

### Bomb Threats

*Jim Gindlesperger*

If a bomb threat were to be called into your office, would you know what to do? Would you know what questions to ask? The checklist in this column will aid you, even though it is unlikely that the caller will remain on the line long enough for you to ask all these questions. Get as much information as you can and report it to the University Police immediately.

First, remain calm. Be courteous and try to keep the caller talking. Ask where the bomb is located, when it will detonate, and what type of bomb it is. The caller will probably not tell you this, but ask his name and try to get a number where you can reach him. Try to determine the caller's sex, is the caller young or old, does he seem to be familiar with the campus?

Try to distinguish voice characteristics: if there is an accent, can you tell what kind or, if it is American, can you tell what part of the country it may be from? Does the person sound intoxicated? Was the voice harsh, raspy, soft, deep, loud, or high pitched? Did the caller speak rapidly, did he seem excited, did he use foul language? These things may not mean much to you, but they are clues that may aid investigators.

Listen to the person's demeanor. Was he calm or was he emotional? Was he laughing or angry? Did he sound rational?

Be alert for background noises, such as music, traffic sounds, industrial noises, office machines, other voices, or a party atmosphere. If it was completely quiet, note that as well.

Write these things down immediately before you forget, then contact University Police. The more information you get the better the chances are that the threat can be properly assessed.

### Computer Recycling Changes

*Mark Banister*

For several years now, Carnegie Mellon has had a computer recycling program. Our initial goal was to reduce the environmental impact from this increasingly growing waste stream. I hope you all know about our program and use it for all computer waste.

Improvements in our program began in September, with the selection of a new contractor. To our university community, the changes will be minimal: Requests for removal of unneeded computer items will continue to be made through the EH&S web site, [www.cmu.edu/ehs](http://www.cmu.edu/ehs). The pick-ups will take place on the same dates, as identified on the above site.

The most substantial changes involve more environmentally-friendly handling of the items. More items will be repaired and refurbished. More efficient and thorough recycling of parts will be performed for items that cannot be reused. Both of these changes will help keep more waste out of landfills and prevent hazardous components from damaging our water and soil.

To facilitate better handling of your waste computer items (monitors, CPUs, keyboards, etc.), please do two things when you have computer waste to dispose of:

1. Indicate, either through the request form or with an attached note, if the item(s) work(s) or not (or if you don't know!)
2. Do not "harvest" the CPUs, by removing the hard drive *or any other parts*. Any data or programs on the hard drive will be completely and thoroughly erased by the contractor. Harvesting of CPUs also reduces the value of the item, making it more costly to dispose of properly.

More changes are planned for the future as well. We are investigating more frequent pick-ups (we pick up roughly once a month now) and/or setting up a drop-off location for those who would prefer it to the pick-up service. Keep an eye on this newsletter over the next several months—any additional changes will be presented here.

### To Reach Us

Telephone: 268-8182  
Fax 268-6976  
Web: <http://www.cmu.edu/ehs>  
Offices: FMS Bldg., 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

### Asbestos Update

*Mark Banister*

The university completed two large scale asbestos removal projects in early June. The largest project was in Warner Hall where the remaining asbestos fireproofing and related materials were removed from the basement through the fifth floor (the sixth floor abatement was completed earlier). In Scaife Hall, the entire building has now also been abated, with the second floor asbestos removal just completed.

Both projects were completed on time and in a safe manner. All air samples outside the work zones before, during and after the abatement showed results below the strictest airborne standards. Congratulations to FMS and our contractors for their excellent performance with these significant projects.

### Don't forget!



October is Fire Safety Month. Don't forget to change the batteries in your smoke detectors.

### Storing Chemicals in Refrigerators and Freezers

*Jeff Harris*

Hazards associated with laboratory refrigerators and freezers include vapors from items being stored, incompatibility of stored items, spillage, and potential for thawing with pressure build-up in containers. Here are a few safety practices, as recommended by the National Research Council, for storing chemicals in refrigerators and freezers:

- Use ONLY "UL Approved" units when storing flammable chemicals (these types of units are not commonly found in local appliance stores). These types of units typically have the interior light switch removed, thermostat controls located outside the refrigerated compartment, spark proof fans, and modified defrost controls.

- Placement of the units should be against fire-resistant walls.
- Because these units do not continuously vent the interior atmosphere, items should be stored within secondary containers. This will prevent any escaping vapors (flammable or toxic) from accumulating in the refrigerator space, or being absorbed into the insulation.
- Clearly label (using placards or signs) the outside of the refrigerator to indicate what items are inside. For example: Radioactive Materials, Biological Materials, Flammable or Toxic Chemicals.
- Container labels should be water proof, do not use water-soluble ink to label containers. Please note: EH&S can help create these labels and placards.
- Consideration for chemical compatibility is important in these often small, crowded spaces. Keep an accurate inventory on all items stored in the unit (samples and reagents).
- Units should be regularly checked to ensure containers are not broken, that the unit is still working, and frost build-up should be removed.
- The drip pan should also be checked to ensure no hazardous materials have drained and are accumulating near the compressor.
- Limit the use of extension cords, units should have heavy duty power cords that are preferably protected by their own circuit breaker.

### How Not to Have a Fire!

Bob Anderegg



While some building construction may provide greater fire resistance, what we put inside of buildings, and how we use equipment and materials can increase the possibility of having a serious fire. Some examples of this are:

- overloading electrical outlets and circuits
- using extension cords that are too light for the electrical loads they are carrying
- leaving heat producing electrical appliances operating while unattended

- storing unnecessary quantities of combustible paints or solvents
- storing large quantities of lumber, cardboard, and other combustible materials
- leaving kitchen areas unattended while cooking
- allowing accumulations of trash or debris to remain within a building overnight
- burning candles and/or incense in dormitory rooms or offices, including during power failures
- allowing obstructions to be placed within normal paths of egress or in front of exits

By avoiding the actions listed above we can help to ensure for improved fire safety.

To further insure for safety, we need to carefully observe the following:

- refrain from removing batteries from smoke detectors for any reason
- in areas with fire sprinklers, maintain at least 18 inches of clearance between tops of stored materials and sprinkler heads
- become familiar with the locations of exits, fire extinguishers, manual fire alarm stations, and other safety equipment
- regularly inspect surroundings to determine any need for corrective action or improvement in the areas of housekeeping, storage, fire equipment and/or exit maintenance, electrical and utility safety, or other safety related issues.

If you would like to discuss this, or if you have any questions relating to the above information, please contact Bob Anderegg at 8-6624 or via e-mail at [ra09@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:ra09@andrew.cmu.edu).

### Art Safety 101

Andrew Lawson

When people think of art, they usually think of an artist expressing his or her creativity on the canvas, in a sculpture, or in a beautiful piece of woodwork. However, what many people don't realize is that many hazards exist in the art studio. A few of these hazards include flammable liquids, combustible materials, harmful dusts and fumes, high levels of noise, and corrosive or caustic materials. There are many ways that people in the art studio can protect

themselves and reduce the hazards that exist in their workplace, including:

- Store all flammable liquids in a flammable storage cabinet when not in use. Flammable liquids used in the art studio include paints, paint thinners, varnishes, and polyurethane.
- Store all acids and bases away from each other and in a(n) corrosives(acid) cabinet
- Always make sure that ventilation systems, such as local exhaust ventilation and chemical fume hoods are turned on and operating when working with materials that produce dusts, gases, or mists.
- Never eat, drink, smoke, chew gum, apply cosmetics, or put in contact lenses when working in the art studio.
- Wear safety glasses when performing activities that could produce flying objects like sanding, chipping, or breaking molds
- Wear welding goggles when welding.
- Wear safety goggles when performing activities that could produce harmful chemical mists or vapors.
- Wear hearing protection when performing activities that produce excessive noise, such as sandblasting.
- Wear dust masks or respirators when performing activities that produce excessive dusts, welding fumes, and chemical vapors.
- Wear chemically-resistant gloves when handling acids, bases or solvents and wear heat-resistant gloves when handling hot objects such as pottery.
- Wear chemically-resistant aprons or lab coats when handling chemicals.
- Store all oily rags and brushes in a closable metal can or container and dispose of them when full through the hazardous waste stream,
- Clean up often! Never allow wood, wood chips, debris, spills or any other material to accumulate on tabletops, floors, or any other surface. Empty garbage cans often and do not allow wood or other combustible material to accumulate in them.
- Wash your hands after removing gloves or before leaving the work area.
- Contact EH&S to find out the proper ways to dispose of your materials.