

Training Topic of the Month:

All new laboratory employees must receive Laboratory Safety training from EH&S as a requirement of the OSHA Laboratory Standard. While there is no OSHA requirement for refresher training in lab safety, we feel that regular review of lab safety topics is essential to a safe work place. Monthly reading of this newsletter will provide such a review. This month's topic is "**General Lab Practices**".

There are a number of general safety rules applicable to laboratories that do not fall under any one specific category, so we call these "**General Lab Practices**".

1. **Minimize ALL chemical exposures**--don't think that because one chemical may be less harmful than another, that exposures to these are acceptable.
2. **There should be no eating or drinking in working areas of the laboratories.** Most labs allow this at desks only, and only when the desks are not in the immediate areas of chemical usage.
3. **Check glassware and equipment before using,** to ensure that they are not cracked or malfunctioning. Damaged items may cause accidents or spills, as well as the loss of your sample and experiment.
4. **Do not work alone with hazardous materials** unless you have received permission from the lab PI to do so. If you must work alone, ensure that there is some mechanism for you to contact help if an accident occurs. Will there be others who could hear you? Stop in to check on you? Call you from time to time?
5. **Consider the hazards inherent in leaving procedures or experiments unattended.** What happens if equipment malfunctions and a fire is started? What if there is a power failure and your equipment stops? What if a condenser hose comes loose and volatile solvents are released? What if a fume hood goes down and hazardous vapors fill the room? Be sure that there is a plan to protect people in your area and building if you leave any procedure unattended. If you cannot ensure safety in these situations, you may NOT leave the experiment unattended. Contact EH&S at 8-8182 for further help in this matter. ***This problem has been a significant source of accidents in the past year--please follow this information!***
6. **Perform ALL work with volatile materials in a ventilated area** (such as a fume hood or glove box). Do NOT rely on general room ventilation to offer any protection from chemical exposure.
7. **Plan new procedures with safety in mind.** Feel free to contact EH&S if you have any questions or concerns about new procedures or use of new chemicals.

Lab workers must wear closed toed shoes in the lab. With summer approaching, this is a chronic problem. The reason for our concern is 1.) that hazardous chemicals may fall on the unprotected skin, and 2.) that sharps or broken glass, frequently found in labs, can harm the unprotected foot

Sandals and Such in the Lab

It's that time of the year where we all need to remember that sandals and open-toed shoes are

NOT permitted in our laboratories, per the university's Chemical Hygiene Plan. The risk of

Laboratory Safety and Hazardous Waste Training

April 10, 2008

9:30 AM to Noon

MI 348

To register, go to: http://ehs-alert.fms.bap.cmu.edu/EHSWebSite/Training/ClassDescriptons/training_laboratory_safety.htm

exposure to hazardous materials (not to mention sharps or broken glass) is too great to permit these to be worn.

Given the warmer weather, we recommend that you keep a pair of appropriate lab shoes at your desk to change into so that you can wear sandals and open-toed shoes for your non-lab activities.

Building Air Quality

One of EH&S's most frustrating tasks involves responding to complaints from building occupants about odors in their offices or labs. There are times when our staff is unable to identify the material in question, unable to locate the source and unable to determine whether people in the area in question are safe remaining in their spaces.



While the problems are often unique, there are some things we have learned in our investigations that should be of interest.

First, given the patchwork of ventilation systems, drains and other building components in many of our buildings, odor sources in one location can travel and cause problems a long way away, often on different floor or wings of a building. For example, we recently had a drain disposal on the upper floor of Mellon Institute impact the first floor of the building. Also, chemical or other odors

released in the area of an air intake may spread the odor throughout a building or space.

Second, it is EXTREMELY helpful if you notify EH&S if you spill any odorous material or (inadvertently) put one down the drain. This will help us prepare for the calls that will result from the incident and to understand the safety and health impacts promptly and react as necessary.

Third, there are some common problems that are easily solved. If there is a sulfur odor in your lab, check to see if you have a dry trap below a seldom-used sink. Running the tap for a few minutes will re-fill the trap and prevent sewer gas (a likely cause of the odor) for coming up through the drain. Burned out ballasts in light fixtures are often the cause of a burned electrical smell.

When we investigate your complaint, please try to provide us with as much information as you can, such as the identity of the material (or a description of it), whether it is growing stronger or weaker, how long it has been present and, if it is recurrent, when does it happen?

Hazardous Waste Pick-up Schedule		
Mellon Institute	April 8&22, May 6&20	9:30 AM to 11:30 AM
Wean and Doherty Halls	April 8&22, May 6&20	12:30 PM to 3:30 PM
All other main campus locations	April 9, May 7	9:30 AM to 11:30 AM
PTC	April 9, May 7	12:30 PM to 3:30 PM
Penn Ave., Robotics Consortium	May 21	
Computers	April 3, May 1	
To request a waste pick-up or receive waste labels or tags, go to: http://ehs-alert.fms.bap.cmu.edu/EHSWebSite/Waste_Recycling/HazardousWaste.htm		