

Oxygen Tank Explodes Near UTHSC

On January 7, 2008, a nexAir delivery truck carrying a liquid oxygen tank was in front of the Madison Avenue building complex occupied by the University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC) when the tank exploded. One UT employee was injured, the exteriors of two buildings damaged, two parked vehicles damaged, and debris scattered over a considerable area. As the investigation of this accident progresses, the pressure relief valve is certain to receive scrutiny.

If this explosion had occurred in an occupied space, it would have been a catastrophic situation. Let's not forget that all compressed gases can suddenly release a tremendous amount of energy under the wrong circumstances. And be alert to all the hazards of cryogenics in addition to the common ones of extreme cold, displacement of breathing air, and promotion of fires.



Portions of tank rest near UTHSC Police car. Photo courtesy of Reno Greganti, Deputy Chief of Campus Police, UTHSC, Memphis.

Fume Hoods in Great Shape

Many hours of testing fume hoods in 2007 revealed that laboratory fume hoods are working exceptionally well. Of the 200 functioning hoods on campus, only two were out of service. By testing your hood against consensus standards and using state of the art equipment, EH&S can give you assurance that your fume hoods are protecting you from airborne hazards.

Please show your appreciation for your fume hood by keeping it clean. Show appreciation for your continued good health and the good health of those around you by using your hood properly. A quick

guide to using your fume hood is available at <http://ehs.memphis.edu/fumehooduse.pdf>. You can learn more about your hood and how to use it by going to <http://ehs.memphis.edu/HoodTutorial.ppt>.

Time to Update Waste Reduction Efforts

If your unit regularly generates hazardous waste, it's time to update your waste reduction plan. State regulations require reporting waste reduction efforts by March 1, so this is the perfect time to review your plan and make appropriate updates. Failure to comply with this or other provisions of the Tennessee Hazardous Waste Reduction Act of 1990 can result in fines of up to \$10,000 per day. For more information, see <http://policies.memphis.edu/UM1622.htm>.

University of California Fined \$450,000

A Congressional investigation revealed that the University of California was recently fined \$450,000 due to improper shipment of anthrax samples from the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in 2005. According to several published accounts, samples were shipped across the country with a small percentage of caps that were not properly secured.

An employee, described as a "scientist," said to have shipped the samples apparently did not have current certification to ship hazardous materials. The employee appears to have resigned following the incident.

If you have an active role in shipping or receiving hazardous materials, please remember that federal regulations and University policy require you to be trained initially, retrained at least every three years, and certified by the Director of EH&S.

For more information on shipping hazardous materials, see University Policy UM1296 or call EH&S.

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	http://ehs.memphis.edu

Partnership Reduces Landfilled Wastes

With encouragement from EH&S, the Chemistry Department recently acquired a glass crusher, making it possible to recycle uncontaminated, broken laboratory glassware and empty reagent bottles. Physical Plant will transport the drums of crushed glass to a local recycler. This partnership between Chemistry and Physical Plant will divert many hundreds of pounds of glass from the landfill each year. Woohoo!

Physical Plant also recycles fluorescent lamps and ballasts, rechargeable batteries, paper, and plastic bottles. For more information on recycling opportunities, please see <http://bf.memphis.edu/pp/recycle.php>.

Are you helping make our campus green?

First Contact

Although we still have to develop warp drive before first contact with the Vulcans, the new amateur radio station installed in the University Emergency Operations Center was recently used by licensed amateur radio operators to make the first on-the-air contact with a “ham” in Burlington, Wisconsin. In the event of a region-wide disaster that disrupts other forms of electronic communication, the amateur radio station will keep us in contact with the outside world. “Live long and prosper.”

Something You Probably Haven't Read

Have you read the State University and Community College System of Tennessee Occupational Safety and Health Plan? Just in case you said “no,” here is an interesting fact: The Plan requires all work areas, regardless of potential hazard, to be inspected by the “department head” at least monthly. Is someone in your department inspecting your work areas for safety hazards every month, keeping a record of the inspections, and taking appropriate action when problems are detected?

Radiation Safety Class Available

If you have personnel needing to complete the radiation worker class, we can schedule a class for a time that is most convenient for all personnel. Please contact Al Simpson at asimpson@memphis.edu.

U. Of Pittsburgh Professor Pleads Guilty

The New York Times and *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reported that a genetics professor at the University of Pittsburgh pleaded guilty to lesser charges related to illegally providing bacteria to a State University of New York at Buffalo art professor. Sharing the bacteria violated the ATCC material transfer agreement conditions as well as hazardous material shipping regulations. As part of the plea deal related to the 2004 incident, the genetics professor will apparently testify against the professor who had requested the bacteria for use in an art project.



Adrienne Bonton, Coordinator of Chemistry Labs, stands ready to recycle waste glass.

Renovating a Laboratory?

If you are planning to renovate a laboratory, please remember that EH&S has personnel who have been trained in laboratory design at the Harvard School of Public Health. We can provide you with guidance on optimizing safety as part of the design, a process that can save money and reduce frustration. Please contact Al Simpson at 4672 to request our assistance.

Industrial Hygienists Share Lessons Learned

Industrial hygienists from the University of California System have created a web site for sharing safety tips based on accidents and near misses. When you have a few extra minutes, check out the site at <http://ucih.ucdavis.edu/pages/lessons.cfm>.

Are your near misses and accidents being exploited to help prevent future accidents?

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