Safety Guidelines for Receiving Hazardous Materials Shipments in Non-Lab Areas

Many lab departments at UCSB do not have a dedicated shipping/receiving area. Therefore, hazardous materials packages are often delivered to administrative offices. Staff in these areas generally do not have experience with hazardous materials, or what to do if a package leaks, smells, or is broken. Although hazardous materials are generally well-packaged and problematic containers are rare, below are some general safety guidelines. However, circumstances may vary and appropriate judgment should be applied.

If a hazardous materials package is leaking, broken, or smells strongly:

- In most cases, broken containers should not be accepted. The package can often be safely taken back by the delivery person, once the box is adequately sealed. Consulting with local lab personnel, or EH&S will help with the decision whether it is safe to have the package returned.

- If anyone is experiencing symptoms (e.g., cough, eye irritation) call 911.

- Knowing the name of the material will greatly aid in determining the appropriate level of response. So, if there is any associated paperwork secure it.

- Some lab chemicals are flammable. So, if a significant quantity of flammable liquid is spilled, there is a small possibility of fire. In this circumstance, evacuate the immediate area and seek immediate assistance from nearby lab personnel, or EH&S, to do a cleanup. While awaiting assistance, keep an eye on the spill from a safe distance to ensure it doesn’t ignite. Pull a fire alarm and evacuate the building if there is a fire. Fire extinguishers are available in all buildings, but should only be used by trained individuals.

- If it is deemed safe to do so, move the package into the nearest fume hood, or outside. If in doubt, leave the package where it is, evacuate the room and close the door.

- In the unlikely event that an individual is exposed to chemicals in their eyes, or skin, note that there are emergency shower and eyewash units inside each lab, or nearby in the hallway. In lieu of these, use a sink to immediately flush the affected area. Call 911.

Footnotes:
1 See also the UCSB Emergency Information Flipchart under Chemical Incidents
2 Packages of radioactive materials are only delivered to EH&S for subsequent delivery directly to a laboratory.
3 For example, most solid chemicals pose very little health threat from a broken container.
4 Contact EH&S at x-3194. If you get an answering machine, call 448-4099.
5 Upon request, fire extinguisher training is offered by EH&S for a sufficiently large group. Call x-7751.