UMS Safety Support Updates, News and Other Topics of Interest
October 2016

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This Month's Topic Reminder – Electrical Safety

Did you know that the OSHA standard (1919.334) requires that flexible cord sets (extension cords) must be visually inspected before use on any shift for external defects (such as loose parts, deformed and missing pins, or damage to outer jacket or insulation) and for evidence of possible internal damage (such as pinched or crushed outer jacket)?

When you do your workplace audits, you should also take a look at the extension cords in use. Ensure that is adequate for the load and the right type and that only three-wire type extension cords are used. Check that the ground prong has not been removed. They should not be running through walls, doors, and ceiling, or under rugs. Check that they don't present a tripping hazards. If you see extension cords being used in lieu of fixed wiring (in other words, more than 90 days) you should contact your facilities management department to have additional outlets installed or relocate the equipment.

If you have any questions about electrical safety, please contact us at sem@maine.edu or give us a call at 581-4055.

Lab Safety Incident Report

Recently, an incident occurred in which a UMaine graduate student accidentally splashed toluene into an eye. The department Research Scientist and Safety Officer composed a letter to all his lab workers, and we'd like to share excerpts (omitting the department name, names, date, etc.) of this letter because we feel it's relevant to any UMS labs. The important message that can be gained, is that no matter how small the sample of a chemical is, you should still be wearing your personal protective equipment.

> This letter is to remind all lab personnel of proper procedures in order to prevent such an event or similar events.
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> The incident involved a small amount of sample (about 3 ml) in a centrifuge tube. The sample splashed into the eyes of the person involved, causing severe pain. Personal protective equipment (PPE) was not used at the time of the incident. The student used the eye wash station, 911 was called, and paramedics transported the student to the hospital where the student's eye was flushed with two bags of saline solution. Most important, the student is fine with no long term damage.
>
> 1. The lesson here is that proper PPE must be used regardless of the size of the sample. When a chemical is involved, even a small amount, we cannot skip using gloves, goggles, fume hoods, and lab coats or aprons. At a minimum, goggles are required when dealing with chemicals so that a splash cannot drip down into the eye.
> 2. A second lesson learned concerns the transport of the sample. When transporting a chemical, either as a sample or a bottle, use an appropriate transfer bucket.
> 3. Once the incident occurred, other students immediately came to the aid of the injured students and appropriate people were immediately notified. This was key as lab and University trained staff quickly responded with medical treatment. We want to remind everyone that if an incident or accident occurs make sure you notify the appropriate people such as your supervisor, or safety officer, or lab director.

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This notification is so that we can make sure you get the proper medical treatment and we can put procedures in place to avoid similar incidents from occurring in the future.

4. One thing to note. Have everyone in the lab try the eye wash at the sink in the lab. If an accident occurs which requires the eye wash station everyone will know how to use it.

Our goal is to make the lab a safe place to work. If we follow the safety protocols, we can minimize the chances of injury.

Spot the Safety Violation(s)

UMS campus work-area image(s)

NOTE: When we observe these hazards, we immediately notify the area supervisor or the campus Facilities Management.

What Were They Thinking?

<u>NOT</u> UMS campus work-area image(s)

This 'Tic Tracer' – a non-contact voltage tester, lights up (indicating a presence of voltage).