

Safety Beacon

Department of Environmental Health and Safety

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Lab Safety- It's Everyone's Business

Lab safety within Academia continually receives press attention, not in the good way. The month of January 2012 was active in the sense that felony charges were filed against the principal investigator and UCLA with regard to the tragic death of a research assistant. There were two explosions in a University of Florida lab within a three month period of time. Graduate students received injuries in both cases.

Please help us help you in preventing accidents: conduct and attend all mandated initial and annual training and keep training records for the required amount of time, using archives as necessary; do not work in the lab or shop alone; enforce the use and insure the availability and adequacy of personal protective equipment such as, but not limited to, safety glasses, proper lab gloves and lab coats; ensure chemical containers are properly labeled and stored correctly; develop standard operating procedures and job hazard analyses for laboratory operations and make sure everyone working in the lab is aware of them, reviews them and that they are regularly updated; clearly label equipment that is unsafe or not operating properly and tag it as out of service until it can be repaired/replaced. Always encourage a work environment that fosters proper health and safety procedures and techniques....(continued on page 3)

Spring Semester - Spring Break Safety

The return to campus for Spring Semester is a challenging and exciting time of the year. As the campus population increases again, it is important to realize it's going to take more time to travel around campus. The number of pedestrians will swell and the need to drive safe and courteous around them is a must. Residents in Student Housing are returning to a multi-person living environment that requires enhanced fire and life safety consciousness for the safety of everyone.

Spring Break is rapidly approaching and is a traditional time for fun and relaxation for the student population. While the attention is towards fun in the sun, please keep in mind a few safety items to prevent injury or problems. Please visit the following link as a comprehensive guide. <http://www.cdc.gov/family/springbreak/>

- Ensure your belongings and valuables are safely secured while you're away. Either take them home or make arrangements to ensure their safekeeping while you're away.
- If driving, be sure the vehicle is ready for the trip. Check the tires, fluid levels, wiper blades, lights and spare tire. Ensure the vehicle is mechanically sound for the distance you plan to travel.
- Travel in groups, staying with friends. Avoid going off on your own as the potential for danger is much higher.

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Is Your Water Protected?

Clean water is not only essential for all living things but also for our laboratories. The availability of domestic water supplies in laboratories is taken for granted. Unfortunately, this also means that unless basic precautionary steps are taken, clean domestic water can become contaminated with waste water.

Contamination occurs when a pipe or hose connected to the domestic water system is allowed to come in direct contact with water in a sink, bucket, or some process. Under certain conditions, a small change in water pressure could draw the contaminated water into the domestic system, exposing other users to unknown chemicals.

Fortunately, it is easy to prevent cross-contamination with the use of back-flow preventers and air gaps. A back-flow preventer is one of several types of mechanical fittings installed on a sink which allows water to flow only out of the faucet. An air gap is a physical separation between the water outlet and a source of contamination.

Steps to protect you and your lab from cross-contamination:

- Make sure all lab sinks are equipped with back-flow prevention fittings.
- Make sure there is at least a 3" clearance between the bottom of the faucet and top lip of the sink.
- Install back-flow preventers or check valves on all processes connected to domestic water piping.
- If your faucet does not have a back-flow preventer installed, remove the hose barb from the faucet. Tubing connected to these barbs can circumvent designed air gaps.
- Make sure hoses are disconnected from wall faucets when not in use.
- When using a hose or tube to fill a bucket or other container, maintain an air gap equal to twice the diameter of the hose or tube.



Industrial Hygiene News

Forklift Training - Lift up Safety on Campus

On December 14th and 15th Environmental Health and Safety hosted a "Train the Trainer" session to prepare a small group of university employees to become Aerial and Fork Lift trainers. The thirteen participants selected from seven university departments successfully completed intense training presented by Arbill, a provider of safety services. This decentralized approach to providing employee safety training allows University departments the independence and the flexibility to train and oversee the safe use of powered industrial trucks and lifts within their respective work groups. The aim of this Environmental Health and Safety initiative is to ensure compliance with the OSHA standards for Power and Industrial Trucks and Aerial Lifts. The training reinforced the general safety principles of identifying possible hazards prior to completing a task and combined classroom and hands on training. Please contact EHS for assistance with implementing programs that achieve compliance with applicable regulations so that we may assist you in keeping the campus environment safe.

Coming up.....Confined Space Training will be held May 7th, 10th, and 14th. Times are to be announced. Please contact EHS at x8475. Anyone who will have the need to enter a confined space in the next year should plan to attend one of these sessions.

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and always urge questions to be asked if there's uncertainty. Remember safety starts with you.

The University's goal in the "Path to Prominence" to become a prominent nationally recognized research institution requires all of us to reach higher and do better with regard to health and safety compliance. Our goal is a safe community. Please contact us at 831-8475 or access our website (<http://www.udel.edu/ehs/>) for assistance.

Links to additional news articles:

UCLA Lab Incident: <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-1228-ucla-death-20111228,0,7543387.story>

University of Florida Incident: <http://www.gainesville.com/article/20120118/ARTICLES/120119491>

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- Reserve a room that's above the 1st floor but below the 6th floor. Why? First floor rooms are easier to break into, and rooms above the sixth floor are sometimes too high for fire ladders to reach. Keep doors and sliding doors locked, and don't let anyone into your room unless you can trust them. Make a mental note of where the nearest fire exits and stairwells are located in case you need to evacuate.
- On the beach, swim where lifeguards are present and use sunscreen and stay hydrated. Always have a buddy with you. Remember the hottest time of the day is between 10 am and 2 pm; avoid long exposure to sun during these hours. When boating use life vests and other safety devices.

Take a few minutes to be safety conscious during this time of rest and relaxation. Your safe return to campus is most important.

Heart Health Month



On January 31, 2012, President Obama proclaimed February 2012 to be heart health month. Every year, heart disease takes the lives of over half a million Americans, and it remains the leading cause of death in the United States. This devastating epidemic leaves no one untouched; its victims are fathers and daughters, grandparents and siblings, cherished friends and community members across our country. This month, we remember the steps each of us can take to reduce the risk of heart disease and re-commit to better heart health for all Americans.

While genetic or hereditary factors play a part in many instances of cardiovascular disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, physical inactivity, obesity, tobacco use, and alcohol abuse are major risk factors that can be prevented or controlled. To take action against heart disease, become or stay active, eat balanced and nutritious meals, maintain a healthy weight and get regular medical checkups, avoid tobacco, moderate alcohol consumption, and work with a healthcare provider to help prevent or treat conditions that can lead to heart disease. Additional resources on how to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease are available at: www.CDC.gov/HeartDisease.

Contact UD's Wellness program (<http://www.udel.edu/wellness>) for more information on various programs offered and get active. If you're interested in learning CPR and possibly saving a life, visit the EHS website (www.udel.edu/ehs) or email us (dehsafety@udel.edu) for class offerings.

Coming soon..... Be on the lookout for the **NEW**
Environmental Health and Safety Website!

More info to follow