Quarterly Laboratory Safety Update

This quarterly slick:

- The danger of walk-in cold rooms and environmental chambers;
- What are near misses and why they should be reported;
- The proper disposal of sharps and broken glass;
- The latest Field Safety Program news.

Want an opportunity to test your stress level? Stay with us! Test and resources for stress management are located at the end of this issue!

Need training? Click here for details on upcoming courses.

In The Wake of a Close Call

Imagine you are a researcher who often uses a walk-in freezer room (- 20 degree Celsius) with a door that usually does not close completely due to ice built up on the door frame. Today, however, you don't notice that the door frame is clean. You enter the room and the door locks behind you. All the odds are against you - the emergency button is out of order, the alarm malfunctions and the room has no cell phone reception. You are trapped.

This happened not long ago to a researcher at UCSB. Eventually they found an area in the freezer room where one bar of service was available to sent out a text which saved them. What if this happens to someone who doesn't have that luck? And how can this be avoided? Reporting near-misses to EH&S is important. If this situation had gone wrong the consequences would have been serious.
After investigating the event EH&S was proactive in ensuring the safety of our researchers. A comprehensive inspection program for walk-in temperature control rooms was developed and emergency exit buttons on all rooms tested. In order to prevent a similar incident from occurring in future the campus has developed a

protocol (Walk-in Temperature Control Procedures) which should be followed when entering a temperature controlled area. Please use it to train your lab members who work in these areas and include a copy of the protocol in your Chemical Hygiene Plan to document the training.

The protocol is also now posted on all temperature controlled rooms' doors. In addition, inside each room you will find a sticker with the room number and building name. Use this information to call Police Dispatch (805) 893-3446 if you ever get trapped.
Our Research & Occupational Safety Specialist, Hector Acuna is available to meet with your group to discuss the protocol and provide training on how to use the Firefighter Axe to escape the room. Firefighter Axes are only required for freezers running below zero degrees Celsius.
Additionally, it is important to note that these rooms have low ventilation. Storing samples on dry ice for prolong period of time (overnight) can create immediately dangerous to life and health environment. Dry ice has the potential to sublimate at -78.5 degree Celsius. So, please, do not leave any samples and reagents on dry ice in the cold room. The consequences can be devastating.

The What and Why of Near-Misses and Incident Reporting

Near-misses happen in the lab often enough to brush them off and keep on going. Often times they are subjective; what you notice as a close call might have been completely ignored by somebody else. OSHA defines near-misses as unplanned events in which nobody was hurt and nothing was damaged, but had the potential to do so. A proactive approach should be taken to address the hazard before an incident happens. The lesson we learned from the near-miss described in the first story of this issue was priceless. Has that event not came to our attention, we would not have taken the necessary steps to address the issue.
To facilitate an easy reporting procedure EH&S has updated the Hazard Reporting Form to include Near Miss and Injury Reporting as well.
The access to the new reporting forms is through three buttons located

at the upper right hand corner of the EH&S website on every page: Hazard - click here to report any type of hazard you encounter on campus or in the lab; Near miss - take the time to report any near-miss you witness or experience first hand; Incident/Injury - to receive the benefits of the Workers' Compensation Insurance Plan report all injuries, minor and severe, that occur on the job. Reporting injury in a timely manner will ensure coverage for minor injuries or diseases that were aggravated or substantially worsened at work. Employees are able to file claims using the online system Employer's First Report (EFR). Injuries involving students and visitors should be reported using the 3rd Party Incident Form. Have questions? Contact Monica Dussert, Risk & Workers' Compensation Analyst

---

My sharps container is full. What now?

Sounds familiar? If you find yourself thinking either one of these, you will find clarification in the paragraph below.

"Sharps" is a medical term for devices with sharp points or edges that can puncture or cut skin. Types of sharps often used in laboratories are needles, scalpels and razor blades. Proper storage and disposal of sharps is important to both, safety of lab members and the staff of waste management companies. In the laboratory sharps should be collected in a puncture proof container. When full the container must be disposed of through EH&S or a licensed medical waste management company. On campus sharps should never be placed in the trash. Improper disposal of sharps containers may cause injury and potentially expose waste management staff to hazardous materials.

Only autoclaved waste bags and cardboard broken glass boxes can be placed into the red-lidded trash cans located near campus science buildings. Detailed information on proper handling of sharps, broken glass and autoclaved waste disposal can be found here. Contact the Hazardous Waste Program Manager, Bruce Carter with any questions and concerns.

Thank you for doing it right!

Ready for a Season of Active Field Research

Our Spring Field Safety training was successfully held this April. The field researchers who attended the course are now ready for an active research season with confidence of individuals who are prepared to confidently handle emergency situations.

The next field safety training opportunity will be in September. The training is free and focuses on Field Trip Planing and First Aid. It would be beneficial to researchers who work in remote areas to attend the class.

In order to ensure your safety during your field trips E&HS can assist in equipment selection, procurement, and training. A variety of equipment (satellite communicators, monitoring devices, respirators, PPE and etc.) can be loaned on a limited basis. Earlier this year the UC Field Research

Safety Manual was published and made available to all campuses within the UC system. It is a valuable resource which includes guidance on planning, training, incident response, risk

assessment, effective communication, campus resources, and common field hazards. Reading the manual before starting to plan your trip will be time well invested.
For questions regarding the Field Safety Program and resources we offer to support your research, contact Nelly Traitcheva.

Feeling Stressed Lately?

Is the image still? Congratulation, you are being calm. If you see a movement in the image above, it is time to visit the UCSB Health and Wellness Website and try out some of their tips for stress reduction. Tell us which approach works best for you!

---

nelly.traitcheva@ehs.ucsb.edu