

MINUTES
LABORATORY AND CHEMICAL SAFETY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, October 22, 2008 (2101-G McGavran-Greenberg)

Members Present: Lorraine Alexander, Bonnie Taylor-Blake, Pat Boone, Catherine Brennan, Howard Fried, James Gilbert, Jeffery Johnson, Susan McMahan

Members Absent: Bruna Brylawski, Kimberlie Burns, Ray Hackney, Katherine Hamil, Mary Beth Koza, Rihe Liu, Rita Fuchs-Lokensgard, Liska Lackey, Kirby Zeman

Meeting commenced at 3:05 pm.

Review/Approve Minutes from 07/23/08 Meeting

Minutes were previously sent out by email. No further comments.

Update of online Laboratory Safety Plan and Chemical Inventory

Brennan gave an update on the new online Laboratory Safety Plan (LSP) and Chemical Inventory system. A summary of the benefits to both researchers and EHS was provided. Features of the online LSP include links to other EHS internal databases (laboratory worker registration form and chemical inventory system) and status of a researcher's plan (approval status and employee annual training records). The online chemical inventory system includes >60,000 chemicals and is searchable by both Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS) number and chemical name. One unique aspect of the chemical inventory is the ability to mark a chemical as shared for use by other principle investigators. Benefits of the online LSP and chemical inventory for EHS include the generation of unique reports for regulatory compliance. After a real-time demo of the LSP, committee members were encouraged to try the two systems and submit feedback. The campus wide roll-out for the online LSP and chemical inventory will be November 2008.

Injuries and Incidents, July-September 2008

The Committee reviewed the log of injuries and incidents for the 3rd Quarter 2008.

INJURY
A post-doctoral fellow was attempting to weigh an infected mouse when it turned and bit their fingertip. The lab will anesthetize mice in the cage before handling in the future.
An employee was sanitizing a scalpel and the scalpel slipped and the blade went through their thumb. The employee was sent to the ER from UEOHC. The wound was sealed and the employee received a Tdap shot and was prescribed Vicodan.
A research technician was using a razor blade to open a 5-gal container of ethanol when the blade snapped and lodged into their thumb. The employee received wound treatment and a Tdap shot at UEOHC.
A research specialist complained of wrist pain in both wrists and a tingling sensation in the small fingers of the left hand. The pain occurred after assaying a large volume of samples in a single day, followed by an extended, multi-day period of constant computer use. An ergonomic evaluation was requested.
A temporary research technician was cleaning up shipping materials associated with Hepatitis B infected human lung tissue and received a splash to the arm. Tests confirmed that the employee had not been exposed.
Two laboratory personnel were potentially exposed to a Biosafety Level 3 agent when a mouse cage with bedding was knocked over. The area was cleaned and decontaminated before the employees left the lab. Both employees personal protective equipment was intact upon exiting the laboratory.
A researcher knocked over an agar plate containing a Biosafety Level 3 virus onto the floor when reaching into an incubator.
A laboratory specialist was installing an air deflector on ceiling tile to prevent a carbon dioxide incubator from filling up with water when ceiling tile was dislodged. A piece of debris fell into the employee's eye and was removed at UEOHC.
A researcher was using a syringe to transfer a chemical when the needle fell off and splashed the eye. The eye was flushed for 15 minutes and the employee went to the eye clinic where the use of artificial tears for comfort was recommended.

A post-doctoral researcher was adding a chemical to a chromatography column above eye level and received a splash to the face and eye.
While preparing to inject recombinant proteins from cell media a post-doctoral researcher accidentally stuck their finger with a needle.
A post-doctoral researcher was cleaning a work area and stuck their thumb with a needle that had been used during perfusion. The wound was treated at UEHC and both Tdap and Hepatitis B shots were given.
A graduate student was checking experimental cages and stepped on a sharp object that pierced 5mm Neoprene dive boots and punctured their foot. The wound was cleaned and the employee went to a local clinic for treatment and stitches.
A graduate student was performing a chemical purification and was using liquid nitrogen to cool the receiving flask. After the flask was removed and warmed an explosion occurred and the employee received cuts to the hand, forearms and chest. The employee was treated by EMT's in the laboratory and transferred to the ER where glass was removed and 18 stitches were administered.

For incidents, there were 18 odor complaints, 13 spills (10 of them mercury), 7 hood alarms, 3 biohazards, 2 gas leaks, 2 lost radiation sources, 1 facility deficiency and 1 request for investigation.

During the discussion of incidents, the issue of the prevalence of mercury spills in campus laboratories was raised. Members were asked whether a mandatory "No Mercury" policy would be accepted by researchers on campus. All agreed that as long as there is an exception process available to researchers a "No Mercury" policy could be implemented.

Questions and Comments

No other issues.

Meeting adjourned at 3:50 pm.