

## LABORATORY SAFETY COMMITTEE

January 15, 2010

**TO:** All Laboratory Personnel

**FROM:** John Park, Laboratory Safety Committee

**SUBJECT:** January 4, 2010 Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

**Participants:** John Park, Max Overman, Jeanne Carter, Edith Henderson, Joe Jurgevich, Beth Swanson, Heather Parker

John spoke with Kent and Steve Kaasa regarding the issue of wearing headphones while working in the laboratory. Steve said that currently there are no OSHA regulations or rules regarding headphones in the lab setting. But he recommended that employees not wear earphones (or at least have one ear uncovered) while working with environmental samples or chemicals in the lab. Kent agreed with this recommendation, and it was decided that this recommendation will be incorporated into the Chemical Hygiene Plan (CHP). Please note the following:

- This applies to headphones (earphones, earbuds, etc.) used with electronic devices such as MP3 players (IPODs), CD players, etc.
- This recommendation only applies to when an employee is working with environmental samples (e.g., checking-in samples, digesting/extracting samples, and analyzing samples) or chemicals (e.g., reagent preparation). In those situations, if you are wearing headphones, please keep one ear uncovered.

Concerning solvent waste bottles in the semi-volatiles/pesticides extraction rooms, the bottles are dated and are being rotated such that older bottles are routinely replaced with new bottles. Ether is a small component of the solvent waste and the waste is transferred to the solvent waste barrels on a regular basis. This should prevent bottles containing ether waste from having time to form hydrogen peroxide crystals.

Max and Heather are putting together an inventory of old chemicals located in the solvent and acid storage rooms. This inventory list will be used to decide which chemicals should have highest priority to be removed, and will also be submitted to a waste-disposal company to obtain a price quote. Max will also work with the unit safety representatives to determine if there is any waste or old chemicals in the units that needs to be included on the inventory.

Max attended the Safety Audit Review Subcommittee meeting that was held on December 11, 2009, in the ESS conference room. During recent safety audits of the regional offices, Steve Kaasa has focused more on chemicals and MSDS forms in the sample prep areas. He noted in some audits that for chemicals there were bottles/containers that were not properly labeled (chemical identification, concentration, date of preparation). For MSDS forms, some forms were more than 10 years out of date. Steve asked whether shipments of sample preservative ampoules (acid, NaOH) from the central lab to the regional offices include MSDS forms. Joy confirmed that MSDS forms are in each box of ampoules(pre-packaged by the manufacturer).

Based on Steve's comments about MSDS forms in audits of the regional labs, Max asked the unit safety representatives to review the MSDS files for their units, as time permits, to be sure that MSDS forms are dated 2000 or later.

The next safety committee meeting is scheduled for February 1, 2010 at 10:30 a.m. Minutes were prepared by Max Overman and Jeanne Carter on January 7, 2010.

/mo/jc