

MINUTES
LABORATORY AND CHEMICAL SAFETY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, July 27, 2005 (2101G McGavran-Greenberg)

Members Present: Kimberlie Burns, Kirby Zeman, Nicole Duncan, James Gilbert, Ray Hackney, Brent Webber, Pat Boone (for Carolyn Bishop)

Members Absent: Lorraine Alexander, Mike Fisher, Liska Lackey, Diane Shugars, Jim Morken, Bruna Brylawski, Katherine Hamil, Bonnie Taylor-Blake, Elizabeth Guthrie, Richard Hanes

Meeting commenced at 2:30pm. Minutes from the meeting of May 27, 2005 were reviewed and approved.

Injuries and Incidents, April-June 2005

The log of injuries and incidents for the 2nd quarter 2005 was reviewed and discussed. For injuries, there were six cuts, four animal bites, four strains, four blood/OPIM exposures, two struck-by injuries, one chemical exposure, and one fall. For incidents, there were seven odor calls, nine chemical spills (six of which were mercury), and one radiation spill.

Proposed New Universal Signage System for Lab Entrances

The Committee viewed a presentation from James Gilbert for a proposed new signage system. The system would use a standard uniform formatting for text and pictographs to convey information about the hazards within particular lab rooms. The Committee discussed the pros, cons, and challenges of such a system. Challenges included how to make the sign meaningful without "over-informing" to the point that the sign was ignored, what to do about classrooms and other rooms with hazardous materials that are not PI labs, how to train personnel in the meaning of signal words, pictograms, etc, and who would be responsible for printing and updating the signs. The attending members of the Committee endorsed the signage system concept, and it was agreed that the concept would be shared with other Committee members who were unable to attend to garner additional feedback.

Controlled Substances Revisited

As a follow-up to the last meeting, Brent talked to Mike Callen, the DEA diversion control agent responsible for the territory that includes UNC, and learned that departmental (rather than individual) licenses for controlled substances are permitted. However, the licenseholder (be it the PI, the section manager, office manager, etc.) would be held responsible for any "diversions" that took place. Therefore, all licenseholders should practice extreme vigilance with regard to the downstream users who are not listed on the license, since they might have to answer for a situation that was created by the downstream user.

Contact Lens Use in the Lab

NIOSH Current Intelligence Bulletin #59 was circulated to the Committee. In this bulletin, NIOSH states that contact lens use in labs should not be restricted, so long as proper safety procedures are observed. For years, many sources (e.g. the *Prudent Practices* Manual and the UNC Lab Safety Manual) had recommended no use of contacts in lab environments. However, subsequent years of experiments and epidemiologic studies have not shown that contacts present a special hazard in labs, and in fact they might improve visual acuity and thus reduce accidents in labs. The next version of the UNC Lab Safety Manual will not include a recommendation to restrict contact lens use in the lab.

Meeting adjourned 3:30pm.