

## Do You Have Time Sensitive Chemicals?

When stored for extended periods or under improper conditions, time sensitive chemicals tend to develop hazards that were not originally present. The September/October and November/December, 2004, issues of *Chemical Health & Safety* magazine include articles that discuss identification, misconceptions leading to accidents, the chemistry, and management of time sensitive chemicals. The articles include descriptions of several unfortunate incidents. Collodion, picric acid, ethyl and isopropyl ethers, anhydrous hydrogen fluoride, tetrahydrofuran, and Tollen's reagent are among the many chemicals discussed.

If you have time-sensitive chemicals in your lab or storeroom, please remember that you have a responsibility to manage these items appropriately and dispose of them before they become a disaster waiting to happen.

Here are some tips:

- Familiarize yourself with the list of peroxide formers found at <http://www.people.memphis.edu/~ehas/perox.htm>
- Attach a peroxide former label (available from EH&S) to containers of chemicals known to form peroxides
- Date all chemical containers when received and when opened, and check the dates periodically
- Keep picric acid wet
- Be aware that old "empty" cans of peroxide formers can still be dangerous
- Never shake or try to open an old container of time-sensitive chemical
- Contact EH&S for guidance



### New Lab Decommissioning Procedure

The Biological Safety Committee and the Chemical Hygiene Committee have approved a new Laboratory Decommissioning Procedure. The following events require implementation of the procedure:

- Principal Investigator (PI) terminating affiliation with the University
- PI relocating to another laboratory space
- Major laboratory renovation
- PI retiring from research pursuits

PIs are responsible for completing the decommissioning requirements. In the event of death, disability, abrupt termination of employment, or other unplanned event, the department chair initiates the decommissioning procedure. Department chairs provide oversight for the decommissioning process and certify that a vacated laboratory space has been properly decommissioned.

PIs vacating shared spaces must ensure that the procedure is implemented for their portion of the laboratory.

The new procedure is available on the web at <http://www.people.memphis.edu/~ehas/LabDecommPro.pdf>.

***Decommissioning your lab improves safety, saves money, and avoids unpleasant surprises for the new occupants.***

### Benzene Worse than Previously Thought

If you work with benzene, the December 3, 2004, issue of *Science* contains a report that should help you realize the importance of using benzene in a properly functioning fume hood, avoiding skin contact, and otherwise using good laboratory practices. Researchers reported in the article that exposure to as little as 0.57 ppm caused noticeable white cell depression in exposed individuals.

The current OSHA 8 hour time-weighted average Permissible Exposure Limit (PEL) is 1.0 ppm; however, the odor threshold for benzene is 8.65 ppm. If you smell benzene, take immediate action to reduce your exposure.

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#### Sources of Assistance

Director of EH&S	678-4672
Radiation Safety Officer	678-4672
Chemical Hygiene Officer	678-4672
Environmental Protection Specialist	678-2044
Laboratory Safety Specialist	678-2740
Fax	678-4673
Emergency (Fire, Police, Ambulance, after hours Chemical/Radiological)	678-4357
EH&S Home Page	
.....	<a href="http://www.people.memphis.edu/~ehas/">http://www.people.memphis.edu/~ehas/</a>

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## Telephone Tree Gets the Word Out

Whether you need to notify people in a crisis or just pass along some useful information, a telephone tree is a proven method of getting the word out.



The first step in creating a telephone tree is to compile a list of personnel in your department, noting office and home telephone numbers. In a crisis or event such as emergency closing of the

University, the department supervisor or designee calls designated individuals within the unit; those individuals in turn call other designated individuals, etc. If someone can't be reached, the caller must contact those who would have been called by the unreachable individual, ensuring that the chain is unbroken.

## Need Radioactive Material?

If you are planning to use radioisotopes for research, please remember that all orders must now be placed via the EHSAssist software. If you need access to EHSAssist, please contact Al Simpson.

After you enter a requisition into the new system and save it, EH&S will review the requisition. Upon approval by EH&S, the person designated to order radioactive material for your department will be notified to place the order for you. When you receive the order, follow the receiving process printed in the *Radiation Safety Manual*, and enter the required information into EHSAssist; the radioisotope will be automatically entered into your inventory. EHSAssist even keeps your records for surveys and wipe tests, waste disposal, and other information.

## Hazardous Waste Reduction Plans Due

Don't forget that the annual update for your department's hazardous waste reduction plan is due in EH&S by March 1, 2005. Requirements for the plan are listed in University Policy UM1622.

## Many Complete DOT Certification

We offer congratulations to personnel in Biology, Herff College of Engineering, Physical Plant, and Physics who successfully completed either the 16 hour Department of Transportation (DOT) hazardous materials class or the 8 hour refresher class in 2004, leading to certification to ship hazardous materials.

If your department needs to ship "dangerous goods," contact EH&S for more information.

## EH&S on TV and the Web

EH&S personnel recently provided technical assistance leading to production of a "Counter-top Chemistry" segment on WREG TV. Ms. Julia Kniesly, an industrial hygienist who works periodically in EH&S, was featured in the on-camera segment.

As a result of some complimentary words from a New York law firm, it has also been noted that EPA Region I created a link from its college and university web page to the U of M EH&S web site. It sounds like we are doing some things right!

## Remember to Manage Compressed Gases

Compressed gas cylinders continue to be costly commodities for those who fail to manage them properly. If you purchase compressed gas cylinders, please remember to use vendors that will take back the old cylinders and any remaining gases. And return those unneeded cylinders to the vendor promptly.

People who leave cylinders in storage for excessive periods of time increase the risk of accidents and drive up disposal costs. For those of you who lease cylinders, failing to return them in a timely manner can lead to your department incurring unnecessary charges over many months or years.

## Paint Helps Increase Hazardous Waste Costs

Although many of you are working hard to minimize hazardous waste generation, we are seeing more cans of old paint and other common items that were apparently purchased in excess and no longer wanted. Disposal costs in December, 2004, included \$1,237 for just one department's old paint. Please help keep waste costs low: Buy only what you need now, not what you may need in the future.

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## Environmental Health & Safety Staff

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