

MINUTES

LABORATORY AND CHEMICAL SAFETY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, October 27, 2010 (2101G McGavran-Greenberg)

Members Present: Erik Alexanian, Pat Boone, Catherine Brennan, Bruna Brylawski, Kimberlie Burns, Dan Elliott, Rita Fuchs-Lokensgard, James Gilbert, Mary Beth Koza

Members Absent: Lorraine Alexander, Howard Fried, Katherine Hamil, Karen Hogan, Rihe Liu, Susan McMahan, Kirby Zeman

Meeting commenced at 3:00 pm.

Updates to Laboratory Safety Manual (Chapters 6-12)

Gilbert discussed the revisions that were made to the Laboratory Safety Manual. Updates include the addition of Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS) numbers, the update of all chemical lists and making these chemical lists searchable in PDF format. Brylawski brought up some minor changes regarding the definition of clean benches and the procedures to be followed when using them (Chapter 7 and 8) and also had some suggestions for Chapter 12. The committee voted and approved the updates presented with the minor revisions that had been raised during the meeting.

Minors in Laboratories Policy

Brennan presented changes to the Minors in Labs policy related to adding more specific verbiage to include any age high school students. Specifically the policy name has been changed to "High School Students and Minors in Laboratories Policy" and this change has been updated throughout the policy and consent forms. Committee members voted for the changes with two additions: in the "Children under the age of 12" section to include language regarding offices inside of labs; to remove references to keeping paperwork with laboratory safety plan and instead use the term "safety records".

Injuries and Incidents, July-September 2010

The Committee reviewed the log of injuries and incidents for the 3rd Quarter 2010.

INJURY
Field Research Technicians setting and collecting insect traps in Virginia received tick bites in field. Two of the five researchers tested positive for Lyme Disease. The other researchers sought medical advice and completed injury report forms as a precaution.
Lab Technician in mouse handling class received bite on left thumb. Employee went to UEOHC where wound care information was provided.
Lab Technician in mouse handling class received bite on left thumb. Employee went to UEOHC where Tdap and wound care information were provided.
Graduate Student was preparing to anesthetize a mouse when it bit the employee's left thumb. Employee went to UEOHC where Tdap and wound care information were provided.
Research technician was processing RNA from established human cell lines and used needle to homogenize the sample. Employee put needle in used pipet tips container by mistake, went to remove it and needle punctured right middle finger.
Postdoctoral researcher lifted bottle of hot media with loose cap after it had been autoclaved. Cap fell off and some liquid poured on left forearm and employee received 1 st degree burn. Employee went to UEOHC.
Research Assistant was using beaker to add 50% hydrofluoric acid to volumetric flask and small amount of acid spilled on gloves. Employee was concerned about possible skin exposure upon removal of gloves. Employee washed hands for 10-min and applied 2.5% calcium gluconate gel. Incident occurred at 4:00 pm and employee went to Campus Health for evaluation. Follow-up at UEOHC found no lesions
Research Analyst was cleaning vacuum flask and sidearm broke off while removing hose. Broken glass lacerated middle finger of left hand. Employee evaluated at UEOHC and given splint to wear for seven days.
Research assistant was attempting to open a drawer to retrieve samples from a -80° freezer that had frozen shut. When the employee forced it open a corner of the drawer lacerated the right hand between thumb and first finger. Employee went to emergency room where wound was cleaned and five stitches were placed.
Research Associate was holding rat while it was being injected with insulin. While trying to reposition the rat, the needle came out of the rat and punctured left little finger. Employee went to UEOHC where Tdap and wound care information were provided.

Postdoctoral researcher was cleaning vibratome with blade attached. Blade came off in hand and lacerated right ring finger. Employee received stitches at emergency room.
Research Specialist was trying to cut a piece of Parafilm® with razor blade and lacerated left middle finger. Employee was counseled on wound care by UEOHC.
Postdoctoral researcher was walking into lab and slipped on wet spot on floor. Employee fell into table and hurt right wrist. Employee was seen at UNC Orthopedic Clinic and x-rays were negative for fracture or dislocation.
Lab tech was looking for PCR material in freezer when drop of water fell into eye. Ice could potentially have adeno-associated virus (AAV) or adenovirus. Employee evaluated at UEOHC and eye flushed. Employee counseled on signs and symptoms and will return to clinic if necessary.
Lab manager was moving microscope table to new location and sprained right wrist when trying to lift. X-rays were negative for fracture or dislocation.

For incidents, there were 7 laboratory hoods, 5 odors, 4 miscellaneous, 4 chemical spills, 4 mercury spills, 2 gas leaks, 2 requests for investigations, 1 biohazard and 1 radiation spill.

During discussion of incidents and injuries, Brylawski suggested that we make more information available to departments about safety clearance forms and provisions for surplus property based on the amount of incidents that occur at Surplus Property. During discussion of animal bites, Brennan mentioned that a new Tick Policy was being generated but was not sure if it had been approved. A question was also asked about types of gloves available to prevent mouse and rat bites and Koza commented that these gloves are available and used by researchers at UNC.

Other Committee Business

Two new members were introduced at the beginning of the meeting, Assistant Professor Erik Alexanian from the Department of Chemistry and Dan Elliott who is the new Environmental Affairs Manager in the Department of Environment, Health & Safety. At the end of the meeting a discussion was raised on near misses and whether we should be capturing these. This led to a discussion about safety culture in labs on campus and a suggestion that injuries and incidents be sent out to PI's after the quarterly meeting or that a laboratory specific newsletter be instituted. EHS will look into options to try and increase the safety culture of laboratory work areas by disseminating more safety information and data.

Meeting adjourned at 4:05 pm.