
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

THE UNIVERSITY OF
MEMPHIS®

Volume 17, Number 2

August 17, 2011

Preparing for Our Next Century of Excellence

The vision for our University includes the intent that we “will be recognized as one of America's great metropolitan research universities...” This shared vision of recognized greatness means that we must all strive for excellence in all our University-related activities, including the health and safety of people and protection of the environment.

The stark reality, however, is that complying with EH&S related laws, regulations, and codes only represent the minimum necessary to squeak by. When your department chair asks that you attend a training session on blood borne pathogens, hazardous waste management, radiation safety, or chemical safety, you are only being asked to meet the minimum regulatory requirements. And when someone from EH&S bugs you to properly store flammable chemicals or label hazardous waste appropriately, you are only being asked to meet the minimum requirements.

As we move toward 2012 and our next century as a university, let's strive to leap past the minimum requirements and move toward greatness in protecting our people, our facilities, and our planet.

Are you striving for greatness or just meeting the minimum requirements?

Use Correct Account for Haz Waste Costs

When paying for items related to hazardous waste, please remember that using Account 74492 will assist in tracking costs. You can use this account for disposal costs, annual generator fees, and waste related supplies, training, and medical expenses.

Get Outta Here!

As you walk through our buildings, please take time to look at the new evacuation route signs installed by personnel from Crisis Management and Physical Plant. These updated signs include the locations of assembly areas associated with each building.



Dr. Catherine Serex shows the exit route to be taken in case of a fire or other emergency in the Administration Building.

In the event that a building is evacuated, those of you who have taken note of the new signs will know where to meet after you exit the building. Meeting in your designated assembly area will give faculty and supervisors the opportunity to verify that

everyone has exited the building and is safe.

Please respond to all fire alarms by immediately evacuating the building and reporting to your designated assembly area.

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Don't Make a Spectacle of Yourself

When you enter a lab, shop, studio, or other work area, don't make a spectacle of yourself by failing to don protective eye wear around hazardous operations. Hazardous chemicals, power tools, and other sources of potential eye injury require the use of appropriate goggles, face shields, or safety glasses. Departments are responsible for evaluating workplace hazards and, with some exceptions, obligated to provide employees with necessary protective eye wear and other personal protective equipment (PPE) at no cost to the employee. Any employee responsible for supervising students or visitors is also obligated to require those persons to don appropriate PPE as well. The University is not obligated to provide free PPE for non-employees.

For help selecting appropriate PPE, contact EH&S or use our on-line tool.

Thanks, Chemists!

We would like to thank Dr. Abby Parrill and everyone from the Chemistry Department who worked so hard at decommissioning labs that are being re-assigned. Proper decommissioning saves money by eliminating unwanted legacy chemicals before we require the services of explosives experts to remove them. The process also gives new faculty a time advantage by allowing them to begin research in a clean lab that is free of clutter and strange bottles lurking in dark corners of cabinets and beneath fume hoods.

Did you know that labs must be decommissioned when faculty terminate affiliation with the University, lab groups move, labs are significantly renovated, or research is no longer performed in a lab?



X-ray diffraction unit is surveyed for radiation leakage during annual inspection by EH&S.

Photo courtesy of Dr. Sanjay Mishra

Lab Safety Seminar August 31

The Laboratory Health and Safety Seminar, complete with our famous fashion show, is scheduled for Wednesday, August 31, from 1:15 p.m. until 4:15 p.m., in Ellington Hall Auditorium.

In addition to providing information that will help you work safely in the lab and protect the environment, fun and refreshments will be provided.

Please register through your department by the morning of August 29 to ensure that we have plenty of refreshments and handouts.

Call EH&S for additional training on chemical safety, hazardous waste management, radiation safety, or biosafety.

EH&S Stretches Research Dollars

Every University department possessing an x-ray machine is required to pay an annual fee to the state of up to \$900 per x-ray tube. By providing free inspections for analytical x-ray units by our own Registered Inspector, EH&S qualifies possessing departments for a whopping 82% discount on the annual fees, helping stretch research dollars.

Anthropologists, Artists, Biologists, Museum Personnel, New Book for You

The Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections and the Health and Safety Committee of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works just issued the latest volume of *Health & Safety for Museum Professionals*. From museum curator to faculty to field workers to maintenance workers, this book is packed with wonderful safety information for those engaged in museum-related work. Come take a look at our copy of this book, and you will want one for your library as well.

Would You Like Penicillin with That?

A terrorist attack with a biological agent, an influenza pandemic, or an outbreak of some other disease could cause major loss of life and disruption of our society. If such an event occurs here, the University can now draw medications from the national stockpile for distribution on campus. By operating our own Closed POD (Point of Distribution), the University can proactively help preserve the health of its employees, students, and their families during a widespread medical event.

But wait, there's more! With the help of faculty and students from the Loewenberg School of Nursing, and lots of volunteer "patients" from Physical Plant, the University successfully activated its POD, dispensing many "doses" of miniature candy bars to employees during the exercise. (It's amazing what people will do for free candy!)

Our thanks go to emergency preparedness coordinator Shelby Slater; Dr. Wayne Capooth, Student Health Services; Bruce Harber, Police Services; Dr. Marian Levy, School of Public Health; Janelle Smalls, School of Nursing; and all the others who helped establish the POD, plan the exercise, and operate the POD during the exercise.

Congrats, Katherine and Ann Marie

Katherine Miller, Laboratory Safety Specialist, received her Master of Public Health degree in May, graduating *summa cum laude*. In addition to graduating in May with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology, Ann Marie Cowles was recently promoted to senior administrative secretary in EH&S. We are proud of Katherine and Ann Marie.

Yale Undergraduate Student Dead

Twenty-two year old Michele Dufault, an undergraduate majoring in physics and astronomy at Yale University, was found dead in a Yale machine shop in the early morning of April 13, 2011. Her hair was entangled in a lathe, apparently causing death by asphyxia due to neck compression while working alone. Sources indicated that she had been trained to use the shop equipment and was "not inexperienced" in its use. Dufault was described as a "brilliant" student. How tragic.



Nursing students register volunteer "patients" to receive simulated medications in Closed POD exercise.

Photo courtesy of Dr. Marian Levy

Intellect, training, experience, and PPE do not guarantee one's safety. Please be constantly vigilant when performing hazardous tasks. Avoid performing these tasks when tired or distracted, and utilize the "buddy system" to ensure that assistance is nearby.

Did you know that our Chemical Hygiene Program requires written prior approval of hazardous activities, including off-hours work and sole occupancy of a building?

Sources of Assistance

Director, EH&S 678-4672
Radiation Safety Officer 678-4672
Chemical Hygiene Officer 678-4672
Hazardous Materials Specialist 678-2044
Laboratory Safety Specialist 678-2740
Fax 678-4673
Emergency (Fire, Police, Ambulance,
after hours Chemical/Radiological) 678-4357
EH&S Web Page .. <http://ehs.memphis.edu>

Greening Your Lab

Dr. Judith Cole called our attention to an article entitled “How Green is My Lab?” in *The Scientist*. The article offers tips on helping your energy guzzling lab become more sustainable. Simple acts such as closing the fume hood sash, defrosting the freezer, and turning off unused equipment will save money and reduce carbon emissions.

Scary Events at Other Institutions

Boston College

A graduate student was working alone in a lab with thionyl chloride when an explosion occurred, resulting in cuts to her face and burned hands. The aftermath of the explosion was complicated because the student went to her apartment rather than immediately seeking assistance. Perplexed first responders found broken glass, blood, and a damaged fume hood, but no victim.

Purdue University

An old metal cylinder of hydrofluoric acid exploded, likely due to metal fatigue, while stored in a ventilated cabinet. Doors to the cabinet were forced open, and some nearby chemical bottles were broken as a result of the blast.

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

An unvaccinated student working with a genetically modified strain of cowpox became infected by the virus as the result of inadvertently touching a contaminated object in the lab.

DOE Savannah River Site

A worker at the Department of Energy’s (DOE) Savannah River Site received a puncture wound to the hand, resulting in internal contamination of the worker with plutonium-238 in excess of the regulatory limit. DOE is proposing to fine the worker’s employer \$234,750 for violations of radiation protection and nuclear safety regulations.

A pox upon contaminated facilities everywhere!

Multistate *Salmonella* Infections Linked to Lab Exposures

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that a multistate outbreak of human *Salmonella Typhimurium* infections has been linked by DNA analysis to bacterial exposure in teaching and clinical labs. The April 28 report noted 73 people in 35 states being infected.

Are you following good biological work practices shown in the Biological Safety Manual, including surface disinfection and hand washing?

Prudent Practices More Prudent than Ever

The National Research Council (NRC) recently issued an updated edition of its *Prudent Practices in the Laboratory: Handling and Disposal of Chemicals*. This must-read book is available from NRC in hardback form, or it can be viewed on-line at no cost. EH&S has a link to the on-line version from our “Chemical Safety” web page.

Carbon Nanotubes Linked to Lung Cancer?

While a direct link has yet to be established, West Virginia University and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health separately announced that lung cells experience changes known to be associated with cancer development when exposed to carbon nanotubes in lab experiments.

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