

July – September 2008

Upcoming Events
and Reminders

Fisher Day at Mellon
Hall

August 13th, 9-1pm

EHS/Rad. Safety
Committee Meeting:
September 4th

Fire Prevention Week
September 15th -19th

TA Training
On Blackboard

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Questions or concerns regarding this newsletter or safety in general may be directed to:

safety@duq.edu

The Safety Chronicle

Duquesne University Focuses on Safety Compliance

George Bender

On May 6, 2008, the University Safety Committee established a new Facility Safety Inspection Procedure. This procedure will ensure that all facilities, including academic and research laboratories and classrooms, are in compliance with safety and health regulations.

Any issues identified either by inspections, observations or walkthroughs are to be addressed by a new protocol, which is based upon a three step,

progressive approach for corrective action:

1. Following the first incidence of an offense, the lab supervisor and appropriate Department Chair will be notified and 5 days allowed for corrective action.
2. A repeat of the same offence will be met with notification of the Department Chair and the Associate Academic V.P. for Research and 5 days allowed for submittal of a written corrective action plan.

3. If corrective action is not achieved after the third incident, the matter is then forwarded to the Provost or other cabinet member for action.

Disciplinary action may be considered for any and all incidents from lab closure, up to and including termination of employment. For those employees represented by a union, disciplinary action will be in accordance with the terms of their labor agreement.

For more information, this "Facility Safety Inspection Procedure" is posted on the Duquesne EH&S website under the Lab Safety heading.



John Volpe, RSO

Paula Sweitzer

John Volpe, our Radiation Safety Officer, joined Duquesne University on July 1, 1998. John has 40 years of experience in all aspects of safety, from security to chemical labs to radiation safety.

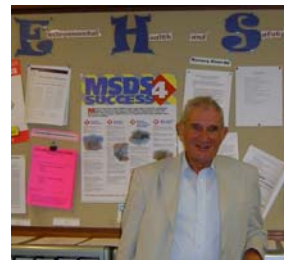
In regards to our safety program at DU, John feels that we are headed in the right direction. In the last ten years there have been some major improvements in safety including the formation of our current Environmental Health and Safety Department in 2004. EH&S staff were previously separated and reporting to different individuals, but were unified as an official department under Safety Director Paul King.

Another aspect of our improved safety on campus is the formation of Safety Committees. DU currently has three safety committees that meet on a regular basis: University Safety

Committee, Labor/Management Safety Committee and EHS/Radiation Safety Committee.

The EHS/Radiation Safety Committee is chaired by John and meets on a quarterly basis. It is concerned with lab safety and consists of individuals from each department where research is going on; this would include Pharmacy, Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Physical Therapy, and Nursing, as well as other departments. John feels that this committee accomplishes what it sets out to do, by getting the interest of the individual departments.

John is concerned that not everybody takes safety as serious as they should, but feels that there are ways to improve the safety culture. To get more people involved in safety, John thinks that awards and giveaways are the way to go. Overall, safety is everybody's job and we all need to be involved.



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Fire Safety: A Comprehensive Approach

Vanessa Fowler

Fire safety at Duquesne includes a broad range of activities and programs designed to prevent and/or fight fires and to provide training and support for successful emergency response.

On a monthly basis, a sub-committee of the Labor/Management Safety Committee conducts a Hazard Walkthrough of one or two buildings on campus. This walkthrough is a thorough inspection of every area on every floor, from top to bottom. This group is looking for, among other things, fire hazards which could include blocked/missing/empty extinguishers, blocked exits, combustible storage in areas not approved for such use and overloaded circuits. **Do you have a concern about a potential fire hazard in your area?** EH&S staff can help with that assessment.

In the event that there is a fire, more than 1,000 extinguishers have been distributed across campus in highly visible and accessible locations. EH&S staff and Facilities Management inspect and maintain this equipment on a regular basis. **Do you know where your closest extinguisher is and how to use it?** Get hands-on experience at the “live-fire” training on September 15th.

The third major part of the fire safety program is made up of more than 100 people across campus trained to assist building occupants evacuate in case of an emergency: Floor Marshals. These volunteers stand ready to direct you to emergency exits and gathering points. They are additionally a wealth of safety information specific to your floor. **Do you know your Floor Marshal?** Find out who they are *before* you need them in an emergency!

How To...Operate a Fire Extinguisher

It's easy to remember how to use a fire extinguisher if you can remember the acronym PASS...



Pull the pin.

This will allow you to discharge the extinguisher.



Aim at the base of the fire.

If you aim at the flames the extinguishing agent will fly right through and do no good. Aim for the fuel at the base of the fire.



Squeeze the handle or lever.

This depresses a button that releases the pressurized extinguishing agent in the extinguisher.



Sweep from side to side

Start using the extinguisher from a safe distance away, and then move forward.

Paula's Tips...

Laboratory Evacuations

- Never block your entrance and exit routes, including kick out doors.
- Do not ignore the fire alarm – it is going off for a reason.
- Shut down running experiments – procedures for emergency shutdowns should have been developed within your departments.
- Close, but do not lock, your lab door behind you.
- Do not search for friends, use the bathroom, grab your lunch, etc.
- Use one of the two stairways to exit the building
- Notify response personnel if somebody is in need of help.
- Once outside, move away from Mellon Hall – each department should have a gathering point on academic walk.
- Check in with your supervisor and/or lab workers.
- Wait for further instructions and/or permission to re-enter the building.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY Know your Evacuation Procedures

Vanessa Fowler

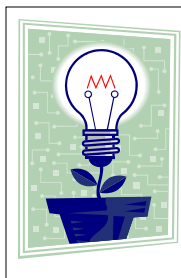
There are many situations in which a building would need to be evacuated. In a real emergency, such as a fire, a person's fear, anxiety or sudden rush of adrenaline may cause confusion or panic. It is for this reason that knowing and practicing evacuation procedures is so important.

Before there is an emergency or practice evacuation, identify several possible routes of escape, in case one is blocked or otherwise inaccessible, and the gathering point for your building. It's also a good idea to meet your Floor Marshal(s); each

floor of every building has a designated Floor Marshal or two who will be on hand during evacuations to assist in directing you to emergency exits and gathering points.

During an evacuation drill, act quickly. Close, but do not lock doors, leave the area and exit immediately. Once at the gathering point, check in with your supervisor or Floor Marshal and don't leave the area. This is also the time to familiarize yourself with the sound of the building alarm; some buildings have newer, deafening alarms while others have older bell-like sounding alarms. Know what your alarm sounds like and don't ignore it.

For a listing of gathering points, see “Floor Marshal Responsibilities” on the Building and Construction Safety page of the EH&S website.



Initiatives

“With the possible exception of the equator, everything begins somewhere.”

Robert Fleming

Vanessa Fowler

Pharmacy Takes Safety Initiative

In an effort to ensure the safety of undergraduate students doing research in the School of Pharmacy, Associate Dean Drennen recently issued a statement of policy which restricts undergraduate work in labs: “undergraduate researchers must have direct supervision by a faculty member or graduate student while working in the laboratory.” Access is likewise restricted.

This is just the latest safety initiative taken by Pharmacy. They have also picked up the reins with voluntary inspections and mandatory safety training; prior to starting work in a lab, each new employee must complete safety training through the Environmental Health and Safety Department.

Congratulations to Pharmacy for a great start toward an integrated safety culture in the workplace.

Mechanical Rooms Get a Spruce

Kudos to Facilities Management for its hard work in cleaning up behind the scenes! In a July 2007 audit of Duquesne’s overall health and safety compliance and in the course of monthly hazard inspections, housekeeping in mechanical rooms and

other storage areas was found to be short of OSHA standards. Since that time, the Facilities Management staff, under the guidance of Director Rod Dobish, have systematically tackled every mechanical room, storage area and housekeeping closet across campus.

The results have been clearly noteworthy and much appreciated. In a recent Hazard Walkthrough of an academic building, no housekeeping issues attributable to Facilities Management were found. A second audit is planned for this September to follow-up on progress made since last July and EH&S anticipates few, if any, findings regarding housekeeping.

Congratulations to Facilities Management for your success in completing such a large scale and cooperative endeavor.

Hard Lessons on PPE

Carly Vosacek and Vanessa Fowler

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is the first and most important line of defense against injury in the Laboratory and on the job. OSHA, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, cites the use of PPE as one of the most important things an employee can do to remain safe.

OSHA requires that employees wear PPE, attend training sessions on its proper use, maintain and clean PPE when appropriate and periodically replace it according to manufacturer’s recommendations. Wearing PPE should not be an inconvenience; lab coats, goggles and gloves come in many styles and sizes so as not to be uncomfortable or restrictive of movement. However, there have been an alarming number of people without proper PPE observed in the Mellon Hall laboratories.

Duquesne University’s own Chemical Hygiene Plan clearly expresses the need for lab coats, goggles and eye protection to be worn in the laboratory. Despite

this, there were 74 citations of inappropriate/missing PPE during lab inspections from June 22nd to July 25th. Chemistry was the biggest offender with 38 individuals observed without PPE followed by Biology with 31.

This trend is most alarming in light of the recent sulfuric acid spill on June 4th in which a student received burns on his forearms and face. This student was very fortunate to receive only minor injuries in the absence of any PPE.

The good news is that things are improving. During the same inspection period as above, violations in Chemistry and Biology declined overall. The Pharmacy floor, however, has been the most compliant department in terms of PPE. The Pharmacy Labs have been consistently wearing appropriate clothing, shoes, and PPE with only three violations in four weeks.

To learn more about proper PPE selection and usage, check out the vendors on Fisher Day in the Mellon Hall lobby on August 13th from 9am-1pm.

Top 10 Reasons Why PPE is not Worn (and Why it Should Be):

- 1. Doesn’t fit. PPE comes in a variety of sizes and styles for your comfort.**
- 2. Uncomfortable. Reassess whether you are using too much PPE or the wrong type.**
- 3. Expensive. PPE should be provided by your supervisor; ask how much has been budgeted and plan from there.**
- 4. Don’t need it. Really? Read the MSDSs for the chemicals you are working with and see what they say.**
- 5. Doesn’t work. No single piece of PPE will protect you from everything. Find the PPE that suits your protection needs.**
- 6. Don’t know where to get it. EH&S staff are always ready to assist. Reps from Fisher and other vendors are also here on a regular basis.**
- 7. Don’t have time. What is 10 seconds to put on a pair of glasses to a lifetime of health sight?**
- 8. “It’s summer” – shorts and sandals are more comfortable. Yes, but not as protective.**
- 9. “I’m careful.” Good; prudent practices can prevent accidents, but they will still happen.**
- 10. Apathy. Find something that is important to you, a reason to be safe.**



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Fire Prevention Week September 15th-19th



Each year, The National Fire Protection Association selects a theme for "Fire Prevention Week." This year's theme is **Prevent Home Fires** and to recognize the importance of fire prevention and preparedness, EH&S will be making hands-on fire extinguisher training available to the whole campus. Fire Prevention Week will also be marked with Floor Marshal Training, the Fire Safety Game and other "surprises!"

Live-fire extinguisher training will be available on September 15th, 1-4pm

"Simple" (without live fire) extinguisher training is available for groups throughout the week, upon request. (Contact Vanessa Fowler at X1506 for details.)

For more information on NFPA and how to prevent fires in your home, check out the NFPA website at nfpa.org

"If you ever catch on fire, try to avoid seeing yourself in the mirror, because I bet that's what really throws you into a panic."

☞ Jack Handey

Fire Safety at Home

Carly Vosacek

Fire Prevention Week is often thought of as a work related ritual or fire drills and talks about the use of fire extinguishers. However, fire safety should not only be reserved for work but should also be practiced in the home. After all, our most precious and important possessions are in the home, like our family, pets, important documents and a lifetime's collection of memorabilia. Sadly, in 2006, there were 3,245 deaths as a result of fire in the United States and 81% of those deaths occurred in the home where property loss was estimated at \$11.3 billion (National Fire Protection Association).

The Home Safety Council recommends the following simple tips for protecting your home from the devastation of a fire.

- Make an emergency escape plan for your family. Identify two exits from every room and agree on a common meeting place outside.
- Know how to handle small kitchen fires. Put out a grease fire by sliding a lid over the flames- never use water! Pay attention to what's cooking on the stove-top to prevent dry cooking fires that scorch pans and smoke, potentially causing heat and smoke damage.
- Learn about fire extinguishers and their use. Make sure that you have an extinguisher approved for use on kitchen and grease fires (a "K-rated" extinguisher) as well as electrical and normal paper/wood fires (an "ABC-rated" extinguisher).
- Do not store gasoline or other fuels in the house, but rather in a garage or shed. If they must be stored in the house, keep them well separated from sources of ignition and use

Practice your plan!
Hold family evacuation
practices twice a year.

Learn more about smoke alarms by checking out the "Smoke Alarms: What You Need to Know" guide on the EH&S website.

- Install a smoke detector on every level of your home. Be sure to test them monthly and change the batteries every year.

the proper container that is approved for gasoline storage.

- Use and maintain electrical appliances appropriately. Clean out the dryer's lint trap after every use and don't overload circuits with too many power strips and extension cords.

This list is certainly not exhaustive but it will help to fire-proof home. Additionally, there is a wealth of home fire safety information available online. Please utilize Fire Prevention Week as an opportunity to evaluate your fire risk at home and take measures to keep your household, loved ones and possessions safe.

More Information at:

www.ou.edu/oupd/fireprev.htm

www.usfa.dhs.gov/citizens/

www.homesafetycouncil.org