

LABORATORY SAFETY COMMITTEE
March 23, 2009

TO: All Laboratory Personnel

FROM: Ray Kelling, Laboratory Safety Committee

SUBJECT: March 9, 2009 Safety Committee Meeting

Participants: Mojisola Ajayi, Roy Byrd, Jeanne Carter, Anne Chandler, Sharif Creasman, Lori Good, Janet Hayes, Edith Henderson, Nick Jones, Ray Kelling, Jim Kimani, Yvette Lyde, Joan Styles, Beth Swanson, Angela Terry

David Wilson from Airgas (supplier of compressed gas cylinders for the Lab) gave a video presentation on the hazards associated with compressed gas chemical products. He referenced the MSDS sheets for more information about the chemical and physical hazards of the particular gases we use.

Because our cylinders are about 200 pounds in weight and under pressures of 2500-4000 psi (air, hydrogen, helium, nitrogen, argon, and oxygen), he stressed the importance of safe handling of cylinders in transport and during use. Cylinders must only be moved when the cap is in place and the tank is chained to a cylinder cart. While in use they are to be strapped in place so they cannot fall. Gas cylinders are not to be placed near electrical outlets where they would come into contact if they should fall. Two stage regulators are recommended and are specific to the type of gas used (flammable gas regulators are not interchangeable with nonflammable regulators). If a valve or regulator were to break off there is enough force produced by the pressure in the tank to hurl the tank through a cement block wall (as shown in the video). He indicated that injuries can also occur when handling the tanks (falling) and when the wrong tool is being used when removing the cap or opening a valve and slips causing broken/bruised noses and fingers. Other hazards one may be exposed to include: flammability, high pressure, extreme cold, asphyxiation, and inhalation of corrosive gases.

All of us are exposed to gas cylinders of one sort or another so that proper handling and safety tips provided pertain not only at work but also at home (propane, hair spray, insecticides, cleaners, spray paints, etc.).

The next safety committee meeting is scheduled for April 6, 2009 at 10:30 a.m. Minutes were prepared by Ray Kelling and Jeanne Carter on March 16, 2009.

RK/jmc