

Important Update on Computer Recycling

Mark Banister



In the October 2004 issue of Lifeline, I wrote about some changes in our campus computer recycling activities. There were two particularly important items that need to be reinforced at this time.

First of all, it is EXTREMELY important that computer items be left intact and NOT be "harvested" [removal of parts from the computer] before they are turned in for recycling. When the computer is "harvested," it no longer can be sent for re-use, the most environmentally friendly solution to our discarded item. Non-working but intact units are often able to be repaired for re-use, but when parts have been removed, they are worth nothing but scrap material value. Harvested units are also a cost drain on our waste budget—we pay to have them recycled whereas with intact units (even non-working ones), we get paid for recycling them.

Secondly, it is EXTREMELY important that Carnegie Mellon recycles ALL unneeded CPUs through our system, as the hard drives will be then erased following US Department of Energy guidelines. We should all be aware of the very serious problems associated with unauthorized persons gaining access to sensitive information through an improperly recycled or insufficiently erased hard drive. Even hard drives that have been removed and physically crushed can have their data recovered by unauthorized persons. When we send our units for erasure, we receive a certification of the removal of data, for our records, as the ultimate assurance of a properly "cleaned" CPU.

Please contact me at markb2@andrew.cmu.edu with any questions regarding the computer recycling program. Look for a description of the steps to take to recycle your computer items at: http://www.cmu.edu/ehs/Waste_and_Recycling_Programs/recycling.htm#Computer

Extension Cords

Jim Gindlesperger



If you are like most people, you often find yourself using an extension cord, either at home or at work. While extension cords look harmless, they can be dangerous. Never use an extension cord that does not have the Underwriter's Laboratories approval stamped on it. This shows that the cord meets acceptable safety standards.

Once you are sure you have an acceptable cord, be sure you use it properly. If you abuse the cord, it could break the insulation or the internal wires. This may cause a short circuit that can result in serious injury.

To prevent cord damage or personal injury:

- ✓ Coil the cord in large loops.
- ✓ Don't bend the cord unnecessarily, or subject it to strain.
- ✓ Don't run the cord under a rug. While this may prevent a tripping hazard, it makes it very easy to walk over. The broken insulation or wiring will not be seen readily, and the end result could be a fire.
- ✓ Use a properly grounded plug.
- ✓ Never connect two small extension cords. Use one long cord instead.

Also, make sure the cord you are using is large enough to carry the electrical load that you will be imposing on it. The label on the cord will tell you how much it can handle. If the cord is hot to the touch, it is too small for what you are trying to do.

If the cord should become damaged, resist the temptation to wrap it with tape and continue to use it. Damaged extension cords should either be discarded or repaired only by a qualified person.

If you find it necessary to use an extension cord in the same area frequently, a better option would be to have permanent wiring installed. While this may be expensive initially, it will give you peace of mind and makes good sense from a safety standpoint.

Eating and Drinking in Biology Laboratories

Andrew Lawson



Eating and drinking in laboratories has been witnessed on many occasions during laboratory visits. This practice poses many health risks, some of which can be serious to those individuals who perform such activities. Not only can you ingest the chemicals, bacteria, viruses and fungi that you are working with, but it is also against university policy to eat and drink in laboratories. So, if you are craving a snack or are thirsty, please consume and dispose of your food and drink outside of your laboratories to avoid risking your health and to comply with university policy. We care very much about our campus community and we need your help in protecting it.

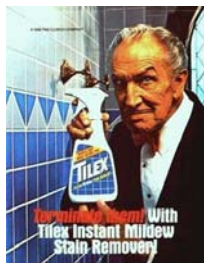
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Mailing Label

Safe Spring Cleaning

Madelyn Miller



There are hints that spring is coming, even to Pittsburgh. Spring cleaning is thus spawned when increased light calls attention to dust that may have gone unnoticed during those dreary winter months. However, problems arise when we become careless in our cleaning efforts and fail to take the necessary precautions when using seemingly harmless household products.

Read the labels! Some household cleaners contain quite strong chemicals. The Tilex® label says, apply product and leave the room. There are signal words like “caution”, “warning” and “danger” that should not be taken lightly. Most automatic dish washing powders have the words “caution” on the label. Not only are they eye and skin irritants, but if you place silver and stainless steel next to each other in the machine, the silver can be removed from your flatware.

Mixing cleaning products could land you in the hospital. It is tempting to mix cleaning products to work on those really tough stains, so mixing might be hard to resist, but the combination could be deadly. For example mixing bleach with ammonia produces toxic fumes. Also, toilet bowl cleaner contains hydrochloric acid and mixed with chlorine containing products, like abrasive scrubs or bleach, can produce a chemical that will cause lung damage.

Do...

- Read and follow label directions
- Store cleaning products away from food and out of children's reach
- Store products in their original containers, keeping product labels intact. Never transfer to a container that may give the impression it could be consumed, for example, in soda bottle.
- Properly close all containers to prevent accidental spills.

For more information look at:

- American Association of Poison Control Centers (www.aapcc.org)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)
- Soap and Detergent Association (www.sdahq.org)

Welcome To New Employee!

Mark Banister



A new employee has joined the EH&S staff. John Zoll is our new Radiation Safety Specialist and will be located in room 313 Mellon Institute.

John's new duties include training, ordering of rad material, performing inspections and audits, addressing regulatory licensing and compliance, maintaining inventories and responding to inquiries. He comes to us well qualified from nine years at the Cleveland Clinic where he was Lead Radiation Safety Technologist, and, prior to that, from the Health Physics Office of the US Army.

Please be sure to welcome John when you see him.



We are now back on Daylight Savings Time. This is a great time to replace the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors!

Upcoming Household Hazardous Waste Collection

Mark Banister



Once again, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Household Hazardous Waste Task Force is having household hazardous waste collection events in our area. The next event is at the South Park Wave Pool Parking Area, in Allegheny County, on Saturday April 30th, from 9AM to 1PM.

It is critical that we all ensure that the environmental hazards we have in our homes be properly disposed of, and this event will help make that happen.

For further information on this and the other 2005 events, please go to:

http://www.cmu.edu/greenpractices/community_connections/2005_hhw/2005_hhw_main.htm

List of Cancer-Causing Agents Grows

Jeff Harris

On January 31, 2005 the Department of Health & Human Services released its 11th Edition, Report on Carcinogens (RoC). Seventeen (17) new substances have been added, growing the list to 246. For the first time, viruses are listed in the report. RoC lists cancer causing agents in two categories – “known to be human carcinogens” and “reasonably anticipated to be human carcinogens”. The following are the most recently added items.

Six substances were added to the “known” list:

- **Hepatitis B (HBV) and Hepatitis C (HCV)** – both were added because chronic cases cause liver cancer.
- **Human Papillomaviruses (HPV)** - like hepatitis, is sexually transmitted and studies show they cause cervical cancer in women.
- **X-radiation and gamma-radiation** – exposure to these types of radiation cause many types of cancer.
- **Neutrons** – Not a widely used type of radiation. Exposure causes genetic damage similar to X and gamma radiation...primary exposure source is from cosmic radiation penetrating the earth's atmosphere.

Eleven substances were added to the “reasonably anticipated” list:

- **Naphthalene** – found in many chemical products, believed to cause some types of cancer.
- **MeIQ, MeIQx, and PhIP** –heterocyclic amine compounds formed when meats & eggs are cooked at high temperatures (also found in cigarette smoke), cause some types of cancer.
- **Lead** - used in many products and found naturally, causes various types of cancer.
- **Cobalt Sulfate** – a coloring agent and drying agent in paints & inks, causes various adrenal & lung tumors.
- **Diazoaminobenzene** – a chemical used in various production capacities, metabolizes to benzene and causes genetic damage in laboratory animals.
- **Nitrobenzene** – a chemical used in the production of other chemicals, inhalation studies produced cancer in experimental animals
- **1-amino-2,4-dibromoanthraquinone** – a dye, shown to cause cancer in experimental animals.
- **4,4'-Thiodianiline** – used in the production of dyes, also shown to cause cancer in experimental animals.
- **Nitromethane** – used in fuels and in the synthesis of pharmaceutical & agricultural products, shown to cause cancer in experimental animals.