

LABORATORY SAFETY COMMITTEE

March 20, 2012

TO: All Laboratory Personnel

FROM: John Park, Laboratory Safety Committee

SUBJECT: March 12, 2012 Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

Participants: Anne Chandler, Narayan Deo, Edith Henderson, Heather Morgan, Max Overman, John Park

Smoke Detectors: John reminded everyone to check the batteries for smoke detectors (and replace, if necessary). The change to Daylight Savings Time is good time to replace the batteries each year.

Weather Radios: The weather radios for the lab and modular building need to be checked, and batteries replaced (Max will check for the modular building and Anne will check for the lab). It was also agreed that the lab needs to purchase a new weather radio.

Building Renovations: There was discussion regarding the on-going renovations of the laboratory. Areas currently closed due to renovation include the metals analysis rooms and the acid storage room. Areas that are open but have not been completed include the receiving room. Several areas have been completed, with new ceiling tiles and lights.

The new fume hood motors still have to be completed, as well as connecting all of the lab fume hoods to the new trunk lines on the roof that run out to each end of the building. This work will take place in April, and each fume hood is likely to be out of service for one day. Once the fume hood work is completed, final testing of each hood will be done, as well as balancing of the air handling and fume hood controls.

Edith mentioned that everyone in her unit really appreciated how well their areas were cleaned up following renovation. The site manager, Jon, has done an outstanding job in cleaning the lab units and working with lab units with regards to scheduling of work. The renovations have certainly been challenging for all lab units, but Jon has helped make it easier.

One issue that has arisen from the installation of the new ceilings is that the pull handles for safety showers in the lab units have been blocked. The ceiling tiles around the pull handles were not cut wide enough for the handles to be pulled down for the shower to be activated. However, this has been fixed in all of the completed units. As other areas are completed, we'll check those showers and have the tiles fixed, if necessary.

EPCRA/Tier II Reporting: Max mentioned that the annual EPCRA/Tier II reporting for the laboratory was completed in February. The data were submitted to Steve Kaasa, who enters the information electronically. This reporting covers any chemicals stored on-site in large quantities, exceeding limits specified by EPCRA and Wake County. For 2011, only two chemicals exceeded the threshold limits: argon (storage tank) and methylene chloride (solvent storage room). There are plans to replace the current argon storage tank with a small tank, which would keep the lab below the reporting limit for argon for EPCRA, but we'd still be above the limit for Wake County (which is only 55 gallons).

ECD's: Anne reported that she had elicited price quotes from several companies for disposal of the old ECD's that are no longer in use in the Pesticides lab. Of these quotes, one company offered the most reasonable price that we have seen so far. Unfortunately, when the price quote and request were submitted to downtown, they were rejected for this fiscal year. Anne and Kent will continue to pursue this issue.

Safety Inspection: Anne, John, and Max conducted a safety inspection of the laboratory on February 6, 2012. Lab areas that were closed due to renovation were not inspected. There were a couple of discrepancies that were documented and have been remedied.

- Access to the sprinkler riser control was partially blocked by construction storage equipment; however, this can be readily moved if necessary.
- Room G059: The fume hood cabinet, which is connected to the general exhaust via a snorkel line, was not working. Anne requested that the connection be improved, and this was completed renovation of the room. However, this fume cabinet is now recommended as only be used for preparing sample dilutions and storage of reagent bottles and prepared standards. Preparation of standards and work with pure chemicals should be conducted under the fume hood in the adjacent room (Pesticides lab).
- Signs have been posted on all of the walk-in coolers to clarify that these coolers should never be used for storage of food or drink.
- There was a lighting issue in room G031-2 (organics storage), with several fluorescent bulbs not working. But the new light fixtures have been installed and lighting is now sufficient.

Anne, Max, and John will conduct a safety audit after the renovations are complete to verify that all safety items are working properly.

Receiving room: Heather asked about renovation work in the receiving room and how it might affect their ability to get samples checked in. The work crews have so far been very flexible in working around our schedules (as much as possible), so that shouldn't be a problem. The receiving area is scheduled to start having the new ceiling and lights installed on Friday, March 16.

Automatic gates: The automatic gates for the parking lot appear to be working very well. But one issue has arisen – the fire department needs to be kept up to date on the security code for opening the gates, in case they have to respond to an alarm on the weekend. There was an incident on a recent weekend when the fire alarm sounded and the fire department responded, but they did not know the security code for the gates. Anne and Kent will follow up on this issue.

A reminder to safety committee members: checks of the safety devices for each lab unit should be conducted and documented on a monthly basis. This includes eyewashes, safety showers, fire extinguishers, and smoke detectors. For safety hoods, please check every three months with the velometer (located in John's office). Hoods in areas undergoing renovation do not have to be checked until work is completed in the area; also note that the hoods have not undergone finally balancing and testing – if you see an issue with air flow in a hood, please contact Anne, John, or Max.

The next safety committee meeting is scheduled for April 9, 2012 at 10:30 a.m. Minutes were prepared by Max Overman and John Park on March 16, 2012. MO/JP