

Health and Safety Urban Legends



Lorraine Davison, CCOHS
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What Are Urban Legends?

- Great story often retold “urban folklore”
 - Funny, sad or horrifying
 - Usually instructive
- Sounds too good to be true!
- Often happened to a friend of a friend
 - You are told that “this really happened”



Are Urban Legends True?

- Some true – some false
- If you hear the same story retold with new variations – these usually never happened
- Some legends can be traced historically
- Tell-tale warning signs can occur (hoax)
- Spread by word-of-mouth, e-mail, the Internet, and often retold via newspapers, radio and TV



Why do Legends spread?

- Great stories you want to share
- Sounds believable
- Most people assume the truth
- Most people want to help
- We have lots of people we can send e-mail to very quickly (more on hoaxes)



Current H&S Legends

- E-mail Virus Hoaxes
- Dihydrogen Monoxide
- Breast Cancer and Antiperspirants
- Other Toxins of the Day
- Gas Pump Fires
- SARS Virus
- Spider under the Toilet
- Photo Gallery



E-mail Virus Hoaxes

I'm sorry about this; but I received this E-mail from a client regarding a virus that was inadvertently passed on to everyone in their address book. I followed the instructions and YES, IT WAS ON MY COMPUTER.

Since you are in my address book, I am sending this on to you as a precaution. NORTON 2002 DID NOT DETECT IT!

Here are the instructions on how to check for this virus and delete it if you have it too. It only took a few minutes, following these instructions. Be sure to notify all in your address book too (which will take longer than deleting the virus from your computer).

Since you are in our address book, there is a good chance you will find it in your computer too unless you have an Apple or MAC. The virus (called jdbgmgr.exe) is not detected by Norton or McAfee anti-virus systems. The virus sits quietly for 14 days before damaging the system. It is sent automatically by messenger and by the address book, whether or not you sent Emails to your contacts. Here's how to check for the virus and how to get rid of it:

YOU MUST DO THIS

1. Go to Start, Go to Find or Search option
2. In the File Folder option, type the name: jdbgmgr.exe

E-mail Virus Hoaxes

- Jdbgmgr.exe
- Sulfnbk.exe

\$800 from Microsoft
3b Trojan
AIDS
Antichrist
AOL4Free Virus
AOL and Intel
AOL.EXE
AOL Flashing IM
AOL RIOT 2 Virus
AOL Year 2000 Update
Awareness Virus
Baby New Year Virus
Bad Times
Be My Valentine
Be Spooked
Bicho7
Big Brother
Blue Mountain Virus
Blueballs Are Underrated
BUDDYLST.ZIP
BUDSAVER.EXE
Budweiser
BUGGLST

California IBM
California Virus
CELLSAVER Virus
CLEANMGR.EXE Warning
Coke.exe
D@Fit
Dana
Dear Friends
Death69
Deeyenda
Desi1love
Despite Virus
Discount Virus
E-Flu
eBook
Economic Slow Down
Elecciones 2000
EVIL THE CAT Virus
Family Pictures
FatCat Virus
February 1
Flashmaster G
Flower for You

Foot N Mouth Virus
Warning
Forward
FREE M & M's
Free Money
Free Pizza Virus
FROGAPULT, ELFBOWL,
Y2KGAME Virus
Gamma2.exe
GAP Email Tracking
Get More Money
Ghost
Gift from Microsoft
Girl Thing
Go Hip
Goldbear Virus
Good Times
Guts to Say Jesus
Hacky Birthday Virus
Halloween Virus
Happy New Year Virus
Hello Dear
Hairy Palms Virus
Help Poor Dog
Hitler
How to Give a Cat a
Colonic
INFILTER
Infoon SARC 'Virus Test'
Iraq War
Irina
Irish Virus



Jan1st20.exe Virus
Jdbgmgr.exe file
John Kennedy Jr Trojan
Join the Crew
Launch Nuclear Strike Now
Let's Watch TV
Life is Beautiful
Londhouse Virus
Lotus Notes Worm
Lump of Coal Virus
Macdonald's Screensaver
Matrix Virus
Microsoft Virus
Millennium Time Bomb
MobilVirus
MOBILE PHONE
MSN Messenger add a Contact
MusicPanel
NASTYFRIEND99
The New Ice Age
NEWYORK BIG DIRT
Norman Virus
Norton anti - virus v5
Osama vs Bush
Outback Steakhouse
Pandemic



E-mail Hoax Busters

- www.symantec.com/avcenter/hoax.html
- vil.mcafee.com/hoax.asp
- hoaxbusters.ciac.org/HBMalCode.shtml
- Search Google.com for “virus name”



809 Scam

- True e-mail scam
- E-mail advises to call a “1-809” number
- Why? Avoid lawsuit, someone arrested or died, won a prize, got a job, etc.
- 1-809 is not FREE
- The scammers keep you on the phone and charges are in the ~ \$25 / minute
- New exchanges are now involved



809 Scam to Spam

- A true e-mail scam
- Warnings about the scam have modified
- Errors include these messages
 - "DO NOT EVER DIAL AREA CODE 809."
 - The 809 area code is new.
 - Some spam versions of this email say that charges can be as high as \$10,000
 - "Please forward this to all your friends, ... to help them become aware of this scam so they don't get ripped off."



Travel Troubles



Needlesticks Galore



Corneal Damage



Superheated Water



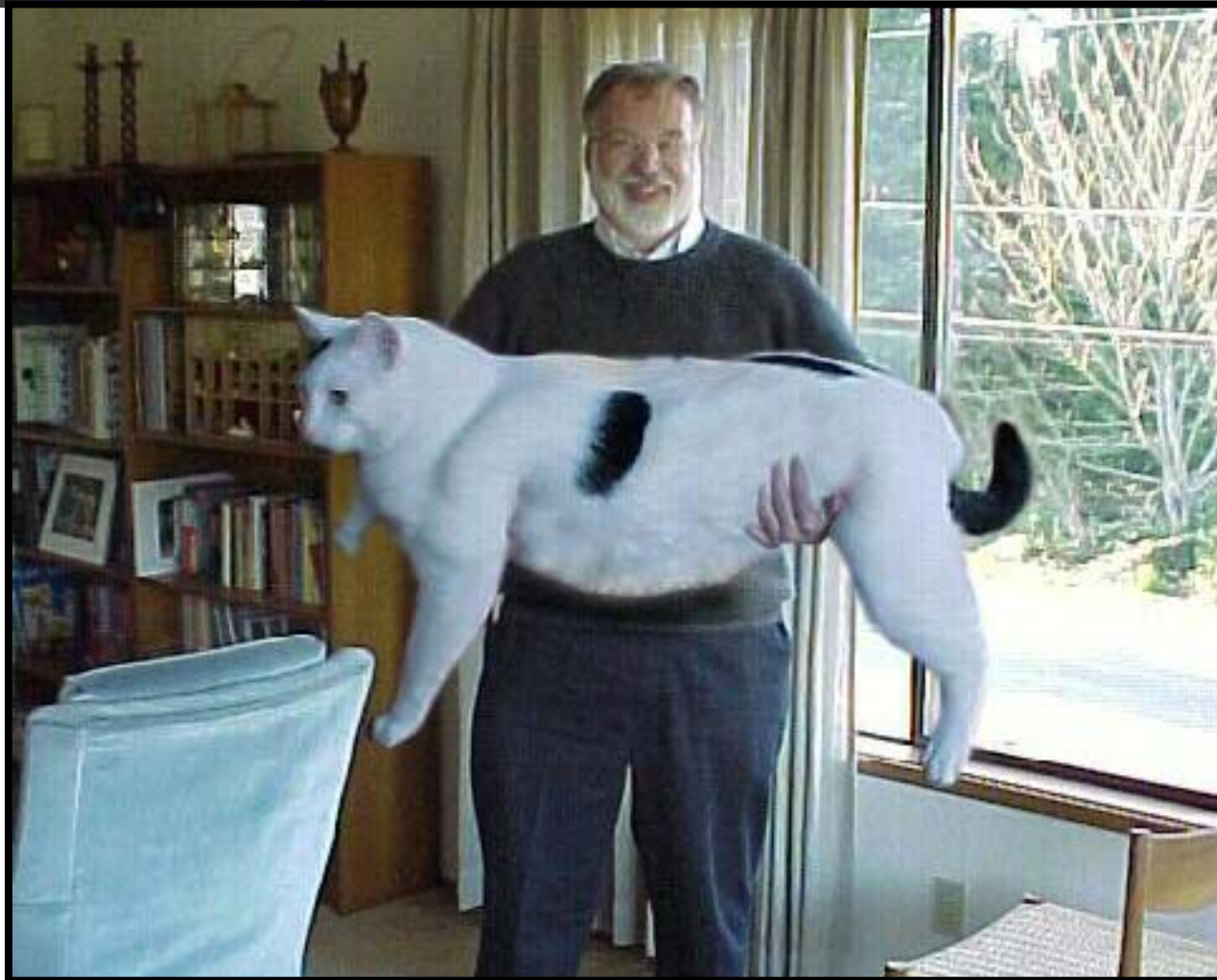
Lighter in my pocket



Is the Tanker Empty?

- Lighter

My Kitty-cat





References

809	www.scambusters.org/809Scam.html

Dihydrogen Monoxide

Ban Dihydrogen Monoxide!

The Invisible Killer

Dihydrogen monoxide is colorless, odorless, tasteless, and **kills** uncounted thousands of people every year. Most of these deaths are caused by accidental inhalation of DHMO, but the dangers of dihydrogen monoxide do not end there. Prolonged exposure to its solid form causes severe tissue damage. Symptoms of DHMO ingestion can include excessive sweating and urination, and possibly a bloated feeling, nausea, vomiting and body electrolyte imbalance. For those who have become dependent, DHMO withdrawal means certain death.

Dihydrogen monoxide:

- is also known as hydroxyl acid, and is the major component of acid rain.
- contributes to the "greenhouse effect."
- may cause severe burns.
- contributes to the erosion of our natural landscape.
- accelerates corrosion and rusting of many metals.
- may cause electrical failures and decreased effectiveness of automobile brakes.
- has been found in excised tumors of terminal cancer patients.

Contamination Is Reaching Epidemic Proportions!

Quantities of dihydrogen monoxide have been found in almost every stream, lake, and reservoir in America today. But the pollution is global, and the contaminant has even been found in Antarctic ice. DHMO has caused **millions** of dollars of property damage in the midwest, and recently California.



Breast Cancer Hoaxes

BREAST CANCER PREVENTION

Not just for women -- men don't forget to tell mom, cousins, etc. Deodorants (non-antiperspirants) are very hard to find but there are a few out there.

I just got information from a health seminar that I would like to share.

The leading cause of breast cancer is the use of anti-perspirant.

What? Yes ANTI-PERSPIRANT. Most of the products out there are an anti-perspirant/deodorant combination so go home and check your labels.

Deodorant is fine, anti-perspirant is not. Here's why:

The human body has a few areas that it uses to purge toxins; behind the knees, behind the ears, groin area, and armpits. The toxins are purged in the form of perspiration.

Anti-perspirant, as the name clearly indicates, prevents you from perspiring, thereby inhibiting the body from purging toxins from below the armpits. These toxins do not just magically disappear. Instead, the body deposits them in the lymph nodes below the arms since it cannot sweat them out. This causes a high concentration of toxins and leads to cell mutations: a.k.a. CANCER. Nearly all breast cancer tumors occur in the upper outside quadrant of the breast area. This is precisely where the lymph nodes are located.



Breast Cancer Rebuttals

- The American Cancer Society
- The National Cancer Institute
- Center for Disease Control



Other Toxins of the Day

- Shampoo Causes Cancer
- Sunscreen Causes Blindness
- Tampons, Asbestos, and Dioxin
- Aspartame Disease
- Bananas & Flesh-Eating Disease
- Canola Oil Is Hazardous
- Febreze Warning

Fires at Gas Stations



An e-mail is circulating that did not originate from PEI or API.

Remarks regarding cellular phones, victim gender and footwear are inaccurate. Only refueling fires that appear to be started by static electrical discharge are detailed in our report. It does not pertain to cellular telephones. In fact PEI has never been able to document a single refueling incident caused by a cell phone.



Static Fires

1. Out of 150 cases, almost all of them were women. - **EXAGGERATED.**
2. Almost all cases involved the person getting back in their vehicle while the nozzle was still pumping gas... - **EXAGGERATED.**
3. Most had on rubber-soled shoes. **UNKNOWN**
4. Most men never get back in their vehicle until completely finished. - **EXAGGERATED.**
5. Don't ever use cell phones when pumping gas. - **FALSE & IRRELEVANT.**
6. Several of the 150 cases involved Dodge Caravans. - **FALSE.**



SARS Virus – posted April 13

SARS Infects Restaurant Workers in Asian Neighborhoods

Netlore Archive: Variants of a widespread rumor claim the SARS epidemic threatens local communities across North America via infected workers at restaurants and groceries in Chinatowns and other Asian neighborhoods

- Malicious e-mails identify stores and people who have died or are sick
- Alarmist hoax, rumors and media sensationalism have made “Fear of SARS” an epidemic disease as well

Blush spider *Arachnius gluteus*



WARNING: From Texas A&M International University

An article by Dr. Beverly Clark, in the Journal of the United Medical Association (JUMA), the mystery behind a recent spate of deaths has been solved. If you haven't already heard about it in the news, here is what happened.

Three women in Chicago, turned up at hospitals over a 5-day period, all with the same symptoms. Fever, chills, and vomiting, followed by muscular collapse, paralysis, and finally, death. There were no outward signs of trauma. Autopsy results showed toxicity in the blood.

Picture Gallery

- Columbia Explosion photos

“Attached are pictures of the Shuttle Explosion from an Israeli Satellite in space. They are from the Department of Justice in Washington D.C.”





Picture Gallery

Columbia Explosion

Why is this a Fake?

- Space not atmosphere
- Nighttime not daytime explosion
- 12,000 mph?
- Ionization from heat of re-entry?

Picture Gallery







Signs it's an Email Hoax

Courtesy of hoaxbusters.ciac.org

- Dire advice and warning!!!
“send this to everyone you know”
- Story is very plausible
- Source is an expert and should know
- Letters always have recognizable parts:
A Hook - A Threat - A Request
- Solution – when in doubt don't send it out
Validate stories thru Urban Legend websites

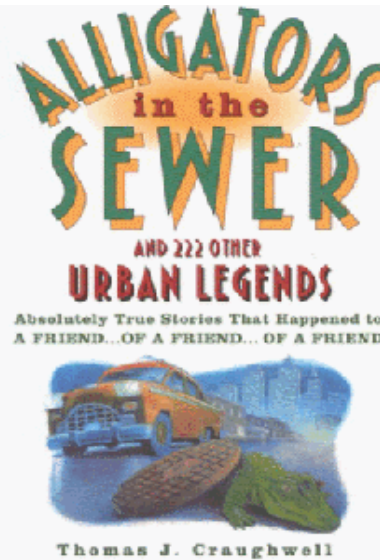
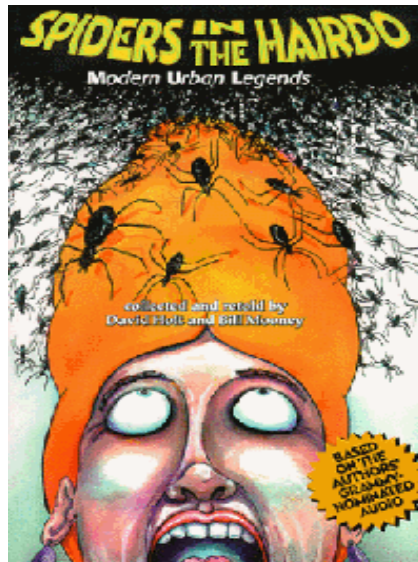


Websites on Urban Legends

- Alt.folklore.urban & Urban Legends Archives
www.urbanlegends.com
- Urban Legends and Folklore
urbanlegends.about.com
- Hoaxbusters
hoaxbusters.ciac.org/HBUrbanMyths.shtml
- Urban Legends Reference Pages
www.snopes2.com/
- ★ Darwin Awards – Fictional or worse
www.darwinawards.com

Books on Urban Legends

Jan Harold Brunvand and Other Authors



Thank-you!



Lorraind@ccohs.ca

www.ccohs.ca

Exploding Water

Center for Devices and Radiological Health

Risk of Burns from Eruptions of Hot Water Overheated in Microwave Ovens



The FDA has received reports of serious skin burns or scalding water erupting out of a cup after it had been over-heated in a microwave oven. The water was superheated (past its boiling temperature) without appearing to be boiling.

This type of phenomena occurs if water is heated in a clean cup, and no food or coffee is added before heating, the risk is greatly reduced. If superheated water is picked up the cup, or pouring in a spoon full of instant coffee, it can erupt out of the cup.

From the Mailbag...

Can Microwaved Water Explode?

Dateline: 01/19/00

Dear Guide:

I received this email that had been forwarded by many companies' safety departments. Apparently, there is actual science fact behind this, but the email is worded



Lead "Running"

I can offer you a smattering of a story about 'lead running'. This apparently was a 'russian roulette' game for bored lead smelters. The lead was melted in large open topped vats, and unless constantly stirred it would skim over. The bored workers would allow this to happen and then with the aid of a couple of wooden planks arranged as a up and down ramp, they would run up one ramp, across the surface of the skimmed over lead, and down the other plank.

This apparently had something to do with bravado, manliness or even acceptance within the group.

Of course things did not always go well, and some of the workers received serious burns. The story goes that one young man, not very experienced, decided to try this, when the surface was really not well skimmed over at all. As he hit the surface it broke immediately and he fell through the surface up to his neck in melted lead. He screamed pitifully in agony. An older worker immediately picked up one of the pieces of wood, and forced the desperate worker under the surface of the lead, to put him out of his misery. The older worker who did this, of course, the young mans father.

Personal e-mail from an HS-Canada subscriber



George Turklebaum, R.I.P.

As the story goes, the 51-year-old Turklebaum suffered a fatal coronary one day while working at his desk. Apparently none of his 23 coworkers thought it remarkable to see him slumped motionless in his chair for five days running, because Turklebaum kept mostly to himself and was always the first to arrive and the last to leave the office every day.

"Of course the story is true," the *Mercury* said when questioned about its veracity. Nevermind the New York City white pages don't list a single Turklebaum anywhere in the area, the item came from a reliable source — a Big Apple radio station.

Among the colorful bits added in the *Mercury's* this tag: "Ironically, George was proofreading medical textbooks when he died."

<http://urbanlegends.about.com/science/urbanlegends/>



Needles That Stick

Vending Machines of Death!

From the Mailbag

Dateline: 01/03/01

Dear Guide:

I got this email, and it has local cities and towns listed. Is this a copy of a hoax? Do you have any way of determining if it's true? The one reason why I think this is probably *not* true is that Cokes cost at least a loonie (one Canadian dollar) in vending machines. The letter says is given in change.

More of this Feature

- [Part 2: Return of the Needle Men](#)

Related Articles

***This is not some scary fiction story!
THIS IS NOW HAPPENING IN ALBERTA!!!...

Please read on and then pass this warning to people you care about. At our student council meeting this afternoon, our advisor (a teacher at the school) told us that last week, she received a phone call from a friend at the University of Lethbridge. THE ABOVE SCENARIO HAPPENED THERE RECENTLY at the U of L) !!! How many it happened to or why not many have heard about it is beyond me, but THIS IS REALLY HAPPENING!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Police suspect that this is the work of a particular cult in western Canada. It (these incidents) began in Saskatchewan and



Cell Phones That Go *BOOM*

Pumped Up Urban Myth

USA Today recently carried the explosive news that BP Amoco and Chevron were banning cell phones from being used near pumps at their gas stations ("Cell phones banned at gas pump," Oct. 8). This followed similar bans in Canada earlier in the year. Unfortunately, the media has often imagined risk rather than an actual one.

The rationale behind the bans is that cell phones might cause a spark at a gas pump and so cause a massive explosion. But *The San Francisco Chronicle* expressed concern before the American companies imposed their ban. "Spurs Warnings From Fuel Industry" (Aug. 28), the *Chronicle* reported a ban to an urban legend that such a thing had actually happened. There is no record of such an incident. A similar reaction to an urban legend occurred in Southeast Asia; since 1993, the *South China Morning Post* and *Post* have all run articles warning about the "hazard" and referring to a record of such an incident actually happening.

While a mobile phone could *theoretically* cause a spark, it is very difficult to measure the risk involved, because no such incidents are as close to zero as you can get. As the *Chronicle* noted, the reasons for the ban vanish in a puff of smoke.

Warning: Cell phone use in gas stations
Cell Phones.....

In case you do not know, there was an incident where a driver suffered burns and his car severely damaged when gasoline fumes ignited an explosion while he was talking on his mobile phone standing near the attendant who was pumping the gas. All the electronic devices in gas stations are protected with explosive containment devices, (intrinsically safe) while cell phones are not. READ YOUR HANDBOOK! Mobile phone makers Motorola, Ericsson, and Nokia, all print cautions in their user handbooks that warn against mobile phones in "gas stations, fuel storage sites, and chemical factories." Exxon has begun placing "warning stickers" at its gasoline stations. The threat mobile phones pose to gas stations and their users is primarily the result of their ability to produce sparks that can be generated by the



Cell Phones

- Phone manufacturers and gasoline companies have issued warnings in the past
- BUT no verifiable incident can be traced (beyond 2 newspaper reports which turned out to be false)

... it hasn't happened yet but ...



Microwave "Cooking"

Legend: Worker who stands too close to microwave radiation is cooked by its rays.

Example: *[Collected on the Internet, 1999]*

(25 December 1998, Canada) Telephone relay company night watchman Edward Baker, 31, was killed early Christmas morning by excessive microwave radiation exposure. He was apparently attempting to keep warm next to a telecommunications feedhorn.

Baker had been suspended on a safety violation once last year, according to Northern Manitoba Signal Relay spokesperson Tanya Cooke. She noted that Baker's earlier infraction was for defeating a safety shutoff switch and entering a restricted maintenance catwalk in order to stand in front of the microwave dish. He had told coworkers that it was the only way he could stay warm during his twelve-hour shift at the station, where winter temperatures often dip to forty below zero.

<http://www.snopes2.com/horrors/techno/cooked.htm>



Exploding Toilets

- Famous story with many variations
- Flammable finds its way into toilet
- Person uses toilet, smokes
- Dropped “butt” ignites, creating injury

Variations include:

Gasoline, cleaning fluid, insecticide, hair spray, coconut oil

Currently still researching accounts from some contributors...



The Hospital Cleaner

- Newspaper Title: Cleaner Polishes Off Patient
- Series of dead patients in ICU – same bed every Friday morning
- Search for cause – but no clues
- Finally – find out that every Friday morning a cleaner would remove a plug used for life support system, use socket to polish the floor
- “Cape Times, 6/13/96”



The Hospital Cleaner

- Cape Times did report story – but not completely – 2 key points missed
 - Hospital official didn't know the story
 - Gov't Representative said story was unconfirmed and were “investigating”
- Phrase “investigating” was sufficient to give the story credibility and so the story was printed – though embellished from one death to several via e-mail re-tellings