



Weill Cornell Medical College

EHS News

New Fire Safety Manual

Fire Safety is everyone's responsibility since a fire can occur any time and in any location. To better prepare the WCMC community for a fire, EHS revised the Fire Safety Manual to include concise, one-page building specific fire safety procedures for all WCMC and NYP buildings.

Procedures in NYP spaces were developed with the Hospital to meet both NYP and WCMC requirements.

The Manual should be used as a resource for fire safety information. All students, faculty, and staff should read and understand the procedures for the buildings(s) they normally occupy.

The Fire Safety Manual is available electronically on the EHS website as part of the comprehensive EHS Program Manual. All updates will be posted



electronically to the website:
<http://www.med.cornell.edu/EHS/manuals.htm>

The building specific fire safety procedures start on page 24 and are limited to one page per building.

EHS staff will be going to every location in the College to provide small-group hands-on fire safety training to ensure the procedures are understood. We will be in touch with each department in the coming months to discuss implementing training in your areas, but feel free to contact us for any training needs during the interim.

R **Rescue** occupants from area, assist if needed.

A **Alarm:** shout "Code Red" and activate pull station to notify FDNY and others in area.

C **Confine:** close doors and windows to prevent fire from spreading

E **Evacuate:** follow building specific evacuation procedures

Lessons Learned

Chemical Spill Prevention

Do you know where your hazardous chemicals are stored? In the case of one laboratory this spring, a hazardous chemical was stored on an upper shelf intermixed with common reagents. While reaching for a reagent, a researcher accidentally knocked the bottle to the floor. The crystals vaporized and presented a potential exposure hazard to the lab staff.

What went well: The researcher immediately notified EHS; evacuated the lab while the spill was cleaned; remained available to provide information; and communicated progress to lab staff.

What we learned:

The spill could have been prevented if the following chemical purchasing, segregation, and storage practices were implemented:

1. Store chemicals at or below eye level to help maintain visual contact and prevent over-reaching for bottles.
2. Separate hazardous chemicals from common reagents.
3. Segregate hazardous chemicals by compatibility (e.g., flammable, acid, base, oxidizer, toxic). Designate areas for the storage of these hazard types. Use bins, where needed, to contain and separate incompatible chemicals stored in the same cabinet.
4. Do not purchase (for volume discounts) high hazard chemicals in larger quantities than is needed.

For more information on chemical storage practices, contact EHS.

Did you know ...



Electronics contain toxic, heavy metals (such as lead) and are not allowed in normal trash. EHS coordinated the recycling of 820 electronics last year. To find out how to have your electronics recycled, see the "Surplus Electronics Recycling" Update on the EHS website for more information.

Fast Fact

Biosafety cabinets **MUST** be certified annually. For a list of authorized vendors and contact information, go to the Frequently Asked Question "Who can I have certify my biosafety cabinet?" on the EHS website.

Current newsletter available electronically at:
<http://www.med.cornell.edu/EHS/news>

212-746-6201
ehs@med.cornell.edu

Going Green

Battery Recycling



In keeping with EHS's commitment to environmental stewardship, EHS provides battery recycling services to WCMC. We make battery recycling easy. To recycle your used batteries:

- Complete the Chemical Collection Request form (<http://www.med.cornell.edu/ehs/chemwaste>) or
- Send used batteries via inter-department mail to EHS, box 354.

Recycling batteries prevents environmental contamination from the toxic heavy metals (lithium, mercury) contained inside most types of batteries from leaching into groundwater and disposing of this material improperly poses a health and safety risk. Also, many of the non-hazardous components (metals and plastics) used in batteries can be recycled and returned to beneficial uses such as manufacturing and building materials.

For more information on battery recycling benefits, read the EHS "*Battery Recycling and Disposal*" Update (<http://www.med.cornell.edu/ehs/updates/batteries.htm>).

You Asked. We Answered.

Clinical Chemical and Chemotherapeutic Waste Procedures

The opening of the Weill Greenberg Center in 2007 marked a new era for WCMC as the first clinical building in the College's history. While meeting with staff of these new clinical areas, EHS was asked "What are the College's disposal procedures for chemotherapeutic and other chemical wastes generated during the course of treating patients." In response, EHS developed the Updates on "*Clinical Chemical Wastes*" and "*Clinical Chemotherapeutic Waste*" to address these unique and complicated mixed waste disposal issues impacting WCMC clinicians.

The "*Clinical Chemical Waste*" Update addresses the proper identification, classification, and disposal methods for chemical wastes generated in clinics. Clinical waste options are generally categorized as normal trash, red bag, sharps or chemical waste. Some items are considered mixed wastes, like used needles which may contain chemicals, and require special consideration as the disposal methods for chemical and biological (sharps, red bag) wastes are vastly different. Examples of chemicals in clinics are: drugs and medications; disinfectants and sterilants; and sample preparation and preservation. Many of these chemicals are considered hazardous and require proper treatment and disposal, which EHS provides.

The "*Clinical Chemotherapeutic Waste*" Update addresses the proper disposal of chemotherapeutic agents which are toxic chemicals used in the treatment of patients to kill diseased cells, most

Training and Education

New Hands-on Training Program

To better meet your needs, EHS is developing a new hands-on safety training program designed to save your time and address your needs. Under this program, EHS will lead brief (10 minutes or less) discussions in specific work locations to address any safety hazard that may be present.

Initially, EHS will focus on chemical hood performance and chemical waste management in labs. EHS will visit all WCMC labs and lead a brief discussion on these important safety issues. For example, did you know that by minimizing chemical storage inside chemical hoods, you will increase the performance of the chemical hood?

If you would like EHS to visit your area or you have an idea for hands-on safety training please contact EHS (ehs@med.cornell.edu). Stay tuned for hands-on fire safety training.

notably cancer. Due to their toxicity, certain agents are stringently regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency. Complicating the issue are items such as needles and syringes which have been administered to patients and must also be disposed as regulated medical waste.

Both Updates are on the EHS website: <http://www.med.cornell.edu/ehs/manuals.htm>
Contact EHS for additional assistance.

For questions or assistance on clinical chemical or chemotherapeutic waste disposal procedures in NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, contact the NYP Environmental Health and Safety office at 746-1926.