

Safety Is An Attitude

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Environmental Health and Safety Newsletter

Spring 2001

Waste Minimization – Help is on the Way

by Tonya Bernadt

Do you have waste minimization ideas and just don't know who to turn to for assistance? If your answer is yes, you are in luck. EHS has expanded its Waste Minimization Program and hired me, Tonya Bernadt, as the Waste Minimization Coordinator for UNL. I was born and raised in the Lincoln area and since childhood have had a great interest in the environment. I graduated from UNL in August 2000 with a BS in Natural Resources. Working as an intern in the Household Hazardous Waste Program at the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department for two years helped me gain the experience necessary to do this job.

The Waste Minimization Program has been set up to target specific departments in the university system that generate large amount of chemicals, or very toxic chemicals. However, other departments that are in need of help are also encouraged to take advantage of the program. Access to a Waste Minimization Coordinator will give departments a chance to reduce wastes without having to do all of the work. Better yet, the waste minimization proposal program provides departments with an opportunity to obtain funding to implement waste minimization strategies. In the past, EHS has funded many minimization activities, but departments had to initiate the projects. Money

is still available for waste minimization assistance and I am here to help do the research *and* assist with writing proposals.

Specific information about the goals of the Waste Minimization Program is posted on the EHS Web Site at <http://bifrost.unl.edu/ehs> (click on Subject Index and select Waste Minimization). A few projects currently in the works include a mercury thermometer exchange with Biochemistry. Under this project, hazardous mercury-containing thermometers will be replaced with new environmentally-safe thermometers. The disposal costs will be covered by the manufacturer of the Enviro-Safe units. This is an important project because it eliminates potential exposure to mercury from broken thermometers.

I am also working with the Chemistry department. Reclaiming solvents for reuse and using a different approach to extraction experiments to reduce the amount of solvent needed are two ideas I am currently researching.

Two other projects that can benefit the entire campus are resuming the UNSCRAP project and developing an on-line waste minimization resource library. The intended goal of the resource library



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Waste Management Update – Aerosol Cans

Empty spray cans aren't really empty most of the time. Even when they don't spray anymore, they still contain a small amount of liquid in the bottom. Additionally, aerosol cans can rupture when heated. For these reasons, the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) considers aerosol cans to be hazardous waste when disposed.

Therefore, all empty or unwanted aerosol cans must be collected by EHS. They must NOT be thrown in the garbage. This includes everything that comes in an aerosol can, (e.g., paints, hairspray, deodorizer, contact cleaner, etc.).

Following these simple rules will ensure compliance with applicable regulations:

- Do not discard aerosol cans in the garbage, even when they are emptied of propellant.
- **All empty and unwanted aerosol cans must be placed inside a metal container with a lid while awaiting collection by EHS.**
 - If you use a lot of aerosol cans, contact EHS so that we can set you up with a collection drum in your immediate work area.
 - If you only use a few aerosol cans, you can place your unwanted aerosol cans in a common-use drum supplied for your building. If you do not know the specific location of the common-use drum for your building, contact EHS.
- Label the aerosol collection container/drum (if not already labeled) as "Aerosol Cans." If you are using a container supplied by EHS to collect aerosol cans, ensure that the labeling on the drum remains legible.

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New EHS Documents

EHS is continually revising and developing new Safe Operating Procedures (SOPs). You can find the following new or revised Waste Management SOPs on the EHS Web Site at <http://bifrost.unl.edu/ehs> (click Subject Index, then Waste Management):

- Items Prohibited From Trash Cans and Dumpsters (03/01)
- Sewer Disposal List (01/01)
- Paint and Paint-Related Materials (01/01)
- Disposal of Office Items (01/01)
- Mercury-Containing Items (01/01)
- Aerosol Can Collection (02/01)

- Fluorescent Light Tubes (02/01)
- Computer Parts and Electronic Equipment (01/01)

Also, eighteen new Chemical Safety SOPs have been developed from the UNL Chemical Hygiene Plan and Hazard Communication Plan. The Chemical Safety SOPs are also posted on the EHS Web Site (click Subject Index, then Chemical Safety).

To view all EHS Fact Sheets and SOPs, go to the EHS Web Site, click Documents by Type, then Fact Sheets/SOPs.

Message from the Campus University Safety Committee (CUSC) Chair, Paul Harmon:

Safety training is becoming increasingly important in the battle to reduce injuries and accidents on campus. The lack of safety training and safety awareness on campus leads to many tangible losses: Employees and their employers pay dearly in injuries, illnesses, and even deaths, as well as property damage. Lost workdays, sick pay, insurance, and workers' compensation costs add up quickly. The money that goes for those payments is not available for other more beneficial investments, such as, higher salaries, new equipment, and research and development.

The lack of safety training has many intangible costs as well. Unsafe procedures are often reflected in poor and inefficient work habits, which make productivity and quality improvement hard to achieve. Unless workers are trained and motivated to use that training on the job, their employers will fall behind in today's very competitive marketplace and workers' jobs will be at risk.

All employees need ongoing training to be able to handle their jobs correctly, efficiently, and safely. Safety awareness is a part of everyone's job descriptions. I encourage all employees at the UNL to take advantage of the training provided by Environmental Health and Safety and do their part in ensuring a safe work environment for all of us.

Editor: Check out EHS training opportunities on the EHS Web Site at <http://bifrost.unl.edu/ehs>.

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is to post feasible waste minimization project ideas that may be applied here at UNL. The UNSCRAP program began in the early 1990s at UNL and is designed to collect and hold usable chemicals that departments no longer need or want, and redistribute them (for free) to departments who can use them. The UNSCRAP collection was cleared out in anticipation of Y2K, but we are now ready to build our supplies. If you are looking for free chemicals, check us out first! More information on the UNL Waste Minimization Resource Library and UNSCRAP Program can be found by accessing the EHS Web Site.

If you have ideas on how to reduce the hazardous materials you are generating, please call me at 472-5038. I look forward to discussing your goals, helping you research equipment, and writing funding proposals. Reducing the amount of waste we generate is just one way to help keep the UNL community healthy and safe.

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- Ensure that the lid on the collection drum remains closed at all times.
- When the collection container/drum is $\frac{3}{4}$ full, attach a Hazardous Materials Collection Tag and submit the top copy of the tag to EHS. EHS will collect the cans and take them for recycling.

Whenever possible, avoid using products that come in aerosol cans. If you can avoid the use of aerosol cans, you can avoid some regulatory requirements. If you need an aerosol collection container or require assistance establishing a collection drum in your work area, please contact EHS at 472-4925.

The Training Corner



Core Training

May 17 1:00 – 4:00pm

Forklift Training

May 15 8:30 – 1:30am

Supervisor Training

May 24 1:00 – 5:00pm

More classes scheduled as needed

X-Ray Training

Upon request – please call to schedule

Radiation Safety Basic Training

April 3 and 10 1:30 – 5:00pm

May 1 and 8 1:30 – 5:00pm

June 5 and 12 1:30 – 5:00pm

July 3 and 10 1:30 – 5:00pm

IATA Training

Upon request – please call to schedule

To register, call EHS at (402) 472-4925 or email, ehs@unl.edu. Check out our web site for more training information or to take our on-line training courses.

*** All class held in the EHS Training Room, 3630 East Campus Loop.**

EHS Welcomes Chad and Nick

Chad Beerstrauch is our new Hazardous Materials Technician for the Environmental Programs unit. Chad previously worked for General Fire and Safety as a fire suppression system inspector. Chad is a 1996 graduate of Southeast Community College with a degree in Fire Protection Technology. You will probably see Chad out on campus, collecting hazardous waste and helping customers with their chemical waste management needs. Chad can be reached at (402) 472-0288.

Nick Huser is our new Assistant Director of Occupational Health and Safety. Nick is filling the position left open by Emily Ranken's departure. Nick will oversee programs such as biosafety, chemical safety, general safety, and indoor air quality. Nick's first project will be completion of the EHS Virtual Manual.



Nick Huser

Chad Beerstrauch

Nick comes to us from K-State, where he developed the safety program for the Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service, and the College of Agriculture. Before that, Nick worked at Phillips Petroleum as an Industrial Hygienist and Safety Analyst. Nick can be reached at (402) 472-9554.

It Happens Here!

Recently an employee was injured while using a razor scraper to remove a label from a piece of glass. During the process, the employee's hand slipped and the razor scraper slid into the employee's other hand, cutting the little finger. Here are some hints for preventing this kind of injury:

- If possible, try to soak off the label or adhesive before resorting to using a scraping tool.
- Use a razor scraper with an automatic retractable blade. In this type of scraper, the blade is only exposed when downward pressure is applied.
- Wear cut-resistant gloves.
- Always scrape away from your body.
- When possible, use a clamp to secure the item being scraped. This will free your other hand from being near the razor.
- Carefully replace dull or damaged blades and dispose of them properly.



In another accident, an employee chose to stand on a rolled-up carpet instead of a stepstool when doing some overhead work. When the carpet roll shifted, the employee fell and suffered injuries to multiple body parts. Before starting a job, ensure that you have all the tools, such as a step stool, required to do the job safely and successfully. Preplanning a job can keep you safe!

EHS Listserv Available

The UNL Environmental Health and Safety Information listserv is now available. The listserv was created to serve two purposes: to distribute announcements regarding new EHS services, programs, and documents; and to provide a forum for the UNL community to discuss environmental, health, and safety issues. The listserv is specifically targeted to supervisors at UNL, who bear significant EHS responsibilities.

EHS will post new information to the listserv as it becomes available. Members are asked to post questions regarding problems or concerns they are having. The listserv is set to "digest" mode, so that a maximum of one message will be sent to members each day. So far, traffic has been light, with about 1 message every week or so. To subscribe, please send an email message to <listserv@unl.edu>. In the message field of the email, enter SUBSCRIBE EHSINFO.



Spring Weather Safety

1. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln is in a _____ earthquake zone.
2. In case of a fire in your building, keep _____ if there is smoke.
3. If a tornado is in the area, move away from windows and do not use the _____.
4. In case of a flash flood, be alert for fire hazards, such as _____ and _____.
5. You need to be aware of the _____ in your building in case of a tornado.
6. If lightening threatens during a storm, do not use the _____, as lightening may strike the lines outside.
7. For more information regarding weather safety, check the _____ pages in the UNL Centrex.

Elevator
Low

Telephone
Shelter area

Moderate
Flammable materials

Broken gas lines
Orange

Answers are posted at <http://bifrost.unl.edu/ehs> (click on Newsletters)

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University of Nebraska-Lincoln



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