



Department of Occupational and Environmental Safety NEWSLETTER

August-September 2000

CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

VOL. 9 NO. 1

Back-to-School Basics



The summer is over and classes have begun -- but how prepared are you? If you run a lab, then chances are you have new students, new teaching assistants, and maybe even new full-time employees. Or maybe you are one of these new people! If so -- welcome to CWRU!

To get ready for the new school year, the first thing to do is to make sure that your entire staff of personnel is properly trained. All new employees must be trained by D.O.E.S.

If you are a new employee or find yourself in a new workplace environment, don't wait for someone to tell you to get trained -- take responsibility and make sure you are properly trained to handle the possible safety hazards you might face.

The Safety Office offers training sessions in **Radiation, Chemical, and Bloodborne Pathogens (BP) Safety**. Radiation and BP Training sessions are subdivided into "New" and "Retraining" sections, so sign-up for the appropriate session based on your training status (which can now be checked by entering your social security # as a code on a the D.O.E.S. homepage at <http://does.cwru.edu>). D.O.E.S. also provides X-ray Training for specialty radiation workers.

Remember, if you are not trained in these areas and you are performing duties which involve these materials, **you are out-of-compliance with both Federal and State requirements for safe work practices**. Call us immediately to sign up for a slot. Times are frequent and sessions are designed not to bombard you with useless background information, but to train you in practical means of safety to better deal with hazardous materials and procedures.

Check our training schedule at the bottom of page two or call our Departmental Assistants
(continued on pg. 2)

Elevator Transport Safety



Have you ever gotten on the elevator in the BRB and noticed someone dressed in head-to-toe PPE holding a small vial very carefully away from their body? What if this person then pressed a button, leaving a suspicious red residue from their dirty gloves?

Would this bother you? It should, especially if the material in question was toxic, blood-based, or even radioactive. And if the potentially-dangerous vial spilled? The person would be protected and you (without PPE) would not be so lucky.

Safety Services is advising that in accordance with both OSHA and Ohio health code regulations that all chemicals and lab/animal specimens and all persons wearing PPE be transported on the freight elevator ONLY. Conversely do not travel on the freight elevator unless you are wearing appropriate PPE.

The new signs posted near the regular elevators in the BRB read "No Food or Drink in the Elevator, "Transport of Animals, Lab Equip Samples and Stock is forbidden in this Elevator," and "Wearing PPE such as glove and lab coats is forbidden on this Elevator." Please follow these rules and **do not take these signs down**. Help make the BRB safe for workers and visitors alike.

In This Issue:

Back to School	1
Elevators	1
What a Waste!	2
Training Schedule ..	2
Hot Tips	3
Decision 2000	4
Kitchen Bacteria	5
Heavy Lifting	5



What a WASTE!

New CWRU Recycling Program

Recently, some buildings at CWRU have been asked to participate in the University's new recycling program.

If your building, office, or lab is part of this new pilot program, you have already been issued a small, personal recycling container for your desk or bench. In this container, you should collect:

- Accounting ledgers
- Brochures
- Colored paper
- Printouts
- Copy machine paper
- Adding machine tapes
- Files
- Memos
- Legal pads
- Lined paper
- Recycled paper
- Time cards

Staples, paper clips, and rubber bands may also be recycled, but only in small quantities.

You should **not** recycle:

- Food waste
- Napkins
- Paper plates
- Candy/gum wrappers
- Magazines
- Overnight mail
- Blueprints
- Books
- Carbon paper
- Labels
- Photographs
- Thermal fax paper

When your personal recycling container is full, empty it into the large blue bin located in a central location in your department or lab. Once this larger bin is full, Customer Services will collect it. **Please do not label or sticker the blue bin in any way as a different bin will be delivered every time it is collected.**

The paper you will recycle will be supplied to a paper mill to help make valuable fibers for post-consumer materials.

Facts about Recycling:

- Every office worker produces 1.36 pounds of scrap paper daily.
- Waste paper consists of 45% of Ohio's solid waste and approximately 80% of office waste.
- Seventeen small trees are needed to make one ton of paper.

If you have questions, please contact Sam Delzoppo at x1075 or by email at sdd7.

(continued from pg. 1)

Gwen Cox-Johnson or Erick Adam Sanders if you have questions as to which session you should sign up for. If you run a lab, don't let your workers slip through the cracks.

Another way to prepare your lab for both workers and students is to stranger-proof it. You probably spend most of your days there, so you know where and what everything is -- but don't assume that other people will also. Go through your lab and make sure everything is (properly) labeled and correctly shelved, sealed, and signed. When there are hazardous materials and items which might be misused, unidentified, or misshelved, this extra step of preparedness is a must.

Also, familiarize your lab with our newsletter. If you keep the old copies in a file or binder (which is a good idea) leave some time for your staff to leaf through them. Or, direct them to our new-look website at <http://does.cwru.edu> where an archive exists of our past issues. Of particular interest might be our 1998 issue devoted to student lab workers or the OSHA inspection quiz in our last issue.

Along these lines, take some time in these beginning weeks to go oversimple procedures for

(continued on next page)

Upcoming Training Sessions

Radiation (x2906)

- **New Training:** Sept. 26; Oct. 11, 29; Nov. 10 (call for times)
- **Retraining:** Sept. 22; Oct. 3, 17 (call for times)
- **X-ray Training:** call office to set up training

Chemical (x2907)

- **OSHA Lab Standard:** Mondays 1-3 (Service Building Conference Room)

Bloodborne Pathogen (x2907)

- **New Training:** Mondays 3-4 (Service Building Conference Room)
- **Retraining:** Sept. 27; Oct. 5, 18; Nov. 2 (call for times; Service Building Conference Room)

Don't forget: rad re-training is now also **ONLINE** on our website: <http://does.cwru.edu>.

As always, call us for upcoming dates and times.

(continued from opposite page)

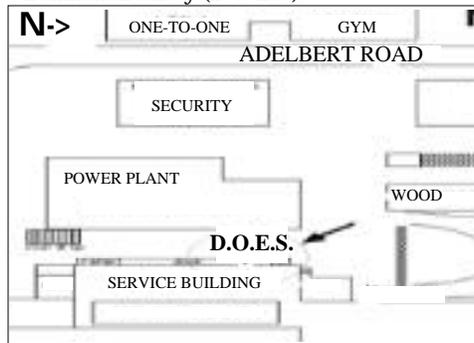
dealing with topics such as small spills, waste reduction, and fire safety. Consult the appropriate D.O.E.S. Safety Manual(s) for details.

Last but not least, make sure your new employees (and you) know who we are -- when you spot a D.O.E.S. staff member making his or her way around your lab or building, meticulously working to help insure your personal safety, don't be afraid to stop them and introduce yourself. We are happy to meet you and answer any questions you might have.

So have a safe semester by training, practicing, and leading by example. Together, we can make CWRU a safe learning environment for all.

Where is D.O.E.S.?

If you're new to CWRU (or simply haven't been to visit us yet), the map below should help you in finding the Department of Occupational and Environmental Safety (D.O.E.S.).



You can also find this map on our homepage at <http://does.cwru.edu>.

Early Notification

At the beginning of the school year, it is always worthwhile to reiterate the importance of work-related injury notification. Be sure and notify us (through your PI) of any new medical condition which might be related to a workplace spill or contaminant -- even if it is only a possibility. Things that are dismissed by you might not be dismissed by others and might be indicative of larger problems. D.O.E.S., in collaboration with the PI, will then authorize medical monitoring through Health Services. Refer to your D.O.E.S. Safety Manual for further details.



HOT TIPS



Pregnancy Precautions

Any pregnant radiation worker who plans to continue working with radioisotope during the pregnancy may inform the Radiation Safety Office and her supervisor in writing of her pregnancy and the estimated date of conception as soon as the pregnancy is known. This declaration lowers the permissible dose limits from 5000 mRem per year to 500 mRem for the entire gestation period.

If she chooses to declare her pregnancy, the worker will receive a fetal badge to be worn at the waist in addition to her quarterly badge. The embryo/fetus dose limit after declaring pregnancy is approximately 50 mRem per month. Fetal badges are exchanged monthly by the Radiation Safety Office.

Declaring one's pregnancy is voluntary; however, it is strongly encouraged. Receiving a fetal badge in addition to your whole body badge is also voluntary, but it more accurately reflects the fetal dose. Otherwise, your highest badge reading is automatically assigned to the fetus. Even if you choose not to wear a fetal badge in addition to your body badge, notify us of your pregnancy so we can monitor your quarterly badge in accordance with fetal/embryo exposure limits.

Contact the Radiation Safety Office (x2906) if you have any questions or would like a current copy of the NRC Regulatory Guide 8.13, "Instructions Concerning Prenatal Radiation Exposure."

Quick Response

If you were in the Animal Facility on August 7 you noticed a strong, debilitating odor. A storage cold room containing a large number of animals failed. But thanks to the quick efforts of the D.O.E.S. Radiation Staff, the area was quickly cleaned-up, decontaminated, and the animals processed and disposed of by the evening of the first report of the incident. Of particular note Tammy Taylor, Karen Janiga, and Ed Travers worked tirelessly to expedite this horrific clean up and remove the hazardous materials away from campus as quickly as possible.

Election 2000: On the Record

D.O.E.S. offers no political endorsements of any kind, but we thought you might appreciate some extracted comments by the two major candidates on various issues of workplace and environmental safety before the election this November.



on waste clean-up: "Individuals, businesses and governments in a new voluntary program [in Texas] have helped clean up more than 200 contaminated sites during the past three years. We encourage such voluntary, innovative approaches in Texas. I appoint qualified board members to state agencies that develop common-sense policies based on sound science that will best protect human health and the environment."

on OSHA: Criticized OSHA and the Labor Department for rushing ahead with proposed ergonomic standards regulation despite considerable uncertainty in the scientific community. He specifically referred to the pending scientific review being conducted by a special panel at the National Science Foundation. OSHA has since reviewed this standard, minimized it, and re-proposed it for traditional workplace environments only.

Overall: George W. Bush supports stronger state and local control of environmental regulations and has advocated for voluntary private programs for cleaning the air and protecting wildlife habitat. He says: "the strictures of the national rules are an impediment to state innovation. That doesn't mean that we want to get rid of them. But they have to be changed in such a way that permits the states more flexibility to do better jobs than they are now." Through state environmental commissions solely appointed by Bush, and in conjunction with the Texas state legislature, Bush has overseen efforts to enact a major anti-regulatory agenda. Bush has also proposed that companies voluntarily reduce harmful industrial emissions rather than be required to do so by law. Bush also opposes the Kyoto Plan to reduce global warming, claiming there are better, more privatized ways to do it.

Criticism: His appointments to state commissions that oversee environmental programs have sparked criticism because of their strong ties to chemical, oil, and real estate interests, and in some cases their relationships to businesses regulated by the commissions. He has also been criticized for his defense of oil interests, Houston becoming the most-heavily polluted city in America, and his refusal to put some Texas animals on the Endangered Species List.



on the environment: Gore is perhaps best known for his bestselling book *Earth in the Balance*, outlining plans to cut down on environmental destruction. However, many critics have pointed out that very few pieces of environmental legislation have actually come out of the Clinton-Gore White House over the past eight years, and none of it nearly as revolutionary as the ideas promised in the book and during the campaign.

on OSHA: It was the Gore Taskforce of 1996 that called for (and got) massive revisions in the way OSHA operates -- downsizing its bureaucracy and (according to pundits) reducing its scope and power. As OSHA's Connie Behee says: "The new OSHA has moved beyond the old focus of punishing employers who fail to meet all its standards. People will know that we are there to help, not to nail them." For this change in policy, Gore has since awarded OSHA many of his own so-called "Hammer Awards" for safety and environmental excellence.

Overall: Called by the League of Conservation Voters the "most knowledgeable on the environment" of any presidential candidate ever, Gore has called for making the next ten years the "Environment Decade," an initiative that includes 1) Dedicating part of the expected budget surplus to create a new National Energy Security and Environment Trust Fund; 2) Protecting forests, rivers and public lands; 3) Ensuring that the nation's air and water are cleaned up; 4) Encouraging smarter growth and more livable communities; 5) Investing more in conservation, renewable energy and in fast-growing technologies that combat pollution; and 6) Taking steps -- not just in this country, but everywhere in the world -- to reverse the rise in global warming.

Criticism: Gore has recently come under fire for accepting campaign contributions from a New Jersey mall development corporation intent on erecting a shopping mecca on 500 acres of undeveloped New Jersey wetlands. Noted environmentalist Joseph Kennedy notes: "It is disappointing to see Al Gore, who I admire, succumb to this kind of mercenary approach."

Information collected from: Reuters, the candidates' personal web pages, www.lcv.org, voters.com, and issues2000.org.

Heavy Lifting

No doubt you've heard the old adage: when lifting heavy objects, bend from the knees and not the waist in order to guard against painful back injury. And though this probably goes through your mind every time you lift something (or help someone move) it has recently been discovered why so many of us ignore this sound advice.



A study in France found that squatting to grab something (the correct way) is actually harder on the heart than bending from the waist. Thus, most people choose to ignore the advice to use their knees because it expends more energy.

An estimated four in five adults develops lower back pain at some point in their lives. So though it may feel more taxing, keeping your back straight and lifting from the knees is still sound advice to avoid later, often debilitating back pain. And don't lift more than 50 pounds at one time.

If you have a condition in which an increased heart rate might prove dangerous, then you should ask your doctor before lifting anything heavy.

Kitchen Bacteria



With a nationwide rise in *e.coli* infections and flesh-eating bacteria outbreaks, most people are more aware of the dangers of bacteria, esp. when preparing food. But there are a number of overlooked steps you can take in your kitchen or break room to help combat the onslaught of microscopic invaders.

Dr. Russell Broaddus, a pathologist at Ben Taub General Hospital in Houston, suggests the following steps to keep your food area bacteria-free.

- Detach your can opener blade and scrub it with a cloth in hot water for at least two minutes.
- Always scrub your cutting boards with hot water.
- Clean your countertops, refrigerator doors, microwave keypad, and cabinet handles with a cloth soaked in hot, soapy water.
- For several minutes, rinse cloths with steaming hot water and soap. Replace sponges often to ensure they don't become a source of cross-contamination.

Be sure to use antibacterial soap for these tasks. These steps are also applicable in or near a lab environment since other contaminants may also be present in these locations.

Meet the D.O.E.S. Staff



Name: Mahdi Fahim
Title: Environmental Technician III

New to the D.O.E.S. Safety Services team this year is Mahdi Fahim, currently an Environmental Technician III.

Mahdi's main job is to conduct testing of all fume hoods under the D.O.E.S. jurisdiction in order to certify them as safe. Fume hoods are tested once a year through a variety of different procedures to determine their overall effectiveness.

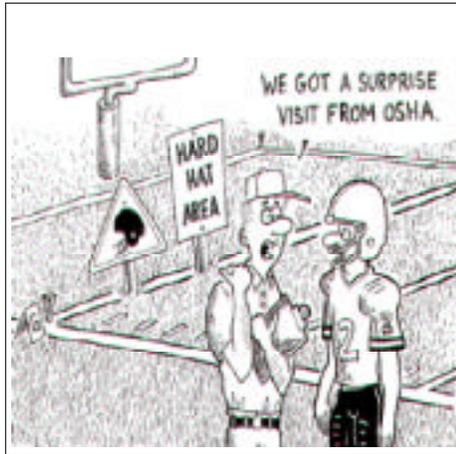
The cycle of fume hood testing is currently over and Mahdi will next be conducting new ASHRAE testing, for which he has been certified and trained. He is very excited about the new ASHRAE testing because of its use of new technology which allows us to offer a true performance evaluation.

Mahdi is originally from Iran and served a tenure as Safety Officer there at a major industrial power plant before coming to America. He is very excited about his work here and says of his time here so far: "The people are very friendly and make you feel like you're at home."

Know When to Roll Them



Riding a bicycle or using your rollerblades to get to work can be a healthy, environmentally-safe means of travel. And with school back in session many students feel the same way -- riding bikes, rollerblades, and even those new push-scooters to and from class. However, **these types of wheeled vehicles are not allowed to be used inside CWRI buildings.** Bikes and rollerblades may not be used in the halls or (even worse) in classrooms or labs. If one of your students does so, take them aside after class and politely explain to them that it is against the rules and that they may use their bike or blades only for travel to and from the building itself; they must leave the bike outside and take their rollerblades off before entering. There are no exceptions to this rule. If you want you can tell them that such equipment may be confiscated if wrongfully used.



Questions? Comments? Suggestions?

Email the Editor at bjr8 or talk to any member of the D.O.E.S. staff.

Department of Occupational and Environmental Safety

Staff

Dr. W. David Sedwick (wds), Director and RSO
 Richard Dell (rxd7), Asst. Dir., Safety Services
 Dr. Bill Stephany (wps3), Asst. Dir., Radiation Safety
 Richard Harley (rxh2), Loss Prevention Specialist
 Todd Crawley (tac9), Facilities Manager
 Felice Thornton-Porter, Q.A. Specialist (fst2)
 Shirley Mele (smm5), Dept. Administrator
 Gwendolyn Cox-Johnson (gxc13), Dept. Assistant 2
 Erick Adam Sanders (eas16), Dept. Assistant 1
 Brad Ricca (bjr8), Technical Writer

Chemical Safety

Robert Latsch, Specialist (rnl2)
 Marc Rubin, Eng. II (mdr6)
 Paige Wietelmann, Specialist (pew2)
 Clinton Giannetti, Technician (cmg4)
 Mahdi Fahim, Technician (mhf6)

Radiation Safety

Karen Janiga, Specialist (kej2)
 Tammy Taylor, Technician (trt2)
 Yelena Tigay, Technician (yxt13)
 Edward Traverso, Specialist (ejt)
 Greg Wojtkiewicz, Technician (grw4)

Department of Occupational and Environmental Safety Case Western Reserve University
 216-368-2906/2907 FAX: 216-368-2236
 (E-mail) does@po.cwru.edu (WWW) <http://does.cwru.edu>

Safety News For the Campus Community