

Winter Term 09: Safety Memorandum

- **Hazardous waste / chemical storage management: the DEQ inspection**

The recent (Fall 08) inspection of the Department of Chemistry by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) revealed some shortcomings with our handling of hazardous waste. Specifically, numerous examples of inadequately labeled waste containers were identified, and there were also some problems with storage of chemicals in inappropriate or failing containers. Please remember that any container being used to store a chemical must be provided with a neatly written/printed information label that clearly identifies the contents using accurate terminology (avoid abbreviations or acronyms that can be misleading). If the container being used to store an old stock compound begins to fail (e.g., cracking plastic or perished rubber seal), then the contents should be transferred to a new & properly labeled replacement container.

Waste containers should be clearly identified as such and hazards associated with contents noted (e.g., "WASTE ACETONE; Flammable"). The waste container should have some sort of secondary containment vessel underneath it (e.g., a tray) and it should NOT be placed in a sink. Unless new waste is being added to the container, it should remain suitably capped.

Finally, please remember that EH&S will collect and dispose of unwanted chemicals free of charge within a few days of receiving a request for pick-up. Complete guides to chemical storage and hazardous waste disposal (with link to web pick-up request) can be found at:

<http://oregonstate.edu/ehs/bulletin/si30.html>
<http://oregonstate.edu/ehs/hwpages/index.html>

- **Fire alarms: a remember**

Last month's accidental triggering of the fire alarm system highlighted that a few individuals are unsure of what to do in the event of an emergency. Simply put, if the fire alarm sounds, everybody should vacate the building and assemble by the parking lot. Experiments that may cause significant danger in their own right if left unattended should be *quickly* rendered safe (e.g., hotplate switched off etc.) before researchers leave their laboratories.

<http://oregonstate.edu/dept/budgets/SAFManual/SAF102.htm>

- **Use of personal protective equipment in laboratories: a cautionary incident report**

During a recent fatal accident at UCLA, a researcher in a chemical laboratory set herself on fire while dispensing a pyrophoric substance incorrectly. The individual was working alone and was not wearing a laboratory coat which exacerbated the injuries sustained. Please remember to wear task appropriate PPE at all times when working in our laboratories and to ask for help if you are challenged by an unfamiliar procedure.

<http://www.rsc.org/chemistryworld/News/2009/January/23010903.asp>

- **New laboratory hazard warning signs**

PI's that have not already done so should complete request forms for new signs for *each of their laboratories* as soon as possible. Forms and instructions can be found at:

<http://oregonstate.edu/ehs/bulletin/si28.html>