

MINUTES
LABORATORY AND CHEMICAL SAFETY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, July 23, 2008 (2101-G McGavran-Greenberg)

Members Present: Lorraine Alexander, Catherine Brennan, Kimberlie Burns, Howard Fried, James Gilbert, Ray Hackney, Katherine Hamil, Mary Beth Koza, Susan McMahan, Kirby Zeman

Members Absent: Carolyn Bishop, Bruna Brylawski, Jeff Johnson, Rihe Liu, Bonnie Taylor-Blake, Rita Fuchs-Lokensgard, Liska Lackey

Others Present: Rich Miller (EHS)

Meeting commenced at 3:05 pm.

Introduction of new Environment, Health & Safety Members

The new Chemical Hygiene Officer, Catherine Brennan and the new Director of EHS, Mary Beth Koza were introduced to the group.

EPA Audit – Progress Report

Miller gave an update on the recent EPA audit conducted by an outside consulting group that occurred on campus. This is a voluntary audit which allows for no fines and penalties to be issued by the EPA for any violations. The consultant was hired in March and investigated 10 items with 1 of these items specifically targeted for laboratories. The majority of labs on campus were visited as part of the audit and violations were corrected at the time of the visit. Miller emphasized the already implemented 4Ls (Lids, Leaks, Labels and Location) program for chemical waste management. A handout and magnets summarizing the 4Ls were passed out to committee members. The EPA audit is currently being written up by the consultants with the final report due to the EPA by the end of the year.

Policy Discussion on Minors in Laboratories

Hackney led a discussion of the newly proposed *Minors in Labs* policy. A draft policy and consent/release form were passed out and discussed in detail. Suggestions from the committee included: organizing the policy by age group, removing the exception to the policy *via* appeal and verification of the HR policy in relation to employees bringing their children (12-18) to work due to childcare situations. The final item suggested was to contact Contracts & Grants regarding their policy for groups with minors.

Injuries and Incidents, April-June 2008

The Committee reviewed the log of injuries and incidents for the 2nd Quarter 2008.

INJURY
A research technician, working with a syringe containing folic acid in sodium bicarbonate solution, scratched left little finger with the needle as they pulled off the cap.
An employee was testing air line in newly renovated lab. Debris from construction was blown out and went up sleeve causing superficial abrasions to the right forearm.
Graduate student was using trifluoroacetic acid (TFA) to cleave peptide. TFA had unknowingly gone into black vacuum tubing connected to glassware. When grad student removed tubing, TFA sprayed on arm.
Graduate student was sectioning paraffin embedded tissue on microtome and cut right thumb. Employee did not lock microtome and use blade guard while manipulating sample.
Post-doctoral researcher was examining DNA fragments in gel on UV light source on Sunday. The employee received burns to the eyes and face when using cover for protecting instrument for UV shield. Employee went to Emergency Department at 2:00 am on Monday because of pain.
Post-doctoral researcher complained of right wrist and lower arm pain associated with a lot of pipetting in the lab. Researcher stated that EHS ergo evaluation was helpful.
Eight Lab personnel were potentially exposed to a BioSafety Level 3 infectious agent between 3/26/08 and 4/4/08 because a culture possibly leaked in an incubator. Employees were wearing N-95 respirators and room was under negative pressure. UEOHC laboratory tests indicated that there were no infections.
Temporary lab technician experienced eye irritations due to dust exposure, while packing up several labs for moving from a forty year old laboratory building.

As a research technician was packing lab equipment for laboratory move, he experienced a sharp pain when picking up a box and turned to stack it on other boxes.
Research assistant was attempting to remove 100 lb septic tank cover to collect samples. Pulling on the cover caused pain in the shoulder and upper back. Employee then tried to push cover off with feet and noticed significant pain in left foot that had undergone reconstructive surgery 8 years earlier.
Employee cut through glove with scissors used for working with HIV+ tissue.
A mouse bit small finger of right hand of researcher and finger began to swell at bite mark. Swelling spread to palm and ring finger. Swelling is thought to have occurred because of bacteria in mouse's mouth.
Research specialist was working with Kaposi's sarcoma HHV 8 that would be injected in mice. After loading syringe with 3 doses (for 3 mice) from tube, employee was attempting to recap tube and stuck left index finger with needle. Will follow-up with UEOHC to determine if infection occurred.
Ethidium bromide that had spilled on bench and run underneath was not cleaned up and subsequent use of bench by employee stained employee's pants. Employee did not realize it was ethidium bromide until trying to rinse out stain with water. Employee removed clothes, showered and put on clean clothes and went to clinic for assessment.
When employee was working with another lab member to move a shelf, the employee's thumb was cut open when it was caught between the shelf and shelf support.
Employee experienced back pain when lifting 60-lb dog from floor to its cage.
Temporary lab assistant was making a buffer solution when sodium dodecyl sulfate splashed in the eye. Employee was not wearing wear eye protection.

For incidents, there were 12 spills (8 of them mercury), 12 odor calls, 11 biohazards, 3 facility deficiencies, 2 gas leaks, 1 fire hazard, 1 fall hazard, 1 lost radiation source, 1 request for investigation and 16 miscellaneous incidents.

During discussion, questions were raised about the number of mercury spills. Suggestions were made to possibly disable mercury thermometer Fischer/VWR online ordering to ensure they are no longer being purchased.

Questions and Comments

Koza encouraged committee members to discuss committee business items with their colleagues in their respective departments.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.