

SAFETY ALERT- WHY TRAVELING MAY BE BUGGING YOU

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**PRODUCT RECALLS
OF INTEREST TO
EVEREST INSUREDS** 2

**FACT OR FRAUD?
JUST BECAUSE
THEIR LICENSED
...DON'T BE DUPED** 2

**SELECT SPECIFIC
GPS FOR YOUR
BUSINESS** 2

**(CONTINUED)
SAFETY ALERT- WHY
TRAVELING MAY BE
BUGGING YOU** 3

**NEW SOIL FUMI-
GANT PESTICIDE
SAFETY PRACTICES** 3

The old saying, "Sleep tight and don't let the bed bugs bite", has new meaning as a major emergence of these critters are being reported on a global scale. Infestations are most common in places where people congregate such as hotels, motels, schools, dormitories, apartments and hospitals. It seems that bed bugs migrate to these places via luggage and clothing as individuals travel. Reports of bed bug infestations in the United States have increased by 500 percent, especially in New York City where international travelers are more predominant.

This new emergence has nothing to do with cleanliness. Experts believe it is the result of a change in pest control practices that do not effect bed bugs. In the last few years, the use of baits rather than insecticide sprays is believed to have contributed to the increase. Bed bugs are not attracted to baits.

Bed bugs live off human blood and feed every 5 to 10 days. They are most active in the evenings. The bites usually cannot be felt for a few hours. Individuals bitten by these insects report symptoms of skin rashes, lesions, inflammation, itching, and allergic reactions.

With their flat bodies, these insects easily travel along

pipes and baseboards. At roughly the size of an apple seed, they can hide in tiny crevices such as mattress seams, bed frames, furniture, carpeting and baseboards.

Everest recommends that owners and managers of places where people assemble, reside or congregate take to following steps to avoid bed bug infestations:

(Article continued on Page 3)



ENTRAPMENT- A SWIMMING POOL HAZARD

By Richard A. Heneghan, CSP, ARM, Everest Loss Control Director

A serious and often deadly hazard of a swimming pool or spa user is being entrapped atop a drain. This hazard should be well known to pool and spa operators and facilities that maintain pools and spas. However recent studies found many public pools and spas do not have adequate, low cost anti-entrapment devices to prevent drowning or serious and fatal injuries. Pool and spa circulation equipment can develop a drain suction of up to 500 pounds, a force that most adults would not be able to overcome let alone a child.

According to the Consumer Protection Safety Commission, from 1997-2007, there were 74 reported incidents associated with suction entrapment, including 9 deaths and 63 injuries.

In December, 2007, the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act (PSSA) was signed into law. The PSSA was named after the daughter of James and Nancy Baker and the granddaughter of former Secretary of State James Baker III. Graeme Baker died in a tragic incident in 2002 after the suction from a spa drain entrapped her under the water. This law mandates the use of anti-entrapment devices for all new and existing pool and spa circulation systems.

The new law is aimed at reducing entrapment related deaths and injuries by requiring dome-shaped anti-entrapment drain covers or pressure reducing split drain systems for all public pools and spas.



We encourage you to learn more about this law, as well as companion laws that have been passed in other states including California.

More information is available at:

<http://www.poolsafetycouncil.org/safety.html>.

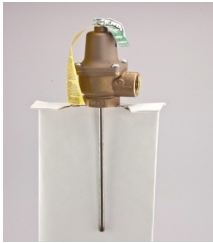
PRODUCT RECALLS OF INTEREST TO EVEREST INSURED

By Jennifer Arrison, Everest Loss Control Manager

WATER HEATER RELIEF & PRESSURE VALVES RECALLED DUE TO RUPTURE & BURN HAZARDS:

Watts Regulator Company announced a voluntary recall of about 900 of their one-inch 140X-9 Temperature and Pressure Relief Valves. These are typically used in large water heaters for commercial buildings or possibly for large homes. The recalled valves were sold by authorized distributors from October 2006 through July 2009.

The recall was prompted by evidence that the relief valve can fail to reduce pressure and avert failure or rupture of the water heater tank and associated valves, posing rupture and burn hazard to consumers. No injuries have been reported and Watts is asking consumers to contact them and schedule a free repair. For more information contact Watts at (888)272-4649 or visit their website at www.watts.com.



ACER NOTEBOOKS RECALL DUE TO BURN HAZARD:

Acer America Corp. recalled 22,000 Acer Aspire-series Notebook Computers. Three reports of short circuiting, resulting in slight melting of the external casing prompted this recall. No injuries were reported. The concern is an internal microphone wire under the palm rest may short circuit and overheat posing a potential burn hazard to users. The recalled models were sold at such retailers as Radio Shack and Amazon.com from June through October 2009. Not all units are affected so contact Acer for details.



Acer is asking consumers to stop using the recalled notebook computers and contact Acer to determine if their notebook is affected and to receive a free repair.

For more information contact Acer at (866)695-2237 or visit their website at www.acer.com.

FACT OR FRAUD? JUST BECAUSE THEIR LICENSED... DON'T BE DUPED

By George S. Hickler, SCLA, Director-Special Investigation Unit

Everest would like to remind employers to communicate their suspicions of possible fraudulent claim activities to Everest's Special Investigation Unit (SIU). The following case proves that your diligence to report your suspicions can pay off.

A state licensed California security guard has been charged with Felony Insurance Fraud as a result of the information produced during the course of an Everest SIU investigation of their suspect worker's compensation claim. The guard is currently being sought by the California Department of Insurance investigators and local authorities after warrants for the individual's arrest were issued by a California County District Attorney's Office. Following tips from the guard's employer, Everest's SIU investigation produced evidence that the claimant guard through his/her attorney, had submitted several falsified documents in an effort to receive benefits to which the individual

was not entitled.

Those documents included a falsified temporary disability note from the treating physician extending time off from work and W-2 wage & salary forms which inflated their annual income. The W-2 forms were apparently those of another person on which the guard placed his/her own personal information. Surveillance video of the claimant also showed them performing physical activity that was in direct conflict with their claimed injuries. The applicant's attorney who was also duped, subsequently petitioned the worker's compensation court to be relieved as the attorney of record. The court further ruled that the claimed injury was non-compensable and the claimant barred from compensation.

To contact Everest's Special Investigative unit, please email siu@everestre.com or call (908) 604-7255.

SELECT THE CORRECT GPS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

By Bruce A. Hooker, ARM, Vice President Loss Control, Mattei Insurance Services, Inc.

Global Positioning Systems (GPS) have become a tremendous benefit for companies involved in transportation. From the company that is hauling freight or household goods nationwide to the local garbage collection company – the GPS has paid good dividends. The GPS allows drivers and fleet managers to:

- Choose the most efficient routes saving fuel, time and vehicle operating costs
- Improve driver safety as some GPS systems can notify fleet managers and safety personal when vehicles are exceeding posted speed limits or are in areas where they are not supposed to be.

Recently, GPS technology has been blamed for an increased number of bridge collisions resulting from trucks traveling on roads with height restrictions less than the vehicle's height.

This issue has caught the attention on the New York State

Legislature. For more information go to:

http://www.9wsyr.com/news/local/story/GPS-use-steering-some-truckers-into-trouble/JA_hXDKePOeRuniRtbPCA.csp

In reality, the problem seems to be that drivers are using the wrong GPS device and have become overly dependent on them instead of paying attention to warning signs and common sense. GPS systems that were designed for automobiles do not anticipate height restrictions. GPS systems designed for trucks are programmed to help drivers avoid low bridges, roads with weight restrictions, and prohibited routes.

Even when using as GPS system designed for trucking, a professional truck driver must always be observant of clearance signs and other warning signs, and should not solely rely on the GPS to determine what is and isn't a safe route to travel.



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Continued SAFETY ALERT - WHY TRAVELING MAY BE BUGGING YOU

- Use a licensed pest control service to routinely inspect and treat your facilities to avoid bed bug infestations. Some firms are now using canine detection teams to pinpoint a problem. These “bed bug dogs” quickly alert the pest control operators of high infestation areas.
- Train your housekeeping and maintenance staff to examine potential hiding places such as carpet edges, mattress seams, pillow case linings, bed boards and wall trim. Look specifically along mattress seams for bed bugs or their droppings, eggs or bloodstains.
- Instruct all staff and residents to report suspected infestations to management.

Employers should advise their traveling employees to avoid leaving clothing on the bed or floor. Direct them to use hangers or hooks and suspend luggage or use a luggage stand, table, or non-upholstered chair.

Taking these precautions can help to prevent infestations.

NEW SOIL FUMIGANT PESTICIDE SAFETY PRACTICES

By Len Hintergardt, CSP, Loss Control Director

The EPA is requiring new safety practices when applying soil fumigant pesticides to control agricultural pests. Soil fumigants are pesticides that, when injected or applied to soil, form a gas to control soil borne pests. The fumigants are either gases, volatile chemicals that become gases or chemicals that react to produce a gas. Examples of common soil fumigants include chloropicrin, dazomet, metam sodium/potassium, methyl bromide, 1,3-dichloropropene (Telone®) and iodomethane (methyl iodide). Soil fumigants are used on many high value crops, such as vegetables, fruits, nuts, forest seedlings, ornamentals, and nursery crops. They are used to control a wide range of pests including nematodes, fungi, bacteria, insects, and weeds.

As gases, the fumigants diffuse from the soil to the air and may pose risks to applicators, workers who re-enter fumigated fields, nearby workers and the public that may live, work, attend school, or are otherwise located in a close proximity to these treated crops. Incident investigations of these bystanders found adverse health effects such as eye irritation to more severe and irreversible illnesses depending on the fumigant used and duration of exposure.

These effects can manifest within hours to days after application.

These new safety practices address:

- Applicator and other worker protection
- Fumigant management plans
- Stewardship and training programs
- Good agricultural practices
- Buffer zones
- Posting requirements
- Emergency preparedness and response measures

Access the Environmental Protection Agency's website for additional information: http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/registration/soil_fumigants/.



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