

PESTICIDES AT THE UNIVERSITY



In general, pesticides are NOT used on U of T property. Only under specific circumstances that require the approval of the Pesticide Committee could pesticides be applied. Only those licensed by the province may apply pesticides.

CLEANING WINDOW WELLS



As part of your job, you may be involved in cleaning window wells. Some hazards that you may be exposed to while you clean window wells include:

- Risk of slips, trips and falls from the ground to the bottom of the well, climbing through windows, climbing over fences, slipping on icy surfaces.
- Risk of burns, abrasions, cuts, electrocution, bruises from contact with utility lines, pipes, conduits, construction debris, garbage, or other unknown materials.
- Risk of diseases such as *Histoplasmosis* from contact with bird droppings – see section on Bird and Bat Droppings.
- Risk of musculoskeletal injuries from shoveling, digging, lifting materials.
- Risk of exposure to biological agents present in the stagnant water.

Before you enter a window well to clean it, make sure of the following:

- Ladders are used properly, in accordance with the University's Ladder Standard.
- Establish a buddy system or a radio communication system if you will be working alone in an isolated location.
- Depending on the situation, wear appropriate personal protective equipment such as gloves (the type of glove material will depend on what you are trying to protect yourself against), safety glasses, coveralls, respirators, head protection, or rubber boots.
- Contact the operating engineers of the area where you will work to ask them what type of utility hazards may be present. Ask them to shut down any lines where possible.
- If you come across containers of unknown chemicals in the wells contact:

St. George: (416)-978-7000 UTSC: (416)-287-7333 UTM: (905)-569-4333

- If you come across window wells heavily contaminated with bird droppings while you clean, follow procedures outlined in the Bird and Bat Droppings section.

SNOW SHOVELING



During the winter season, Grounds employees are involved in clearing the snow from building entrances. Shoveling snow requires great physical effort, as it involves staying balanced on often slippery surfaces as well as lifting heavy loads.

Awkward shoveling practices may contribute to back or other musculoskeletal injuries.

Some safe practices to follow to make snow shoveling safer include:

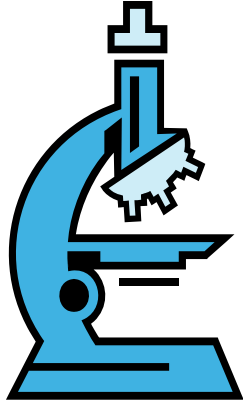
- Waxing or lubricating the shovel so that snow will not stick.
- Taking care not to overload the shovel especially when the snow is heavy and wet.
- Watching for hidden objects lodged into the snow, as sudden stops may impact the body.
- Use the lightest shovel appropriate for the job.
- Minimize your 'throw' distance to < 1 metre.



Before using snow throwers / snow blowers / snow sweepers, make sure to:

- Never wear loose clothing, scarves, or other items that could get caught in the equipment.
- Use appropriate hearing protection.
- Secure long hair.
- Ensure all shields are in place.
- Ensure auger, blower system, and snow discharge chute are properly lubricated, adjusted and operating freely.
- Ensure engine oil levels are proper.
- Ensure tires are properly inflated and in good condition.
- Ensure the power cord is in good condition with the ground lead intact.
- Ensure throttle and clutch systems are working smoothly.
- Keep hands and feet away from the machinery's moving parts, even if the machine is OFF.
- Watch for pedestrians and traffic.
- Ensure that snow from the discharge chute is not going to hit you, bystanders, or other objects.
- Never leave a snow thrower running while you take a break.
- Never operate a machine indoors unless the room's exhaust is connected to an exhaust system that was designed for that purpose.
- Also refer "Powered Equipment and Handtools Section" of this handbook

SAFE TO REMOVE TAGS



As part of your job, you may be called upon to work in a University Laboratory which is vacated by a principal investigator or a professor due to retirement or other reasons. The work may involve moving equipment that was used with biological, chemical, or radiological agents. To protect your health and safety, principal investigators or professors are required to properly "Decommission" the laboratory and associated research areas such as storage rooms. Once the areas are decommissioned "Safe to Remove Tag" signage or other equivalent document will be posted identifying that the equipment to be moved has been decontaminated to inactivate or remove potentially hazardous agents and materials used in the laboratory.

Equipment should not be removed unless a "Safe to Remove Tag" or an equivalent document signed by the principal investigator is provided.

SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS



Slips, trips and falls are major cause of workplace injuries. When we walk, we shift our center of gravity from our rear foot forward. Depending on what is in our path or on the ground, we can lose our balance as we walk. Injuries can be minor (e.g. scrapes, bruises) or serious (e.g. bone fractures, even fatalities).

As part of your job, you may often be exposed to conditions that may increase the risk of a slip, trip, or fall such as:

- Wet or snowy weather conditions
- Wet flooring indoors
- Spills on the floor
- Uneven flooring, rug or carpet edges
- Loose handrails
- Uneven steps
- Icy floors
- Poor lighting conditions
- Extension cords, cables, piping in the way
- Equipment or supplies in the way

Prevention:

- Good housekeeping
- Look where you are going! Do not allow objects you are carrying to obstruct your view.
- Keep your work area tidy and uncluttered.
- Make sure that your footwear is appropriate for your working conditions.
- Clean up drips or spills immediately.
- Keep cables and cords out of walkways.
- Avoid use of cell phones and other distracting gadgets when walking
- Report any slip, trip and fall hazards to your supervisor right away
- Keep work areas well lit and clean.
- When you are working on wet and slippery surfaces, practice **safe walking skills:**

- Walk at a safe speed; do not rush.
- Use shorter steps to keep your center of balance under you.
- Point your toes slightly outward

SUBSTANCES FROM TREES AND PLANTS



Certain plants and weeds carry substances that may cause irritation and dermatitis to your skin upon contact. The chance of coming into poisonous plants such as Poison Ivy on the city campuses is negligible. You may come into contact with such substances while working in rural areas such as Hart House Farm, however.

For detailed information about various plants, contact the *Canadian Poisonous Plant Information System* with the Department of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Canadian Biodiversity Information System. Their website can be found at:

http://www.cbif.gc.ca/pls/pp/poison?p_x=px

Prevention

The best way to prevent you from contact with poisonous plants is to use gloves and clothing as a barrier. Note that barrier creams will not provide you with protection from contact with poisonous plants.

Other ways to protect you from contact with poisonous plants include:

- Destroying poisonous plants when you notice them. Do not burn the plant, because the smoke may be toxic to humans and animals.
- Washing and scrubbing areas of the body that came into contact with a poisonous plant.
- Washing clothes that have been in contact with a poisonous plant.

BEDBUGS

What are bed bugs?



Bed bugs are insects that, as adults, have oval-shaped bodies with no wings. They prefer to feed on human blood. Prior to feeding, they are about 6 mm long and flat as paper. After feeding, they turn dark red and become bloated. Eggs are whitish, pear-shaped and about the size of a salt or rice. Clusters of 10-50 eggs can be found in cracks and crevices.

Can I get sick from bed bugs?

There are no known cases of infectious disease transmitted by bed bug bites. Most people are not aware that they have been bitten but some people are more sensitive to the bite and may have a localized reaction. Scratching the bitten areas can lead to infection.



Where can bed bugs be found?

Bed bugs prefer dark areas. They feed at night and hide during the day (90% of their life is spent in hiding areas). They do NOT fly or jump and are often carried on objects such as furniture and clothing. Examples are mattresses, linen, cushions, curtains, rugs, edges of carpets, dust covers and couches. They can also be found in cracks in the bed frame and headboard, cracks in plaster, in drawers, behind baseboards and in telephones, radios and clocks.

Prevention:

1. If you are asked to move items like the ones listed above, perform a visual inspection of the item prior to moving it. Bed bugs and their eggs are large enough to be seen with the human eye. Bed bugs may also leave small brown-coloured feces stains.
2. After the move, workers should inspect their own clothing, shoes, hat, etc.

If you do see evidence of bed bugs, do not touch the items and contact your supervisor immediately. Arrangements will be made to treat and clean the items by the property manager.

If bed bugs are discovered AFTER you have made touched the item, follow these precautions:

1. **If the clothing will be thrown away:** Seal in sturdy plastic bags (double bag) and keep them in secure place until they can be disposed of.

2. **If the clothing will be kept:** Wash clothes in hot water and then dry on high heat for at least 30 minutes. If it is not possible to wash the clothes immediately after, following Step 1 until they can be washed.
3. Shoes should be carefully inspected and dispose of if needed.
4. Wash your hands, face and other exposed skin with soap and water.

Resources: Visit the City of Toronto website on bedbugs or contact the City of Toronto website at 416-338-7600
<http://www.toronto.ca/health/bedbugs/factsheets.htm>