

## COLD MEDICATION & DROWSINESS

by Mark Stice

Cold and flu season is here again. Now is a good time for our annual warning about using over-the-counter cold and flu medications during work hours. Sometimes, cold remedies and work are not a good mix. The most common side effect of over-the-counter cold and flu medicine is drowsiness, which lowers one's alertness and reaction time. Ten to twenty-five percent of people taking these medications report daytime drowsiness. This can be more than just an annoyance. Approximately 200,000 vehicle accidents are attributed to sleepiness every year. Fatigue is a factor in nearly one-third of truck accidents where the driver is killed. Taking medications, then coming to work and using machinery or sharp tools, can be dangerous. So, when you are ill, what should you do? In many cases, your employer may not want you to show up for work when you have a bad cold or the flu. Not only does your risk of injury increase if medication causes you to be drowsy, but your productivity is likely to be poor as well. In addition, you may pass a virus to co-workers so that they too become ill. Finally, your own recovery may be delayed if you are not getting enough rest to fight the ailment. But, sometimes you *must* come to work and you *need* to take medications. If this is the case, remember the following:

- **Let your supervisor know**
- **Follow the recommended dosages**
- **Do not mix medications**
- **Read the label**
- **Don't try new remedies during work hours**
- **Wash your hands often**

November 15-20 - Flu  
Shots @ Medical Center  
(4249)

November 28-30 - Life  
Safety Code Training,  
contact Laura Groce at 544-  
9154.

### Safety Concerns Reporting System (SCRS)

The goal of the Safety Concerns Reporting System (SCRS) is to identify and correct potentially dangerous situations and to solicit ideas for improving MSFC's safety program. Anyone working at MSFC may use the System. You may submit any safety-related suggestion or concern, and if desired, remain anonymous. For issues involving your immediate work area, you are encouraged to first report to your supervisor or building manager. In many cases, it may be possible to correct the issue without using this Center-wide system. Please note that routine facility maintenance or repair issues, such as replacing a bulb in an exit light, are best reported directly to the Facilities Help Desk by using One Stop Services - call 544-HELP and press 4 for "Facilities Work Request." To assure appropriate priority, please specify the issue is "safety related." For additional One Stop Services information, go to <http://4help.msfc.nasa.gov/>. Other means of entering safety-related concerns and suggestions into SCRS include:

- Calling 544-HELP and pressing 0 for "NASA Information Support Services Specialist," or pressing 2, for "Safety Hot Line."
- Calling the MSFC Safety Office at 544-0046.

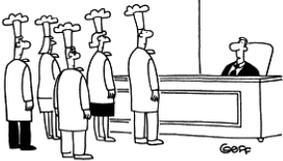
Filling out a SCRS Reporting Form found on most bulletin boards throughout the Center.



### A Commitment to Safety and Mission Success

**Our goal: Establish  
MSFC as number  
one in safety within  
NASA**

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"I understand we have too many cooks in the kitchen. Therefore, I'm changing your job titles to food executives."

### Ask Dr. Know

**How do I dispose of  
chemical product  
containers that  
have been opened?**

**If the product  
containers are  
empty the user  
should follow MPG  
8870.1, Chapter 5.  
If the containers  
are partially full,  
the user should  
follow MPG 8870.1,  
Chapter 2, para 2.5.**



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Occupational  
Medicine and  
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Health Services



<http://health.msfc.nasa.gov/>