

MINUTES

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE, LABORATORY ENVIRONMENT

Tuesday, June 19, 2001 (2101G McGavran-Greenberg)

Members present: Lorraine Alexander, Bonnie Taylor-Blake, Bruna Brylawski, Mike Fisher, Todd Gambling, James Gilbert, Ray Hackney, Kathrine Hamil, Liska Lackey, Sheldon Wiggins, Kirby Zeman

Members absent: Richard Hanes, Jim Morken, Paula Murphy, Lola Reid, Mike Fisher, Diane Shugars

Minutes for the meeting held on April 3, 2001 were approved, as corrected.

REVIEW OF INCIDENTS/INJURIES IN THE LABORATORY ENVIRONMENT

During September through November there were 5 laboratory injuries, which are listed below:

- Employee works at microtome for 5-6 hours cutting paraffin blocks with embedded materials. Microtome is used with right hand rotating knob so that blocks can be cut. After hand became swollen, the employee went to see her physician and was diagnosed with tendonitis in right hand and right shoulder.
- Employee received superficial 2nd degree burns while deactivating butyl-lithium with isopropyl alcohol.
- Employee was weighing out formic acid ammonium salt (1.577 g) to prepare 500 mL of 50-mM solution in water. When employee tried to break solid piece into smaller pieces, some solid flew up and hit employee in the eye. Flushed eye for 15 min with water.
- Glass stopcock broke while employee was connecting tubing. The employee's left thumb was lacerated thumb.
- Employee noticed increasing pain using right thumb to pipet. Employee pipets 2-4 hours/day for past 10.5 mos. Diagnosed with severe stenosing tenosynovitis of the right thumb.
- While employee was transferring cryovials in liquid nitrogen, one exploded. The cap flew off and hit the employee in the head, lacerating the eyebrow.
- While employee was transferring HIV cell samples from one box to another for storage in liquid nitrogen, cryovial exploded. Employee's chin was lacerated causing minor bleeding. Patient cell sample was HBV⁺, HAV⁺, HCV⁻.

Twenty-one laboratory incidents were also reviewed. There were 7 mercury spills, 1 rad spill, 8 odor complaints, and 2 gas leaks, and 3 miscellaneous incidents.

The committee discussed the large number of mercury spills and the need to inform laboratories of alternative mercury free thermometers. This information is communicated in lab safety training and the data sheet on mercury is given to a lab when a mercury spill occurs.

LABORATORY CLIP INSPECTIONS SUMMARY

A summary of the laboratory CLIP inspections for March, April and May 2001 was reviewed. The most common violation was not providing and documenting the annual training on the lab safety plan. The results are summarized below:

Rating	Definition	Percent of Labs Inspected
Outstanding	2 or more consecutive inspections with no violations	64%
Excellent	1 inspection with no violations or only 1 <i>de-minimus</i>	19%
Good	1 non-serious violations and/or < 5 <i>de-minimus</i>	17%
Poor	2 or more Non-serious or ≥ 5 <i>de-minimus</i> ; repeat violation	0.4%
Unacceptable	1 or more serious violations (corrected immediately)	2%

REQUIREMENTS FOR HAZARDOUS WASTE IN LABORATORIES

Rich Miller, Environmental Affairs Manager, discussed the issues of proper handling of hazardous waste. He stressed the need to ensure that lids are secured tightly on waste containers, waste containers are placed in secondary containers to contain leaks, the material is properly labeled, and the waste is accumulated at the site of generation. Many were no aware of the to accumulate the waste where it is generated (as opposed to accumulating the waste in a central location.)

OTHER ITEMS

The committee continued to discuss the issue of eating and drinking in laboratories. The committee was also informed that the name of the Health and Safety Office was being changed to Department of Environment, Health and Safety, effective July 1.