

**MINUTES**  
**LABORATORY AND CHEMICAL SAFETY COMMITTEE**  
 Wednesday, February 2, 2005 (2101G McGavran-Greenberg)

**Members Present:** Lorraine Alexander, Kimberlie Burns, Richard Hanes, Nicole Duncan, Bruna Brylawski, Katherine Hamil, Kirby Zeman, Jim Morken, Bonnie Taylor-Blake, Carolyn Bishop, James Gilbert, Ray Hackney, Brent Webber

**Members Absent:** Mike Fisher, Liska Lackey, Elizabeth Guthrie, Diane Shugars

**Also Present:** Pete Reinhardt and Billy Mitchell (EHS)

Minutes from the meeting of October 27, 2004 were reviewed and approved.

**Egress in Halls – Surplus Property**

Billy Mitchell, Campus Fire Marshal, distributed a proposed new policy for ensuring that hallways do not become cluttered with surplus property, so that passageway requirements of the North Carolina Fire Prevention Code are not violated. The policy is officially titled the “Egress and Life Safety Policy”, and gives the Fire Marshal authority to tag such property with a two-week notice of removal and then have it removed after two weeks if no action is taken. Questions were raised about who (department or individual labs) was responsible for making sure that p-110 forms were filled out for surplus property, what to do about semi-permanent items such as refrigerators/incubators, property location during major lab renovations, and items waiting to be installed in the labs. Billy stated that all actions under this policy would be “reasonable”, and that communication between the Fire Marshal and the property owners would prevent the occurrence of “surprises”. After discussion of all concerns, the Committee voted unanimously to endorse the Egress and Life Safety Policy.

**UNC Labs in UNC Health Care Facilities**

Carolyn Bishop announced that UNC Health Care would be receiving its triennial JCAHO audit beginning on February 14, and shared a policy with the Committee that dealt with University laboratories located in UNC Health Care Facilities. The policy was approved by the UNC Health Care Personnel and Environmental Safety Subcommittee (PESS) in January. The policy will ensure that JCAHO compliance occurs in these labs. Requirements include maintenance of laboratory safety plans, detailed chemical inventory lists, inspections and sampling in labs that use formaldehyde/glutaraldehyde, and the need to obtain and wear UNC Health Care System photo ID badges.

**Accidents and Incidents in Lab Buildings**

A list of the incidents and injuries occurring in laboratory buildings during the last quarter of 2004 was distributed. The following injuries were reviewed:

Department	Injury
NUTRITION	Post-doc was inserting pipette into stopper when pipette broke and went into hand.
DENTAL RESEARCH	Employee experiences moderate to severe allergic responses (itchy, watery eyes; sneezing; wheezing; and some shortness of breath when working with rats and mice).
CAROLINA VACCINE INSTITUTE	Employee accidentally stuck left forefinger with needle of empty syringe while disposing it. It had been used to inoculate a rabbit with virus replicon.
PATHOLOGY & LAB MEDICINE	While assisting to relocate lab, employee was trying to clean area on deep countertop. Employee planted left knee which gave out.
CYS FIBROSIS/ PULMONARY RES	Employee experienced muscle pull or nerve pinch under left shoulder blade when picking up 5-gallon jug of TBE buffer.
LINEBERGER CANCER CENTER	Undergraduate lab tech was washing glassware when a beaker broke and she cut her right thumb.
MICROBIOLOGY & IMMUNOLOGY	Employee reports an allergic reaction/skin rash apparently related to the malaria prophylaxis medication she is taking after a trip to Africa. Symptoms include swelling and hives, especially in legs and arms but also on back.

Laboratory Incidents Oct-Dec 2004: 3 gas leaks, 16 odor complaints, and 11 spills (1 radiation spill, 4 mercury spills, 6 chemical spills).

#### **OCME Update**

Pete Reinhardt, EHS Director, stated that EHS representatives have met with representatives from the Office of Chief Medical Examiner. Lab cleanouts have been performed to reduce the number of hazardous materials present, and OCME is still regularly given CLIP inspections. A new agreement will soon be finalized between UNC and OCME, but OCME remains (and will remain) a separate entity under the NC Department of Health and Human Services.

#### **Other Business**

Several suggestions were made for ways to improve the formaldehyde training module. Even though the module achieves OSHA compliance, the Committee wished for the module to contain additional useful information such as odor thresholds, thresholds for various levels of toxicity, safe work practices (e.g. don't microwave formaldehyde solutions), and shipping information. These improvements will be made, and a new prototype of the formaldehyde module will be unveiled for the Committee's review.

Meeting adjourned 3:30pm.