



# Occupational Safety PEP Comments for Employees



Saturday, July 27, 2002

## Marshall Space Flight Center

- 06/17/2002 19 (Question 38 on 90 Question Survey). Checked don't know because I haven't had a reason to test the system.  
25 (Question 50 on 90 Question Survey). Checked N/A because we do not regularly have mishaps and injuries.  
26 (Question 52 on 90 Question Survey). Checked N/A because I am not aware of any injuries or illnesses occurring in the workplace.
- 06/17/2002 I am well-versed in what our organization SHOULD be doing. I've answered the above survey based on my honest assessment of what we ARE doing, instead of what we are SUPPOSED to be doing. Our Center has a lot of activities to show involvement with safety but a lot of it seems rather superficial, i.e., for appearances sake and not really about safety and health in our workplace. We know that our buildings are old and that maintenance is difficult but that shouldn't be used as an excuse to perpetuate unsafe working conditions. There are lots and lots of safety meetings, websites, attendance tallies, etc. but it would be better to have more effective safety systems and processes for remedying serious problems than emphasizing the showy, superficial part of participation. There are individuals scattered about who appear genuine in their rhetoric and actions about safety. For most managers in the chain, it looks more like an act for their boss(es) than sincere concern for the well-being of our workforce. You can tell when managers are uncomfortable talking about the safety and health of others. Their posture, voice, and even the cadence of their words takes on a hollow affect that causes employees to look at one another and roll their eyes. I totally believe personally and professionally in the need to place safety first in the workplace, in my home, and in our communities. I receive data around here on a regular basis which suggest that I am very much in the minority at our Center. If our organization really believes in the importance of a safer and healthier workplace and workforce, the boss wouldn't place the least capable person here in the position of being our safety officer. How scary is that? He runs and hides whenever there is an alarm of any kind. I wouldn't trust him to leave a burning building much less understand anything sophisticated about emergency situations. He is so inept that it's hard not to laugh sometimes but that's disrespectful and never appropriate. It's not his fault. He's the wrong person for the top safety job in our organization. He has this job because management appears not to be able to figure out anything else he can do. It is as if the thinking is that he can't do much damage as the safety officer whereas if he had a real job, he might be dangerous. This sends a very poor message to the workforce about how much value management really places on our safety and health program. I don't know how management can be convinced to really support our safety and health program as a vital facet of our Center values. It is as if the Center Director understands and some worker bees understand but in between in the hierarchy, they haven't a clue yet. I don't want us to try to get some star from OSHA so that we can "look good". I want us to be good. If we get a star, that's fine but that's not the real point of a true safety and health program. Thank you for this opportunity to submit these comments. I really appreciate those of you who sincerely care about us, our workplace, and our future ability to serve the nation. Thank you so much.



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- 06/17/2002 Ergonomic evaluations are provided only upon request, but should probably be a requirement for every employee's work station. However, adequate funding for ergonomic chairs and equipment may not be available. Re-evaluation of the policy of providing this service without a guarantee of funds to provide proper chairs, keyboard holders, etc. is necessary.
- Many employees suffer from allergies when moved from newer buildings such as 4203 (where they were healthy) to older buildings such as 4202, 4712, and 4201. In spite of tests that seem to confirm that the "air is safe or at least meets OSHA standards" in these buildings, employees have no confidence in this due to severe allergic reactions in some coworkers that are directly related to exposure to molds, etc., in these buildings. Contact me at 544-0289 for more information.
- 06/17/2002 Overdoing 'safety awareness' promotes apathy, IMO.
- 06/17/2002 Safety personnel are not very knowledgeable in actual safety avoidance. They tend to worry about minor problems and have no answers for safety problems which require funding to solve.
- 06/17/2002 We are a safety/health-oriented Department.
- 06/18/2002 #23 (Question 46 on 90 Question Survey) is improperly worded for the choices (Strongly/Totally Agree) available. For the record, in looking at the SCRS it can be seen that many of the safety issues have been open for months and in some instances years.
- 06/18/2002 I believe MSFC has one of the best Safety Programs in the area.
- 06/18/2002 MSFC is a very safe place to work and the Safety reviewed and encouraged at work has made me much more safety conscious at home!
- 06/18/2002 Question 6 (Question 12 on 90 Question Survey) states the "I am aware of the locations of emergency equipment (fire pull boxes, extinguishers, first aid kits) used in my workplace to deal with emergencies." Note that first aid kits were taken up many, many moons ago with the intent for employees to go to the medical center for any first aid needs. The "first aid kit" issue may need to be revisited for this day and time.
- 06/18/2002 The SHE Program at MSFC has come a long way in the last few years. We continue to strive for management commitment at ALL levels and work towards a 'World Class' safety program. There are still areas that need work, but we're slowly addressing and correcting these issues.
- 06/18/2002 Even though we are told the air quality in our buildings is safe, I continue to have respiratory (sinus infections, sneezing, coughing) symptoms as do many of my coworkers. I firmly believe better filtration systems and air handling systems are needed.



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- 06/18/2002 Drinking water quality is questionable. Smokers surround entrances and pollute the air. I have allergies and the smoke bothers me when entering or exiting buildings. Smokers should be moved to butt huts such as used at Redstone Arsenal.
- 06/18/2002 Hazard and close call reporting system should not be required to get a band aid for a paper cut or other "minor" injuries!
- 06/18/2002 Tall metal screen falling on you.
- 06/18/2002 This site has an excellent safety program of long standing. Its safety professionals are "the best".
- 06/18/2002 Great place to work and safety is # 1 at all times.
- 06/18/2002 As far as total Safety and Health, we have ASBESTOS in our building and we don't drink the water (bottled water is used). Have mentioned many times about the concern of the axe that is housed in the fire extinguisher boxes-----irate employees???. Safety posters are not posted in the buildings because we are told that there is a lack of funds to purchase said posters. Being made aware of and protected against all emergencies----don't believe that all have been or can be identified --- who would have ever thought of 9/11???
- 06/18/2002 I requested to take the first aid course here at MSFC. I got turned down.
- 06/18/2002 My work environment is strictly an office type setting, that is the reason that I marked questions 39-45 as N/A. With the excellent safety program here in place at MSFC should I ever need those type of safety features I feel confident that the safety program would provide them for me.
- 06/18/2002 In our area, project funds need to be used to pay for safety-related facilities work. It might seem more appropriate for institutional funds to cover that work. Additionally, facilities work requests for any task seem to take a long time from submission to completion of work.
- 06/19/2002 The building manager in my building sent out an announcement that pest control would be spraying for ladybugs. I expressed a concern to the building manager (no SCARS) that pesticides in a sealed building were not worth the health hazard in order to get rid of harmless ladybugs. The concern was forwarded to the Safety Officer - who's research consisted of asking the pest control technician if it was safe. The response was "We've been using this pesticide (Vapora) for years here without any problem." When I did my own research I found that Vapora is classified as a probable human carcinogen. This does not reflect a management concern for employee health and welfare.



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- 06/19/2002 It is my opinion that more emphasis should be placed on the importance of the enlightening and encouraging for a healthy workforce that will substantially increase the sensitivity to the priority of SAFETY .  
Specialists and therapist should be regularly requested to speak at safety/staff meetings.
- 06/19/2002 I work in c-wing east of building 4487. The drinking water is trashey and sometimes smells bad. How about rectifying this situation?  
I appreciate it.
- 06/19/2002 We are safe in this group, but the attention given to safety (center-wide)is absolutely ridiculous. The safety minutes consist of the worse case scenarios or the situations that are going to happen just because statistics dictate they will. Some things are unavoidable no matter how conscious one is of safety, yet we spend hours going over these cases as if to say we can control entropy and chance. It is absurd. All this overemphasis on safety does is make one afraid to do anything lest the worst happens. Yet, the worst thing that is occurring because of the safety dogma is no one cares about products and actually spending tax payer's money to achieve some significant results. We are only concerned with making safe yet underachieving hardware because management (center-wide) is afraid a finger nail might get scraped (you think I am kidding). This is all to say, safety is definitely important, but as with anything in life, too much of a good thing causes it to not be appreciated anymore.
- 06/19/2002 The drinking water in building 4487 C-wing east can show turbity, taste and odor conditions. C-wing west (ED40) has bottled water (stand fountains) provided at government expense due to the same water conditions. The same bottled water fountains should be provided to C-wing east.
- 06/19/2002 Ergonomics in the office are not addressed. The modular arrangement in the cubicles has created physical (health) problems.
- 06/19/2002 I hope my inputs help...
- 06/19/2002 Water in my building is undrinkable. Provided water is in an inconvenient location, and tastes too metallic for my taste. I must bring in my own spring water weekly.
- 06/19/2002 MSFC has an excellent Safety Program.
- 06/19/2002 This is a great "safe" mentality to work in!
- 06/19/2002 Since I have first started working for Marshall Space Flight Center in November 2000 I have always known that Safety and Health are Priority One, and I have always respected NASA for that idea.
- 06/20/2002 The only thing that would improve my accessibility to health enhancement would be an onsite swimming pool to do lap swimming in....



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- 06/20/2002 I personally feel there are too many safety meetings.
- 06/20/2002 This is an outstandingly safe and caring place to work.
- 06/21/2002 All safety activities (training, certification, emergency response, closure of close calls and mishaps, etc.) are handled sufficiently, and treated seriously, until the situation calls for a response beyond that which can be carried out by those persons assigned to my work area. That is, if we handle the issue, it will be addressed and/or resolved promptly. If the situation calls for outside support (Safety, Facilities), response will be delayed, and the situation is very likely to "fall through the cracks" and or be turned back to us for action. Close calls are not always reported because the action to correct the situation always comes back to those people the given area. If we are to resolve the problem, why add to our workload by building a paper trail? Others may benefit from our experience, but it is hard to get people to appreciate that aspect when you are asking them to add to their already too heavy workload.
- 06/21/2002 First aid kit was request by the group, but denied. Reason given was that we were within a certain response time from emergency personnel. What if the closest emergency personnel site is on another call and the response time takes longer from the alternate?
- 06/21/2002 MSFC has made a great deal of progress toward creating a safe & healthy work environment over the past several years. I now feel management values my personal safety, whersa ten years ago I would not have felt that way.
- 06/21/2002 Safety is excessively emphasized for the office environment.
- 06/21/2002 I was given no formal safety training when I started work in this area 8 years ago but I have been given significant training since then.
- 06/21/2002 In my observation, ED27 dedicates significant time and effort to safety.
- 06/21/2002 The industrial safety program is more than adequate. Most safety hazards are due to working in a very old building.
- 06/24/2002 Ergonomic evaluations of workstations are only conducted at the request of individual employees and not as a routine part of any safety/health plan.
- 06/24/2002 Employee safety awareness is almost second nature in my organization. Employees pay a lot more attention to potential safety issues than ever before and practice safety everyday.
- 06/24/2002 I don't feel it is necessary to require CPR/medical expertise from within a work area (#38).



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- 06/24/2002 RE: ergonomics. An ergonomic office survey was done in our area last fall and all but one person who participated received ergonomic chairs and other equipment. That person, ironically is the only one with a back problem (spondylyosis).(The chair was recommended and authorized by the ergonomic specialist). When pursued, the only response was that the ergonomic fund was depleted. Interestingly, 5 months after the depletion, another employee (who was on extended LWOP for about 8 months) received her ergo chair while still on Leave without pay. She did return to work, \*part-time\* about a month later.
- 06/26/2002 I fail to see how painting an existing crosswalk black improves safety. It would appear that avoidance of liability is of greater concern than employee safety.
- 06/26/2002 MSFC/NASA HAS AN OUTSTANDING SAFETY PROGRAM.
- 06/26/2002 I think safety awareness has really been improved over the last few years at MSFC. It's seems to be maturing to the point where it is becoming more ingrained into the center culture in a positive way and no longer considered just another TQM-like management fad that typically fades with time. Please keep this safety emphasis positive - don't allow a "safety Nazi" culture of fear to develop: cover-ups and non-reports will result. Please offer more opportunities and management encouragement for first aid and CPR classes for MSFC personnel - the benefits are obvious in an emergency, but this training can improve morale in those who take them by providing confidence and a sense of preparedness.  
Thanks
- 06/26/2002 Kitchen areas in 4203 should be equipped with small fire extinguishers. This type of device would allow control of most fires that could occur as a result of improper use of Microwave ovens.
- 06/27/2002 Safety is number one at MSFC.
- 06/27/2002 Why does the west wing of our building get bottled water and we (the east wing) don't? The quality of the water is the same.
- 06/27/2002 My Center's commitment to safety is "World Class" !
- 06/27/2002 Marshall talks ergonomics, but supplies no funds to provide the ergonomic chairs and desks needed.
- 06/27/2002 Quality of Drinking Water in Bldg is a continual concern.
- 06/27/2002 Formal training is a traditional weakness in safety programs outside of traditionally defined hazardous operations areas. While potential hazards exist in the office environment; fire, slips/trips/falls, etc.; procedures for those types of hazards and emergencies do not seem to be part of any formal, mandatory training.



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- 06/27/2002 45( Question 90 on 90 Question Survey). Assumes that certification results in increased job performance/safety. We have NO input into certification requirements.
- 06/28/2002 The water in C wing is horrible. Some of the personnel in C wing have bottled water routinely delivered. I do not understand why all of C wing does not get this benefit?
- 06/28/2002 Safety is being pushed to the limit. So much so that when minor accidents occur on the job, employees are reluctant to report those injuries for fear of impacting MSFC's safety record.
- I answered "N/A" to question 42 since when I hired in safety was an overkill issue as it is today.
- 06/28/2002 The SD40 organization has a defined safety awareness process.
- 06/28/2002 45 (Quesiton 89 on 90 Question Survey). Answered with the understanding that special training is for safety related concerns.
- 06/28/2002 Safety programs here are not just "lip service", even in our office enviroment safety issues are taken seriously.
- 07/01/2002 We strain the gnats and swallow the camels. There is so much attention to the mundane aspects of safety (tripping hazards and coffee pots) that attention is distracted from the serious technical and management problems with difficult safety and health issues (protracted periods with 60 hour work weeks for large teams, inadequate attention to environmental impact and range safety issues.)
- 07/01/2002 Safety needs to clarify the rules and provide training specifically related to storage of laboratory chemicals (cabinet requirements, compatibility, etc.) as it is not always clear which chemicals must be stored corrosive/flammible-materials cabinets and which cannot be stored together.
- Classroom training for forklifts, overhead cranes, etc. is provided, but organized hands-on (operator) training is generally available at the center.
- The expertise of safety representatives needs to be augmented in the area of laboratory electrical equipment; they tend to concentrate on recepticle ground faults and extension plugs.
- 07/01/2002 Those stickers in the stairwell telling us to hold on to the rails are silly and don't really accomplish anything.
- 07/01/2002 Local fire extinguishers are for wood and paper fires only. If an electrical appliance were to short and ignite, local personnel would not be able to provide any immediate response or attempt to extinguish.



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- 07/01/2002      Quality of water is substandard - building/plumbing pipes are too old. Water color ranges from tan to brown on certain days. Employees should not have to pay for bottled drinking water.  
Air quality/asbestos levels in the buildings is substandard. I did not take allergy meds till working in this building.
- 07/01/2002      Q24 (Question 48 on 90 Question Survey). Posters used to be posted once a month in our area. Posters have not been posted for over 2 years now. As far as I know, only housekeeping rules for our area have been posted over the last six months.
- 07/02/2002      I work in an office environment and do not operate equipment. The emergency plans (e.g. evacuation) have not changed since I have worked in this area, hence some of my "don't know" responses.
- 07/02/2002      Due to a recurring problem with a co-worker blatantly falsifying safety inspection records, which could have lead to exposure of both myself and any other employees in or around my building to x-radiation, and the apparent outweighing of concern for not upsetting this employee over that of my own safety, I no longer have the conviction that my safety on the job is the priority that I have been led to believe.
- 07/02/2002      Comment on #36 (Question 71 on 90 Question Survey).  
The severe weather alert response time is unacceptable. Currently the response time is 15 minutes after the National weather service has issued a watch or warning. This needs to be improved for safety concerns!
- 07/02/2002      Re: question xx  
I remain concerned about the long term effects of overall water and air quality in Bldg. 4666 and the presence of asbestos in the building.



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07/03/2002

Q 5,34,&35. (Questions 10, 68, and 70 on 90 Question Survey) I don't know if there is a plan for the ceiling falling down or for a meteorite hitting the building but it does NOT concern me.

Q 14 (Question 28 on 90 Question Survey) My health needs include blood pressure medication. How can I say that it is being met "in my work area"

Q 19&22 (Questions 38 & 44 on 90 Question Survey) Employees know that if they report a close call everyone up the line will be deluged with committees and paperwork. Since we like our immediate supervisors and don't want to do this to them, we just discuss them among the workers privately and keep the supervisors out of it. If the system were much more informal it would be more effective. Also, anyone who has been involved in one of these root cause investigations will tell you that they hound you to ridiculous lengths. "Why did you step off the curb wrong?" "Because I'm human and I don't always do everything perfectly, That's Why!!!"

I strongly object to this survey being used to dump paperwork on our managers if they don't get a certain score. Also, I object to the results being broken down to anything below center level. The Center Directors dump on the lower level directors etc.

Also, there needs to be a category for "not directly known". I refuse to put anything other than "don't know" for anything that I don't have direct knowledge of.

07/03/2002

The building I work in has no fire suppression sprinkler system. I consider that a safety deficit.

07/03/2002

I think the center is doing a pretty good job when it comes to employee safety, with one exception. Many people still have computer desks, desk workstations, and/or chairs that are not ergonomically correct. I personally know a couple of people who need to get a new chair but cannot because there aren't sufficient funds. If the center is really serious about safety and wishes to make this clear to the employees, then they should be willing to spend whatever is necessary to make our work areas ergonomically correct.

When employees hear all the center's rhetoric about safety but perceive the center is not doing much to help make their work areas ergonomically correct, then all the safety talk comes across as lip service and not a serious commitment. Thank you.

By: Civil Service Only

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- 07/03/2002 A better supply of drinking water is needed.
- 07/04/2002 Safty tends to be over done and waists a lot of resources. Most of the training is repetitive, redundant and ineffective. We need to leave some room for common sense. Everyone does not need the same level of safty training.
- 07/05/2002 #14 - (Question 27 in 90 Question Survey) Resources available for Safety & Health, not adequate. When I required an ergo chair, after an evaluation, I was told there was no money to purchase it. Only after my management pursued the issue, was the chair purchased. More resources should be allocated for these items, rather than other "fluff" items centerwide.
- #33 (Question 65 on 90 Question Survey) - An ergonomic evaluation is promptly provided after request by the employee or manager. They are not routine.
- 07/05/2002 In general, safety is a priority handed down from management to employee.
- 07/07/2002 Without any doubt, from the center top manager on down, commitment to safety is a paramount priority.
- 07/08/2002 SD72 believes a safe workplace is a better work place. Safe meetings are held every first Wednesday of each month.
- 07/09/2002 The Safety program at MSFC has enhanced my awareness of safety at work and home. I am much more aware of my surroundings and unsafe conditions and make every effort to be safe.
- 07/09/2002 I am on full-time study with my previous assignment on the 9th floor. Have not worked in the TD work area since Dec 2000. Answers are based on work performed prior to Dec 2000 and on e-mail and other correspondence from the TD organization.
- 07/09/2002 If anything we are placing too much emphasis on safety.
- 07/09/2002 In general I am very pleased with the level of attention given to safety concerns in my work area.
- 07/10/2002 If the center was serious about ergonomics in a computer-centric world, every computer bought would have by DEFAULT an ergonomic keyboard, with the ability to request non-ergonomic keyboards as an exception. As it stands, the individual organizations are penalized by having to buy a computer, pay extra for an ergonomic keyboard, and wastefully throw out the original non-ergo keyboard. That shouldn't happen.



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- 07/12/2002 Safety is alive and well at MSFC. Our Managers have done an excellent job of fostering an environment that is permeated with the desire to aggressively pursue safe conditions. I know the safety program is working, because I have heard countless co-workers comment about the fact that thinking safely is so ingrained, that it spills over into their personal lives as well, making them more cautious and safety conscious when driving, using lawnmowers, power tools, etc. I think this is a huge compliment to the Safety program. MSFC is not only creating a safer NASA, we are really supporting the Center's value of "people" by creating a safer environment both at work and at home.
- 07/12/2002 The overemphasis on "safety" has compromised NASA's ability to perform its primary technical function.
- 07/15/2002 Safety at MSFC is Priority One. I appreciate the tremendous effort that is made by managers and fellow employees to ensure a safe and healthy workplace.
- 07/15/2002 I have not received an employee evaluation in this group.
- 07/15/2002 I think we at MSFC have a great Safety Program.
- 07/15/2002 Although they keep track of my training, the safety office does not directly notify me of re-training requirements. That appears to be left up to my direct management.
- 07/16/2002 Safety here at MSFC workplace has spilled over into our personal lives which has helped improve safety for everyone. I would however like to see more CPR & American Red Cross Emergency First Aid classes offered to employees (and their families) and contractors here at MSFC.
- 07/16/2002 Safety is in the forefront of my actions at work and home due to the constant emphasis placed on safety at work. I have carried safety precautions into my every day walk of life thanks to MSFC.
- 07/17/2002 In an attempt to lower costs, building 4203 air conditioning systems are turned off after hours each workday and over the weekend. Heat levels become very high on every floor. Air quality is poor. This poses health risks to personnel. This is also harmful to equipment left in the building during those shutdown periods.
- 07/17/2002 I am a relatively new employee in a sedentary, office job at NASA Marshall: I have been in this job for less than three months. During that time we have had safety inspections and "safety minutes" at routine staff/team meetings. Safety is the first key value emphasized. Many of my answers or groups of answers above make sense only in this context.
- 07/17/2002 My work environment is an office cubicle - rather benign. Supervisors do address safety issues regularly they might affect us at home and at work, and I am aware of supervisory walk-arounds to do inspections. This approach seems perfectly adequate for the office environment, anything else would just become an additional burden of time and responsibilities placed upon both the employee and the supervisor.



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- 07/18/2002 We need to check the drinking water in our building for contaminants. Some people won't drink it because they don't think that it is healthy.
- 07/18/2002 I submitted a close call report regarding the flow of traffic on Martin Road in the mornings (I witnessed cars travelling in the wrong direction on two different occasions due to inadequate directional markings) and did receive a timely response. However the response was not acceptable and was never resolved. Several others submitted similar reports and received similar unacceptable answers.
- 07/19/2002 I have observed that many organizations' safety moments covered a lot of valuable examples and information regarding general safety issues. But the hazard information within the workplace and the emergency procedure or any equipment operations were not addressed.
- 07/19/2002 Would like to see more focus on the health and environmental aspects of our job sites, i.e. building conditions.
- 07/19/2002 Asbestos & EPA issues are of very high concerns. A month does not pass in my building for a scheduled outage in tamper with asbestos.
- 07/19/2002 I think that radiation monitoring devices should be worn by all personnel operating equipment which produces radiation.



## Occupational Safety PEP Comments for Managers

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### Marshall Space Flight Center

- 06/18/2002      Excellent non-threatening focus on safety as a way of life both at work and at home. The culture is changing, and it's positive.
- 06/20/2002      I THINK MSFC HAS AN EXCELLENT SAFETY AND HEALTH PROGRAM. THANKS TO BOTH MANAGEMENT AND THE EMPLOYEES THAT MAKE THIS A REALITY.
- 06/25/2002      The safety program at MSFC is thorough and comprehensive, however, the numerous and superfluous safety initiatives, websites, duplicated reporting, and unreasonably lengthy training sessions are inhibiting to many employees and tend to dilute the intended goal of real safety. Many who have observed the process get the impression that safety is often used as a political tool for gain by ambitious managers.
- 06/25/2002      Safety at Marshall has come a long way in the past 3 years.
- 06/28/2002      Seems to be a real dedication to safety
- 07/01/2002      Funding needs to be set aside annually to cover ergonomic requirements for Center Organizations which have minimal funding.
- 07/05/2002      I believe the Safety and Health program at MSFC is world class. The leadership here at the Center is definitely committed to the health and well-being of our workforce. The emphasis placed on Safety in Center Management meetings and the new/expanded Health & Fitness facility are two examples of this commitment. All of this makes me feel fortunate to work here.
- 07/09/2002      I have no direct knowledge of element 11. I assume this is done in the appropriate areas. My group is in an office setting. We do not work with heavy machinery, facilities, etc. Maintenance in our area consists only of building maintenance and computer maintenance. I imagine there are plans for these, but have never seen them.
- 07/15/2002      I believe that Marshall has established a highly effective safety program!
- 07/18/2002      Element XI - Budget constraints have limited the Center's ability to replace obsolete and deteriorated building components and systems (e.g., electrical power distribution systems). However, significant efforts by senior Center and Agency management are underway to correct this condition.