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1. Are You Familiar with Your Emergency Action Plan?

Your department/facility/area should have an Emergency Action Plan 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 ongoing research or facilities due to 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. 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.

The UNL Safety At Nebraska Emergency Preparation website (<https://safety.unl.edu/preparation>) contains a template in addition to other useful preparedness information. Assistance and a fillable version is available upon request from Mark Robertson, UNL Emergency Management Director. While the template is designed for developing a **Building Emergency Action Plan**, it can readily be modified to develop a facility or area-specific emergency action plan.

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.

Do you know where to find your department/area/facility's Emergency Action Plan? Have you reviewed the plan in the last 6-12 month? Now is the time.

Resources

- Building/Department Emergency Action Plan
<https://safety.unl.edu/doc/Template%20Building%20Emergency%20Action%20Plan.pdf>
- EHS SOP **Emergency Preparedness**
<https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/emergency-preparedness>
- EHS web-based training **Emergency Preparedness** web-based training
<https://ehs.unl.edu/web-based-training#EP>

2. The ABCs of AEDs

An AED (Automatic External Defibrillator) is a smart, portable device that can be used to help heart attack victims. Because of their simple design, verbal cues, and ease of operation, AEDs can be safely used by a member of the general public. An AED contains a power pack and two electrodes. The electrodes are applied to strategic locations on the chest of the victim and the power pack delivers a shock when a button is pushed. If effective, the shock restores normal electrical rhythm to the heart. An AED will not deliver a shock unless it first detects an abnormal heart rhythm.

Following are the ABCs of AED use:

- A. Do you know the location of the nearest AED in your workplace? Like fire extinguishers and other fixtures, we often walk past AEDs and don't really notice them. In the event of an emergency, it is important to be able to quickly retrieve an AED for use.
- B. To assure AEDs will be functional in an emergency, routine maintenance is required. Batteries are one of the most important parts of an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) system. To make sure an AED will work perfectly in an emergency, periodically check batteries as directed by the manufacturer to make sure they are in good working condition. Replace the batteries when needed. The manufacturer will provide additional maintenance instructions, such as periodic replacement of electrodes and pads.
- C. AED batteries contain heavy metals such as mercury, lead, cadmium, and nickel which must be properly disposed. Complete and submit a Hazardous Materials Collection Tag for disposal through Environmental Health and Safety.

If it becomes necessary to discard the entire AED unit, contact EHS for pickup and disposal of the device by completing/submitting a Hazardous Materials Collection Tag.

Resources

- EHS SOP **Automatic External Defibrillators** <https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-AED.pdf>
- *How Often Should A Defibrillator Be Serviced?* | AED USA. (n.d.). AED USA Knowledge. https://www.aedusa.com/knowledge/how-often-should-a-defibrillator-be-serviced/?utm_source=google
- EHS SOP **Battery Disposal** <https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-batterydisposal.pdf>
- EHS SOP **Hazardous/Radioactive Material Collection Procedures** https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-chem_collection_procedures.pdf

3. Update on UNL Controlled Substances Disposal

In the past, a member of the EHS team maintained a controlled substance registration for the purpose of facilitating disposal of controlled substances used by other campus registrants. EHS recently changed the process so that no one on the EHS staff needs to maintain a registration. Under the new process, EHS will facilitate disposal by bringing a product called “RxDestroyer” to the registrant’s location. The registrant will then place the controlled substance in the RxDestroyer package and complete a Form 41 for their records.

This product meets DEA requirements for rendering controlled substances non-retrievable. To initiate the process, send a hazardous materials collection tag to EHS. **Ensure the tag clearly identifies the product as a controlled substance.** Please share this information with any of your colleagues who may hold DEA registrations or complete hazardous materials collection tags on behalf of a registrant. If you have questions on this change, contact Baillie Luff, Waste/DOT Manager, by email (bluff2@unl.edu) or phone (402.472.1556).

Resources

- Form DEA-41 https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/21cfr_reports/surrend/41_form.pdf

4. Extra Care Using Canned Air

Do you periodically use a canned air product to clean your computer keyboard? Canned air is not the air you breathe and as such may be hazardous if not used correctly. “Canned air products contain a gas that is mostly compressed into a liquid,” the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries states, adding that “a variety of gases are used in these products, and some are highly flammable.” With some formulations, frostbite can be another hazard associated with canned air. Before using canned air, read all label information to ensure hazard awareness and proper use.

When an aerosol container of canned air used at UNL is spent, the container must be disposed through EHS, either by submitting a Hazardous Materials Collection Tag or putting the spent container into your building’s existing EHS collection container. In addition to aerosol cans, there may be other items/materials used in an office setting at UNL that may not be disposed in trash cans/dumpsters. Review the Items/Materials Prohibited from **Trash Cans and Dumpsters** Safe Operating Procedure to familiarize yourself with those items/materials.

Resources

- *Take extra care when using canned air.* (2019, August 30). 2019-06-03 | Safety+Health.
<https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/18520-take-extra-care-when-using-canned-air>
- EHS SOP **Hazardous/Radioactive Material Collection Procedures**
https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-chem_collection_procedures.pdf
- EHS SOP **Items/Materials Prohibited From Trash Cans and Dumpsters** https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-dumpster_ban.pdf

5. Grain Bin Safety

Grain Bin Safety Week, February 19-25, 2023. Since 2014, Nationwide has been collaborating with industry leaders and agricultural professionals to raise awareness about grain bin dangers, provide education and share best safety practices for working in and around grain bins. Working around grain bins presents unique and serious hazards about which farm workers must be constantly vigilant.

Following are some major hazards and mitigation strategies:

- **Hazardous atmosphere (oxygen deficiency, toxic gases, allergens).**
Store only adequately dried grain to reduce spoilage. Keep insect/animal

infestations to a minimum. Regularly clean bin. Observe all restricted entry requirements, including testing of the atmosphere prior to entry.

- **Fire/Explosion.** Accumulations of grain dusts can create flammable/explosive atmospheres, so make sure ventilation systems are in good working order. Ensure grain dust accumulations are kept to a minimum with regular cleaning, especially near ignition sources. Ensure electrical connections meet code requirements.
- **Falls.** Working at heights in and around a grain bin poses a fall hazard. When performing tasks at elevated heights, fall protection is required.
- **Electrocution.** This hazard is often overlooked. An auger may come into contact with overhead wires while being moved unless locational awareness is maintained. Poles to dislodge crusted grain might contact overhead lines unless care is taken.
- **Entanglement.** Unguarded augers, PTOs, and other moving parts present an entanglement hazard, as does the sweep auger inside the bin. Ensure all equipment is properly guarded, avoid loose-fitting clothes, and do not operate the sweep auger while inside the bin.
- **Engulfment/Entrapment.** While loading/unloading operations present an obvious engulfment/entrapment hazard, stored grain itself is also dangerous. Air pockets can shift and cause stored grain to flow like a liquid. Do not enter grain bins during active loading/unloading. When possible, entry in the presence of grain should be conducted only when there is no alternative and then only while observing the following:
 - Grain is less than waist deep and applicable lockout/tagout procedures have been implemented to prevent grain addition, removal, or other movement.
 - The atmosphere in the bin is not hazardous, adequate ventilation has been established, and no work to be conducted in the bin has the potential to create a hazardous atmosphere.
 - A co-worker is present outside of the bin, verbal communication is maintained, and the co-worker has a readily available means of summoning emergency help.

Review EHS **Confined Space Awareness** and **Lockout/Tagout (LO/TO) for Machines & Equipment** web-based training, as well as **Lockout/Tagout for Machines & Equipment** Safe Operating Procedure to develop your safety plan.

Grain bin accidents tragically impact individual, families and entire communities. According to AgriSafe, 60% of documented grain entrapments between 1962 and 2019 were fatal. Watch out for yourself and those you are working with to prevent injury or death while working with grain handling and storage.

Resources

- *Grain Bin Safety Week – Nationwide*. (n.d.). <https://www.nationwide.com/lc/resources/farm-and-agribusiness/articles/grain-bin-safety-week>
- EHS SOP **Grain Bin Safety** https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-grain_bin_safety.pdf
- “Grain Bin Safety Week.” *AgriSafe Network*, 19 July 2021, <https://www.agrisafe.org/event/grain-bin-safety-week/>
- *National Education Center for Agricultural Safety*. (n.d.). <https://www.necasag.org/>
- *Don't become a statistic: Grain bin safety tips | Integrated Crop Management*. (n.d.). <https://crops.extension.iastate.edu/blog/kristina-tebockhorst/don%E2%80%99t-become-statistic-grain-bin-safety-tips>
- NFU (National Farmers Union) Farm Safety video series https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0B_GIRKHw4tDAY8-Pn_w-8_7g8okjCA-

6. Near Miss or Near Hit?

The Chancellor’s University Safety Committee (CUSC) is reaffirming their goal to focus more intensely on Near Miss/Close Call reporting and to also encourage reporting of unsafe practices. To support that effort, the EHS “*Near Miss/Close Call Incident Reporting Form*” allows for reporting of unsafe practices.

By reporting all near misses, often thought of as “close calls,” or unsafe practices, you are contributing to a safer and healthier campus environment. Information reported is shared throughout the University for educational/awareness purposes. Specific identifying information (e.g., names, departments, etc.) is not included in informational publications. Participation will benefit the entire campus community. Be assured that there is no risk of repercussions for reporting a situation or hazard.

A “near miss” can also be viewed as a “near hit!” Next time you see something and think, “This could have ended up very badly,” report that circumstance online to help your fellow workers throughout the university stay safe.

Resources

- Near-Miss/Close Call Incident Reporting Form <https://ehs.unl.edu/near-missclose-call-incident-reporting-form>

ADOPT SAFETY AS YOUR ATTITUDE – DON'T LEARN BY ACCIDENT!

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