

New EH&S Assistance Tools, Services

As we write this article, Academic Affairs Technology personnel are diligently working to give the EH&S web site a new, improved look. In addition to the new look, we will soon add a new risk assessment tool to the web site.

The risk assessment tool was developed for EH&S by Carolyn Able, an Ohio State University M.P.H. student working in cooperation with the U of M School of Public Health. The new tool will allow you to assess hazards in your work areas, while automatically ranking those hazards to allow you to allocate resources based on the severity of the hazards. Look for the new tool in the “EH&S Forms” section of our web site in a few weeks.

But wait, there’s more. By agreeing to share resources in Browning Hall, the School of Public Health has made it possible for EH&S to offer more training opportunities for you. We can now offer on-demand video and computer based training to individuals and small groups while continuing to provide in-person training in a location of your choice. Consider having your next small group safety meeting in Browning Hall. See <http://ehs.memphis.edu/training.htm> for a list of training options and videos.

Biomedical Waste Costs Decrease

As a result of a new contract for disposal of biomedical wastes, your disposal costs will decrease significantly this year. Just compare your next transfer voucher for biomedical waste disposal with the transfer vouchers from 2009; we think it will make you smile.

Sources of Assistance

Director of 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 Home Page	http://ehs.memphis.edu

Feds to Investigate Texas Tech Lab Explosion

A January 7, 2010, laboratory explosion at Texas Tech University, Lubbock, will be investigated by the U. S. Chemical Safety Board, the first investigation of its kind by the CSB. The explosion severely injured a 29

year old graduate student in the chemistry department who was handling a “high energy compound” under investigation as part of homeland security research.

CSB Chairman John Bresland recently stated, “We see serious accidents in high school and university labs every year, including a tragic fatal-

ity a year ago at UCLA. I believe it is time to begin examining these accidents to see if they can be prevented through the kind of rigorous safety management systems that we and others have advocated in industrial settings.”

The CSB has no enforcement authority; however, their findings are generally made public. Learn more about CSB activities and view video recreations of accidents at <http://www.csb.gov>.



Are You a Storm Water Polluter?

If you toss cigarette butts, food wrappers, drink bottles, and other trash on the ground, you are helping pollute the waters of the United States. That’s right. Anything lying on the ground is likely to be washed into a storm drain during the next rain, and that storm drain discharges runoff to our streams without undergoing any type of treatment.

Okay, so most of us don’t litter, but how do we handle grass clippings and leaves from our yards? If you blow yard wastes into the street or gutter, much of that material ends up in our streams, promoting growth of algae and depriving fish and other aquatic creatures of oxygen. Bagging those materials for disposal (takes up valuable landfill space) or properly composting them (great option) can significantly reduce storm water pollution.

Think before you pollute storm water!

University of Manitoba Fire Update

The University of Manitoba's Duff Roblin Hall fire reported in our last newsletter was determined to be caused by failure of an extension cord used to power a refrigerator. The building was heavily damaged, impacting teaching and research in several departments.

Please remember that extension cords are only temporary power delivery devices; they are not to be used as long-term replacements for electrical outlets. If you have equipment that is connected to extension cords for days at a time, it is time to have an electrical outlet installed. And if you think installing a new electrical outlet is too expensive, please weigh that expense against the cost of a fire (see photo at right).

Are you using extension cords appropriately in your office, lab, shop, classroom, or studio?



Fire aftermath in a University of Manitoba lab.
Photo courtesy of U. of Manitoba.

Novel H1N1 Influenza Virus Update

As we wait to see if another wave of influenza strikes, we would like to thank all of you who worked so hard to minimize the novel H1N1 virus' impact on campus, including those who were vaccinated and used good hygienic practices. While we will surely forget someone, we want to specifically thank Dr. Wayne Capooth and staff at Student Health Services, Joy Hoffman and colleagues in the School of Nursing, Dr. Marian Levy and students from the School of Public Health, Captain Kevin Langellier and colleagues in Police Services, Shelby Slater in Emergency Preparedness, and Physical Plant. Let's all continue to promote good health by keeping our hands clean and using good cough/sneeze etiquette.

Acid Burns at U of British Columbia

Canadian news outlet Kelowna.com reported an August, 2009, incident at the University of British Columbia at Okanagan in which a graduate student was burned by sulphuric acid that splashed on her face and chest. Reports indicated that the student, who was not wearing goggles or a face shield, was also working in a lab that was not equipped with an emergency eyewash.

Are you taking appropriate precautions when handling concentrated corrosive chemicals?

Risks Associated with Waste Reduction

As budgets shrink and chemical prices grow, some of you may consider recovering usable materials from your wastes. While the University encourages waste reduction processes that allow reuse/recycling of materials, some treatment methods can lead to unintended safety and compliance issues.

If the material that you intend to recycle on-site would otherwise be a waste, you are obligated to determine if the material is a hazardous waste before proceeding. If it is a hazardous waste, you must manage the material as a hazardous waste, including reporting the generation and recycling on your department's hazardous waste annual report. In addition to regulatory issues, processes like distillation can be dangerous unless performed by an experienced chemist or other trained individual; if you don't have that training and experience, then please don't try it.

Contact EH&S before beginning new recycling processes.

Pyrophorics Safety Video Available

UCLA's EH&S department has created a pyrophorics safety video that is now available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RaMXwNBAbxc>. If you work with pyrophoric materials, this video could be a lifesaver.

Chemical Safety Quick Facts

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services has posted a series of chemical fact sheets at <http://web.doh.state.nj.us/rtkhsfs/search.aspx>. While these sheets do not replace Material Safety Data Sheets, they are good sources of safety information.

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