the state. Those long awaited (dreaded) barrels show up along the side of the road to signal the beginning of the "shutdown" season. So what, right!!! Well, as EMS personnel, these rites of spring represent additional hazards to your ability to do your job safely, effectively, and on a timely basis for the best patient care possible.

POTHOLES

They can be bone jarring, front end bending, tire blowing, and extremely dangerous to any vehicle, especially an ambulance on an emergency run. They can cause loss of steering, swerving, in addition to vehicle damage and additional patient injury. Other drivers on the road are an additional hazard that you face in the pothole season. They can swerve without notice to avoid a pothole, possibly right into your path. This is the time for extreme vigilance and awareness while behind the wheel of your rig.

One incident resulting in the fatal crash involving a father and his son occurred last year in Oakland County. The accident is believed to have been the direct result of a pothole. For more on the story information, follow this [link](#).

Article Continued On Back

Potholes article continued

CONSTRUCTION

After a long winter, it's time for lane closures, traffic slowdowns, and those fluorescent vests to line the roadways. Long lines of backed up traffic can serve as hazards to your ability to navigate to any emergency call, even with lights and siren. Frustrated motorists, caught in the confusion, can suddenly dart out on to the shoulder, just as you are passing by on the way to a call. If you are unaware of what road blockages may be in your area, you may not be able to respond in a timely fashion. Learn where all construction is taking place. Put a map up in your base that highlights streets and roads under construction. And by all means, always wear your traffic vest whenever you are working along any roadside. It could save your life!!!!



LINK: Pothole stalls ambulance overnight. Cleveland, OH

MUD

As the thaw comes, so comes the soft ground. This is probably as dangerous to EMS personnel as snow and ice covered roads and sidewalks. Stepping out of the rig onto slippery, muddy, soft ground is a prime cause of many slip and fall injuries to ankles, knees, shoulders, and backs. Moving the stretcher over muddy ground can cause sudden jerks if wheels sink into the mire and you don't see it coming. If one partner slips, the other is either going to follow, or have to bear the sudden weight burden all by him/herself. Talk to your partner constantly when moving a patient, for each step you take might be your last as an EMS professional if you don't. You have done a tremendous job of communicating with your partner in these circumstances, keep up the good work and let's help keep both you and your partner safe and healthy during this spring season.

Each season is different and brings with it different hazards. Anticipate, itemize & discuss among your staff the changing hazards of one season, and, just like with spring training, it takes a while to get acclimated to the start of another season. Don't let this happen to you.

Unplug for mental wellness

Take a break from media

The media and the Internet constantly carry news about mass shootings, terrorist attacks, natural disasters, and other troubling events. So, what are the possible health implications of being constantly exposed to negative news?

A recent Texas A&M study looks at this issue, according to a press release (vitalrecord.tamhsc.edu/the-toll-of-bad-news-on-your-health). The constant airing, tweeting, posting, and chatting about anxiety-provoking events can be overwhelming, dredging up a range of emotions that lead to exhaustion or general malaise.

“Research has shown that there is a physical connection between what we think and the parts of the body that our brains control,”

says Willa Decker, clinical assistant professor and nurse specialist in psychiatric mental health with the Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Nursing.

“Self-awareness is key, the point at which negative news affects our emotional and physical well-being is different for each individual.” For example, heart rate may increase, and a person may become irritable and overly emotional, or just feel drained. “Then it may be time for an individual to step away and regroup,” says Decker.

Decker says “it might be helpful to schedule a reasonable amount of time each day to catch up on the news, and then focus the remainder of your day on living.” Another way to cope is by “focusing on overall well-being by making sure to get enough rest, eating well, and exercising. This can go a long way toward mitigating our exposure to so much disheartening news,” she explains.