



# THE SSE ELUCIDATOR

*"Elucidate: to give clarity through explanation and analysis."*

## TOMATO FOOD SAFETY ALERT



*Red Plum/Red Roma tomatoes implicated in outbreak*



*Round red tomato implicated in outbreak*

A salmonella outbreak linked to raw tomatoes serves as a reminder to take extra care with summer fruits and vegetables. More than 20 people have been hospitalized as the CDC investigates the source of the tomatoes responsible for the illnesses. An ongoing multi-state outbreak of human Salmonella serotype Saintpaul infections is believed to

be connected to large tomatoes, including Roma and round red. Since mid-April, 167 persons infected with Salmonella Saintpaul with the same genetic fingerprint have been identified in 17 states: Arizona (12 persons), California (2), Colorado (1), Connecticut (1), Idaho (2), Illinois (27), Indiana (7), Kansas (5), Michigan (2), New Mexico (39), Oklahoma (3), Oregon (3), Texas (56), Utah (1), Virginia (2), Washington (1), and Wisconsin (3).

Salmonella can occur when food is improperly stored or handled and when preparers do not wash their hands or sanitize implements involved in meat storage. Salmonella is a common organism that can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. Healthy persons

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Tomato Food Safety Alert	1
Decreasing Your Summer Energy Consumption	3
Indoor Air Pollution	4
June's Careless Calamities	5
Dry Drowning Safety Alert	7
Courses and Seminars	7

infected with Salmonella often experience fever, diarrhea (which may be bloody), nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain and cramping within 12 to 72 hours of infection. Generally, the illness lasts a week. In some, hospitalization is required because the infection may have spread from the intestines to the blood stream and other body sites. Without treatment, severe cases of Salmonella can result in death; however, some Salmonella bacteria are resistant to antibiotics, largely due to the use of antibiotics to promote the growth of feed animals.

While there is no way for consumers to detect salmonella (you can't smell, taste or see it), there are some things you can do reduce the risk. At this time, FDA is advising U.S. consumers to limit their tomato consumption to those that are not the likely source of this outbreak. These include cherry tomatoes; grape tomatoes; tomatoes sold with the vine still attached; tomatoes grown at home; and raw red Roma, red plum, and round red tomatoes from specific sources listed at: <http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/tomatoes.html>. Throw away or return any raw red plum, Roma, or round red toma-

## TOMATO FOOD SAFETY ALERT (CONT.)

toes that are from an unknown source.

Consumers everywhere are advised to:

- ◆ Refrigerate within 2 hours or discard cut, peeled, or cooked tomatoes.
- ◆ Avoid purchasing bruised or damaged tomatoes and discard any that appear spoiled.
- ◆ Cook tomatoes at 145 degrees to kill salmonella
- ◆ Cut away the part that is attached to the plant and the button on the other side because that part of the tomato is a hard area where organisms can more easily attach themselves.

While Ketchup and cooked sauces are not affected by the outbreak, consumers should be aware that raw tomatoes are often used in the preparation of fresh salsa, guacamole, and pico de gallo, are part of fillings for tortillas, and are used in many other dishes. If you are really concerned, tell the restaurant to leave the tomatoes off the sandwiches and salads. Even if you remove them once your order comes, the food could still be contaminated.

**General Fruit and Vegetable Safety** – In addition to tomatoes, consumers are advised to practice safe handling of all of their fruits and vegetables.

- ◆ Thoroughly wash all produce under cold running water.
- ◆ Wash hands with soap and water thoroughly before handling food. Wash your hands if you come in contact with pet feces, use the bathroom or change a baby's diaper.
- ◆ Keep produce that will be consumed raw separate from raw meats, raw seafood, and raw produce items.
- ◆ Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot water and soap when switching between types of food products.
- ◆ Remove outer layers of cabbage and lettuce.
- ◆ With the exception of bananas, fruit should be

washed even if it is being peeled because the fruit is still being touched by the person doing the peeling.

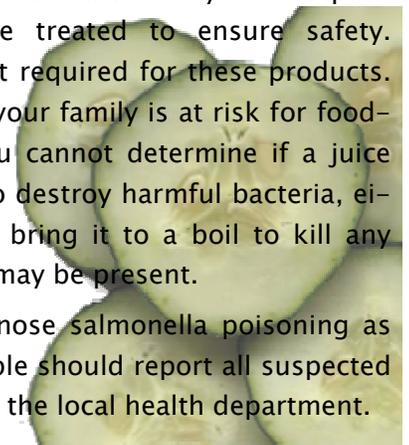
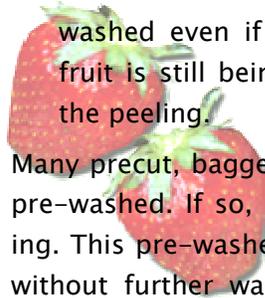
Many pre-cut, bagged produce items like lettuce are pre-washed. If so, it will be stated on the packaging. This pre-washed, bagged produce can be used without further washing. As an extra measure of caution, you can wash the produce again just before you use it. Pre-cut or pre-washed produce in open bags should be washed before using.

**Fruit and Vegetable Juice Safety** – Most of the juices sold in the United States are processed (for example, "pasteurized") to kill harmful bacteria. But when fruits and vegetables are fresh-squeezed and left untreated, harmful bacteria from the inside or the outside of the produce can become a part of the finished product.

Some grocery stores, health food stores, cider mills, and farm markets sell packages and containers of juice that was made on site and has not been pasteurized or otherwise treated to kill harmful bacteria. These untreated products should be kept in the refrigerated section of the store or on ice, and must have a label warning people (children, elderly, and people with weakened immune systems) who are at a higher risk for foodborne illness.

Juices that are fresh squeezed and sold by the glass – such as at farm markets, at roadside stands, or in some restaurants or juice bars – may not be pasteurized or otherwise treated to ensure safety. Warning labels are not required for these products. If you or someone in your family is at risk for foodborne illness, and you cannot determine if a juice has been processed to destroy harmful bacteria, either don't drink it or bring it to a boil to kill any harmful bacteria that may be present.

Many people misdiagnose salmonella poisoning as the flu. However, people should report all suspected foodborne illnesses to the local health department.



## DECREASING YOUR SUMMER ENERGY CONSUMPTION

**Programmable Thermostat** – Did you know that properly using a programmable thermostat in your home is one of the easiest ways you can save energy, money, and help fight global warming? An ENERGY STAR qualified programmable thermostat helps make it easy for you to save by offering four pre-programmed settings to regulate your home's temperature in both summer and winter — when you are asleep or away.

The average household spends more than \$2,000 a year on energy bills — nearly half of which goes to heating and cooling. Homeowners can save about \$180 a year by properly setting their programmable thermostats and maintaining those settings. The pre-programmed settings that come with ENERGY STAR qualified programmable thermostats are intended to deliver savings without sacrificing comfort. Programmable thermostats that have earned the ENERGY STAR offer the most energy-saving potential for your home and, unlike older manual thermostats, contain no mercury.

The key is to establish a program that automatically reduces heating and cooling in your home when you don't need as much. In order to increase your energy savings, it's important that you:

Keep the thermostat set at energy-saving temperatures for long periods of time, such as during the day when no one is home and through the night. ENERGY STAR qualified thermostats come with four pre-programmed temperature settings for typical weekday and weekend routines.

Resist the urge to override the pre-programmed settings. Every time you do, you use more energy and may end up paying more on your energy bill.

Set the "hold" button at a constant energy-saving temperature when going away for the weekend or on vacation.

Install your thermostat away from heating or cooling

registers, appliances, lighting, doorways, skylights, and windows, and areas that receive direct sunlight or drafts. Interior walls are best.



If you have a heat pump, you may require a special programmable thermostat to maximize your energy savings year-round.

**Invest in an ENERGY STAR Central Air Conditioner** – ENERGY STAR qualified central air conditioners have a higher Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) than today's standard models. SEER measures energy efficiency. The higher the SEER, the greater the level of efficiency. Since sizing and proper installation of a central air conditioning system are critical to energy efficiency and home comfort, it is important to hire a qualified technician.

**ENERGY STAR Home Sealing** – Homes that have drafty air leaks and are poorly insulated leads to an uncomfortable home and higher heating and cooling bills. This is especially true when the weather outside is very cold or hot. Sealing air leaks and adding insulation can increase your home's overall comfort, as well as reduce heating and cooling bills.

The EPA recommends a process called ENERGY STAR Home Sealing. Seal air leaks to reduce drafts and get the full performance out of insulation. Always seal air leaks before adding insulation. Add insulation to keep your home comfortable and energy-efficient. Usually, the easiest and most effective place to add insulation is in the attic. This can improve comfort throughout the home. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) recommends insulation levels for each part of the house, tailored for varying climates. Visit [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov) and click on Home Sealing to see recommended levels of insulation. Choose ENERGY STAR qualified windows when replacing or adding windows to your home. In addition to making you feel more comfortable, they reduce UV.

## INDOOR AIR POLLUTION

With the increasing concern over outdoor air pollution and its effects on global warming, indoor air pollution is often overlooked – not to mention preventable. Research has indicated that the air within homes and buildings can be much more polluted than outdoor air. Since people spend up to 90% of their time indoors, taking a few moments to examine the indoor air quality in your home can be helpful, and even lifesaving.

Indoor air pollution occurs when pollutant sources release gases or particles into indoor air. There are many sources of indoor air pollution that can be found in your home. Here are some examples provided by the EPA:

- ◆ Combustion sources such as oil, gas, kerosene, coal, wood, and tobacco products
- ◆ Building materials and furnishings such as deteriorated, asbestos-containing insulation, wet or damp carpet, cabinetry or furniture made of certain pressed wood products, and damaged/chipped paint containing lead
- ◆ Biological contaminants such as bacteria, mold, mildew, viruses, animal dander, dust mites, cockroaches, and pollen
- ◆ Products for household cleaning and maintenance, personal care, and hobbies such as solvents, air fresheners, and pesticides
- ◆ Central heating and cooling systems and humidification devices
- ◆ Outdoor sources such as pesticides and outdoor air pollution
- ◆ Chemical contaminants such as radon and carbon monoxide



Some health effects from indoor air pollutants can be experienced immediately after being exposed. Examples of immediate effects include: irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat; dizziness; fatigue; and headaches. These immediate effects are usually short-term and are treatable by eliminating the person's exposure to the source of the pollution. Early symptoms of diseases may also appear, including

asthma, hypersensitivity pneumonitis, and humidifier fever. Often, immediate effects are similar to those from colds or viruses, so it may become difficult to determine if the symptoms are caused by indoor air pollution. In these situations, it is important to pay attention to the time and place the symptoms occur.

Some health effects from indoor air pollution may show up years after being exposed to the pollutants or after years of exposure. These effects include: heart disease, respiratory disease, and cancer.

To improve indoor air quality, the EPA recommends three strategies. The most effective way is to eliminate individual sources of pollution or reduce their emissions. For example, sources that contain asbestos can be sealed or enclosed. The second strategy is increase the amount of outdoor air coming indoors. This can be done by opening doors and windows, using attic or window fans, using bathroom or kitchen exhaust fans, and operating a window air conditioner that brings outdoor air in. Ventilation is particularly important when performing activities that produce high levels of pollutants, including: cooking, painting, heating with kerosene heaters, and sanding. Some new homes are even being designed to bring in more outdoor air. Some of these designs include air-to-air heat exchangers. More information about these can be found at the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy's Office's website at [www.eere.energy.gov/](http://www.eere.energy.gov/). The final way to improve indoor air quality is to purchase an air cleaner. Be sure to find one that efficiently collects particles and has a high air-circulation rate. Also remember that air cleaners are not recommended by the EPA to reduce levels of radon.

Unfortunately, most people do not recognize that their home has an indoor air pollution problem until health problems arise. Testing for pollutants can become expensive. Before monitoring your home for pollutants other than radon, be sure to consult your state or local health department or professionals who have had experience with indoor air quality.



## INDOOR AIR POLLUTION (CONT.)

*What about Radon?* Recently, radon has become more recognized as an indoor air pollutant, but most people are still not familiar with it. The most common source of indoor radon is uranium in the soil or rock in which homes have been built. Uranium releases radioactive radon gas as it naturally breaks down. Any home may have radon in it, including new homes. Radon gas often goes undetected because it is colorless and odorless, but it can easily enter your house through cracks in concrete walls and floors, dirt floors, floor drains, sumps, and even through well water.

The biggest health effect associated with exposure to high levels of radon is lung cancer. The American Lung Association and the American Medical Association agree that radon may cause thousands of preventable lung cancer deaths each year. The EPA estimates that radon causes about 14,000 deaths a year in the United States. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer, following cigarette smoking. If you smoke and there is radon in your home, your risk for lung cancer is extremely high.

You can't detect Radon through sight and smell, but testing is easy to do. Do-it-yourself radon test kits are inexpensive and can be found in hardware stores, retail outlets, and online. Test kits should be state-certified or have met the requirements of a national radon proficiency program. In addition, a trained contractor can be hired to do it for you. The National Environmental Health Association's National Radon Proficiency Program ([www.neha-nrpp.org](http://www.neha-nrpp.org)) or the National Radon Safety Board ([www.nrsb.org](http://www.nrsb.org)) can provide you with a list of qualified radon measurement contractors.

It is possible to reduce radon levels in your home after it is determined that the acceptable levels have been exceeded. This requires technical knowledge and special skills performed by a contractor who is trained to fix radon problems. To review ways in which radon can be eliminated from your home, consult the EPA's Consumer's Guide to Radon Reduction. Also check with your state radon office for a list of state-certified radon-reduction contractors in your area.

## THE SSE ELUCIDATOR'S MONTHLY CARELESS CALAMITIES

Lets start off the Critical Days of Summer with some note worthy topics.

1. Topic: Bicycles. A sergeant from an aviation squadron was looking at bicycles at a local store, some were on an overhead rack. At least one of those wasn't lashed down or balanced because it fell on his head. Gave him a concussion.

2. Topic: Basketball. A sergeant in North Carolina was moving one of those portable backboard things you see in driveways. Of course, "portable" also means "droppable," which is what he did onto his left foot since it was heavy and he didn't bother to get any help. He was on LIMPDU for four days.

3. Topic: PT. A seaman recruit was changing into his p.t. gear in his barracks. He pulled on his socks, but before he could lace up his shoes, he slipped and strained his knee. Two days of LIMPDU for this jock.

4. Topic: Driving. A Eugene, Oregon man crashed into the side of a moving freight train while sending a text message. A news report said "When officers arrived they found him alert and talking but trapped in the car." We double-checked our source to make sure it said "alert and talking," not "alert and texting," which would have been an oxymoron.

Police charged him with drunken driving and careless driving. It was 2 a.m. Police also suspected that he had been speeding. Isn't it comforting to know that we share the road with such people?

We regret not being able to report the content of his vital text message. "B HOME SOON"? "PIKN UP BEER"? That's all for this month friends and neighbors. Until we meet again, puh-leese pay attention while sharing the roads. Cell phones are bad enough, but text messaging? U GOT 2 B KIDN ME.

## DRY DROWNING SAFETY ALERT

Sunshine and 95-degree temperatures are keeping things busy at local pools. However, the tragic death of a South Carolina 10-year-old boy more than an hour after he had gone swimming has focused a spotlight on the little-known phenomenon called “dry drowning” — and warning signs that everyone should be aware of. Dry drowning can occur up to 24 hours after a small amount of water gets into the lungs and damages the tissue, causing the lungs to fill with water. As a result, the lungs are unable to deliver oxygen to the blood and, ultimately, the brain. According to the CDC, some 3,600 people drowned in 2005, the most recent year for which there are statistics. Because the CDC does not distinguish between wet drowning and dry drowning, it is uncertain how many drowning deaths are due to dry drownings.

In the case of Johnny Jackson, he had gone for a swim in his neighborhood and walked home with his mother. He seemed fine except that his mother says he soiled himself, and then started talking slowly. He was sleepy. He layed down to take a nap and about one hour later he was dead. When she went to check on him later she saw his face was covered in a “spongy white material”. Johnny must have got some water in his lungs while he was swimming in his local pool at Goose Creek, South Carolina. He

didn't show any signs of respiratory distress.

Dry drowning can happen when someone has

forceful contact with the water, such as from high diving or a water slide. Or just from summer fun in a pool, or even from a bath. When water gets into

the lungs, and it doesn't have to be much, a person can asphyxiate. Lungs immersed in fluid are unable to take in oxygen from the air, but even with a small amount of water, laryngospasm reflex essentially causes asphyxiation and neurogenic pulmonary edema. Basically when you breath, the diaphragm contracts, increases the volume of air into the lungs from the outside. During laryngospasm the person's larynx spasm shuts. Air does not rush into the lungs. The heart is beating and the blood flowing but it is not picking up oxygen.

First things first: if you see someone having trouble, fighting to keep their head above water, get them out of the water and get them calmed down. If you notice breathing problems, be aware. Just because they didn't drown, doesn't mean they're out of danger. Dry drowning usually occurs between one hour and 24 hours after an incident. A person can have a drowning incident, be pulled out of the water, be OK, and then sometime within the next 24 hours, they can dry drown.

Unfortunately, unless a you know what to look for, signs are easily overlooked or misinterpreted, especially in children. The first sign to look for is difficulty breathing, including persistent coughing, shortness of breath, or pain in chest. If someone comes out of the water and coughs for a minute, then calms down -- that is much different than if the child keeps coughing or complaining of pain.

The second sign is extreme fatigue, which isn't always easy to spot in children. It's very difficult to tell when your child is abnormally tired versus normal tired after a hot day and running around in the pool. When your brain isn't getting oxygen, it can become excessively tired resulting in loss of consciousness. Finally, dramatic changes in behavior, another tough call when dealing with very small children whose moods and behavior can change from one minute to the next. If your child's abnor-



## DRY DROWNING SAFETY ALERT (CONT.)

mally cranky, abnormally combative, or exhibiting any dramatic change from their normal pattern, this could be do to a loss of oxygen to their brain.

There are risk factors and situations in which dry drowning may be more likely, such as if the child is not a good swimmer or a first-time swimmer. Children and adults with underlying lung problems such as asthma may also be at increased risk for dry

drowning. To prevent an incident, use common sense and never let inexperienced swimmers in the pool without a lot of supervision.

If you or someone you know experiencing these systems, they need to get to an emergency room and have a breathing tube inserted so oxygen can be forced into the lungs so they regain their function.

## UPCOMING COURSES AND SEMINARS

**Title:** USEPA Introduction to Environmental Management Systems Training

**Location:** Web Based **Date:** 6/17/08 – 6/20/08

**Description:** This course provides an overview of environmental management systems (EMS) and how EMS can support environmental improvements at facilities that are subject to environmental regulations. It also presents information regarding the USEPA's involvement in supporting EMS efforts at facilities regulated under a number of environmental statutes, including the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). This web-based training course will take about 1 hour to complete. The intended audience for this web-based EMS training course includes anyone looking for an overview of EMS.



**Web:** Visit <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/ems/ems-101/ems101.htm> for registration information..

**Title:** Naval Civil Engineer Corps Officers School (CECOS) Training Courses

**Location:** Various **Date:** Various

**Description:** During FY 2008, CECOS will offer 57 different courses with 260 individual course offerings. The Mobile Training Teams will be conducting over 80 percent of the courses. Courses being offered include: facilities energy management; environmental compliance assessment; DoD conservation law enforcement program; introduction to cultural resource management laws and regulations; historic preservation law and Section 106 compliance; natural resource conservation; and basic and advanced environmental law. You do not have to be an engineer or with the Navy to attend.

**Web:** For a complete listing of courses visit the CECOS website at: <https://www.npdc.navy.mil/csfe/cecos/index.cfm?fa=courses.schedules>.

**THE ELUCIDATOR**

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*Visit us at:*

<http://mrmc-www.army.mil>

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***Reminder***

*For all accidents, no matter how minor,  
specific forms documenting the incident must be submitted to your Safety Office.*

*Military: DA Form 285-AB-4*

*Civilian: DOL Claims Forms CA-1 or CA-2*

*All employees requiring medical attention must visit your local Occupation Health Clinic as soon as possible post mishap.*