


# THE UPDATE

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*The goal of our monthly update is to provide information on timely matters that may impact your practice and professional interests.*



## **SAFER LESS TOXIC FIRE-EXTINGUISHING AGENTS POSSIBLE**

Fire-extinguishing agents comprising microscopic drops of water microencapsulated in flame-retardant polymers have been proposed by researchers at John F. Kennedy Space Center, FL as effective , less toxic, non-ozone-depleting, non-global-warming alternatives to prior fire-extinguishing agents , e.g. halons. Prior agents although effective are also toxic and contribute both to depletion of upper-atmospheric ozone and to global warming. The proposal to formulate new water-based agents results from the recent success of water mist as a fire-suppression agent . Water mist reduces both the flame temperature and oxygen concentration available for combustion as the water droplets evaporate. Their manufacture requires the proposed new fire suppression agents being available for discharge in a microencapsulated format.



## **USACE REPORTS RESULTS OF ITS RAB PILOT PROGRAM**

As a follow-up to our September, 2004 general discussion on the pro's and con's of Reverse Auction Bidding (RAB) , in a recently released final report ( on its own RAB pilot program ), The United States Corps of Engineers USACE) stated the "reverse auctions should not be used as a means to procure construction services ". Their report further referenced last years Office of Federal Procurement Policy memo on RAB stating that "construction repair and alterations should not be considered commodities ". THE USACE report noted that "reverse bid auctions may have a significant potential when used to procure commodity goods or very simplistic services where the critical issue of variability is very small or non-existent". Their report also " found no proof that reverse bid auctions provided a significant or marginal edge over the sealed bid process for construction projects and that there was no valid measurement method to project any claims of savings from reverse bid auctions".



## **PAINT "KITTY-LITTER" ADDITIVE PREVENTS CORROSION**

Ohio State University( OSU) researchers recently reported

incorporating clay and other chemicals into a paint that keeps metal from corroding while also revealing when critical items e.g. airplanes, boats and bridges need to be repainted. While still under development early tests have shown that it prevents corrosion as well as other commercially available paints that are less environmentally friendly. According to OSU Professor of Materials Science and Engineering Rudolf Bucheit "It works like high tech kitty litter" where the imbedded clay particle in the paint pigment captures corrosive chemicals while releasing "the right amount of a corrosion -fighting agent when needed".



### **WI-FI ' S GREAT BUT IS IT SECURE?**

A number of Wi-Fi router, access point and other gadget manufacturers privately confirm that as many as 80% of home users don't bother to enable basic encryption or other protections against connection theft, eaves-dropping and network invasion. While Wi-Fi hardware manufacturers have made initial setup easy, the enabling of security is anything but. Based on Wi-Fi makers worldwide posted sales in 2003 of its gear for homes and small offices of \$1.3 billion reported by Synergy Research Group, there may be a lot of wide-open networks that offer anyone within range of the Wi-Fi signal free access to a high-speed Internet connection. While companies that sell Wi-Fi products understandably want their hardware to be simple and interoperable they also want to keep support calls and returns low. Many of them turn off security by default. So be careful when working at home or on the road with confidential information. Use a wired router if unsure of your own Wi-Fi security software.

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