

In this issue of the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Listserv – February 7, 2019

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1. Do YOU Have a Current Emergency Action Plan?

The purpose of an emergency action plan is to facilitate and organize employer and employee actions during workplace emergencies. Well-developed emergency plans and proper employee training, such that employees understand their roles and responsibilities within the plan, will result in fewer and less severe employee injuries and less collateral damage to the ongoing research or facilities during emergencies.

Putting together an emergency action plan that deals with specifics of your work site/building is not difficult. It involves describing how employees should respond to different types of emergencies, taking into account your specific work site layout, structural features, and emergency systems.

The UNL Emergency Planning and Preparedness website contains a template (“Faculty, Staff & Depts.” tab, “Have a Plan” section). Assistance and a fillable version is available upon request from Mark Robertson, UNL Emergency Management Coordinator (preparedness@unl.edu). While the template is designed for developing a **Building Emergency Action Plan**, it can readily be modified to develop a facility or specific area action plan.

Does your department/area/facility already have an Emergency Action Plan? Emergency action plans should be reviewed at least once a year and more often if necessary to reflect changes in personnel or other specific attributes of the area/facility.

All workers should be familiar with the emergency action plan, including how they will be notified of an emergency, at least two safe routes of escape from the building, and where they can shelter-in-place, if needed. In an emergency people tend to freeze, so they need to know what to do without having to think about it—that means training. If workers have additional roles to play in an

emergency, such as shutting down equipment or assisting disabled co-workers, they must be trained in those duties as well. In addition to regular review/ retraining, make sure that all new workers are trained on the emergency action plan.

Resources

- Emergency Planning & Preparedness: Building Emergency Action Plan <http://emergency.unl.edu/Building%20Emergency%20Action%20Plan%20Template.pdf>
- EHS **Emergency Preparedness** Safe Operating Procedures <http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/emergency-preparedness>
- EHS **Emergency Preparedness** web-based training <http://ehs.unl.edu/web-based-training#EP>

2. Note Recent Revisions to Biosafety Safe Operating Procedures

Recently, 17 Biosafety Safe Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been revised. Notification of the SOPs updated and a brief description of the change(s) have been published in the “Revised SOPs” section of the January listserv and this issue.

Online under the Biosafety Category of Safe Operating Procedures you can see the revision date in parentheses after the SOP name. Please carefully review all the Biosafety SOPs with the (12/18) or (1/19) revision date that do or may apply to your research.

Resources

- EHS **Biosafety** SOPs <https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/biosafety>

3. Situational Preparedness – Test Your Knowledge

Situational preparedness is so important that we will be looking at various aspects over time, as well as providing resources to assist you to “be prepared” for whatever situations you may encounter at UNL while driving, bicycling or walking. Let’s begin by testing your knowledge about distracted driving. First, take the test developed by Geico: <https://www.geico.com/more/driving/auto/car-safety-insurance/distracted-driving-quiz-test-your-knowledge/>. How did you do?

Recently the University of Iowa explored why cell phone use leads to distracted driving. New research shows that even a simple conversation can affect your brain’s ability of focus. This study mimicked a cell phone or passenger conversation while driving by asking questions. Researchers tracked eye

movements and found that those answering questions during the study took twice as long to see a new object on the screen compared to those who were not asked any questions or were not required to answer. Engaging in activities other than driving slows your ability to pay attention to surroundings and potential new hazards.

Conversation seems effortless but it's very complex. Every time the brain is distracted, the time to disengage from one action and initiate another action gets longer until eventually drivers are oblivious of their surroundings. Research has demonstrated cell phone use also reduces a driver's field of vision, so drivers end up with "tunnel vision." In addition, eye movements lag. The "cognitive load" on drivers makes them less likely to detect and react to the appearance of a new object. This concept also applies to conversations with others in the vehicle.

Resources

- Distracted Driving (various articles)." *GEICO More*, GEICO More, 28 Mar. 2018, <https://www.geico.com/more/?s=distracted+driving>.
- Stewart, Richard. "UI Study Explores Why Cell Phone Use Leads to Distracted Driving." *Iowa Now*, University of Iowa, 8 June 2017, <https://now.uiowa.edu/2017/06/ui-study-explores-why-cell-phone-use-leads-distracted-driving>.

4. Safety Shorts – It Starts With You

This series features links to short safety resource(s) each month. Provided this month are resources related to distracted driving. Do you know as much as you think you do?

- **IDOT Distracted Driving** (Illinois Dept. of Public Safety, 2:15 min.) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g0UTXKWbPuo>
- **Distracted Driving** (Hershel Venkat Talluri, 2.25 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7eFH3y_SIO0
- **It Starts with You: Zero Tolerance for Distracted Driving** (Sentry, 12:47 min.) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hxt9SUHQnQA>

NOTE: Resources are provided for informational purposes only. Publication does not in any way endorse a particular company or product or affect current UNL policies and procedures.

5. EPA Inspection Info

UNL is subject to unannounced inspections by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and/or Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ), to assess compliance with waste management regulations. These inspections typically occur every 2-3 years. You should always be prepared.

To make sure you are and remain in compliance with any applicable regulations, review the EHS **Waste Management** Safe Operating Procedures (SOPs). If you use/dispose of chemicals or any of the other items listed, YOU need to be prepared for a potential audit. As a reminder, if you are the subject of such an inspection:

- Review the **Items/Materials Prohibited from Trash Cans and Dumpsters** SOP.
- Review your work area. Make sure that all containers are closed, properly labeled, in good condition, and located in the same area where the waste was generated.
- If an inspector visits your work location, answer their questions honestly, but answer **only** the question asked. There is no need to volunteer information. After you have answered the inspector's question, wait silently and patiently for their next question.
- Avoid the temptation to keep talking because silence is uncomfortable. If you don't know the answer to a question - **don't guess** just say that you don't know. You may direct the inspector to your supervisor or someone else who may know the answer.

If you have questions or wonder if this applies to you, contact Tony Lloyd, Senior Environmental Specialist, alloyd4@unl.edu or 402-472-4942.

Resources

- **State or Federal Hazardous Waste Inspections**
SOP http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-state_fed_inspections.pdf
- **Waste Management** SOPs <http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/waste-management>
- **Items/Materials Prohibited From Trash Cans and Dumpsters**
SOP http://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-dumpster_ban.pdf

6. Carbon Monoxide, a Silent Danger

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas that can kill you. It is found in fumes produced by burning fuel in cars, trucks, gas grills, furnaces...and other engines. Most common symptoms of CO exposure are headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain

and confusion. These symptoms are like the flu. Too much CO can make you pass out or kill you.

Some tips to prevent CO poisoning:

- Do not operate fuel-burning tools/equipment/machines (e.g., camp stoves, heaters, forklifts, power washers, generators, etc.) indoors. Use battery or electric powered alternatives.
- Install a CO detector and regularly test the unit/change batteries.
- Have your gas-powered home heating system serviced by a qualified technician yearly.
- Make sure gas-powered appliances are vented properly.
- Never use a gas range/oven for heating.
- Never burn charcoal indoors.
- Never leave a vehicle idling in a garage, even if the garage door is open.

Resources

- “CDC - Carbon Monoxide Poisoning - Frequently Asked Questions.” *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, National Center for Environmental Health, 21 Mar. 2018, www.cdc.gov/co/faqs.htm.
- OSHA (Carbon Monoxide) Fact Sheet https://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_General_Facts/carbonmonoxide-factsheet.pdf.

7. EHS Now on Twitter

Find us and follow us on Twitter! Environmental Health and Safety is now on Twitter. Check us out and follow us @UNLincolnEHS.

8. Safety Poster – What ‘s in your freezer?

EHS has developed a number of safety posters of relevance to the campus community. Does your laboratory freezer look like this? Resolve to check over your freezer and clean out, even if it does not look as bad as the poster shown below. And you can update your inventory at the same time!



Order your FREE poster(s) today. Contact ehs@unl.edu or 402-472-4925 with your name, campus mailing address, and quantity desired.

Resources

- Safety Posters <http://ehs.unl.edu/safety-posters>

9. How Are We Doing?

Environmental Health and Safety is committed to excellent customer service and offers a *Customer Satisfaction Survey* as an easy method for the campus community to provide feedback on our services and staff. By taking a few moments to complete the survey (<http://ehs.unl.edu/survey>), you will be helping us to identify areas where we might need to focus our attention.

In order to effectively evaluate potential areas for improvement, please provide specific information or examples and your name and contact information. The Director, Brenda Osthus, follows up on all submissions. We greatly appreciate your participation.

Please feel free to contact Brenda Osthus, EHS Director, at 402-472-4927 or bosthus1@unl.edu if you would rather communicate outside the parameters of this survey.

10. Revised Safe Operating Procedures

- *Aerosol Can Collection* <https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-aerosol.pdf>

Removed reference to “foot pedals” or “securely closing lids with Velcro.” The latest recommendation states “to keep containers closed.”

- ***Biohazard Door Postings*** https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-bio-door_postings.pdf
Updated with new information about changes to door postings for greenhouses and plant research labs. The sign has been simplified and some of the previously required information has been removed. This change is based on feedback from faculty and staff.
- ***Disposing of Biohazardous Materials, Including Recombinant Nucleic Acids*** <https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-bio-dispose.pdf>
Updated to be consistent with the Autoclave Operation and Performance Testing SOP and include specific guidance for soil and other plant material. New guidance was added for disposal of contaminated sharps and pseudo-sharps like pipettes and pipette tips.
- ***Guidance for Collection and Storage of Human Samples*** https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-bio-guidance_collection_storage_human_samples.pdf
Updated compliance information pertaining to IBC, IRB, and Scientific Research Oversight Committee (SROC). Updated shipping compliance information.
- ***HIV and HBV Research Laboratories*** <https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-hivresearch.PDF>
Revised to remove reference to HIV/HBV production facilities as those do not exist at UNL. References to EHS SOPs updated or added as appropriate.
- ***Incident Reporting – National Institute of Health (NIH) Guidance*** https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-bio-incident_reporting-NIH.pdf
Revised to remove specific examples of incidents that are reportable to NIH. The sample form was edited to only present the relevant sections of information that a PI or other lab staff member would need to provide when reporting an incident.
- ***Microbiological Laboratory Practices*** https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-bio-microbiological_lab_practices.pdf
Name changed from ***Standard and Special Microbiological Practices***. Revised to provide a concise description of accepted

practices and procedures in microbiological laboratories compiled from accepted national reference sources. References to EHS SOPs have been updated as appropriate.

➤ ***Necropsy Biosafety*** <https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-bio-necropsyarea.pdf>

Updated to add reference sources and provide updated guidance for procedures conducted during animal necropsies. Updated procedures include revised requirements for PPE use and respiratory protection. New guidance added for exposure to potentially infectious aerosols and decontamination of tissue samples by autoclaving. Guidance related to reporting of suspect select agent and toxin identification from diagnostic necropsy was updated with the current list of agents that require immediate reporting and examples of reportable select agent exposure situations were removed.

➤ ***Preparing a Laboratory Biosafety Manual***

https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-bio-preparing_biosafety_manual.pdf

Minor revisions to wording. Changed references to rDNA to include synthetic nucleic acid molecules.

Remember...SAFETY IS AN ATTITUDE!

Environmental Health and Safety

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