



Weill Cornell Medical College

EHS News

Emergency Drills – Medical Assistance Needed

Have you ever wondered what would happen if there was a spill of a hazardous material and you, or a co-worker, was potentially exposed? Would you know who to contact to get emergency medical assistance? Do you know the immediate first steps that should be taken during a hazardous material spill or other type of emergency?

EHS and the NYP Emergency Medical Services (EMS), as part of on-going efforts to test the College's emergency response capabilities, held a drill in December to test this scenario. Members from Dr. J. David Warren's (The Abby and Howard Milstein Synthetic Chemistry Core Facility) and Dr. Anthony Sauve's (Pharmacology) laboratories participated. The drill included response in the lab as well as transporting the injured person to the Emergency Room. This drill reminded all participants of these key aspects of responses requiring emergency medical assistance:

- ❖ Laboratory staff must know who to contact in the event of a spill requiring medical treatment. EMS should be contacted at 212-472-2222 (2-2222) when emergency medical treatment is needed. After contacting EMS, call EHS to coordinate the spill response. Remember to report all spills to your Principal Investigator or supervisor.
- ❖ All laboratory staff should immediately vacate the spill area to an area of fresh air to avoid further exposures.
- ❖ Close doors to prevent others from entering the spill area.
- ❖ Exposed laboratory staff should immediately remove contaminated clothing and use safety showers or eyewashes to flush exposed skin or eyes with water for 15 minutes.
- ❖ While waiting for emergency personnel to respond, gather the following information:
 - ✓ Name and quantity of hazardous material(s) involved.
 - ✓ Material Safety Data Sheet(s) and any other relevant safety information.
- ❖ All individuals who work with hazardous materials must know what to do in an emergency **before** beginning work with any hazardous material. There isn't time to determine what to do after an emergency happens.



Dr. Yana Cen, Post-Doctoral Associate, participates in spill drill as a contaminated patient.

Whether you work in a laboratory, a patient-care area, or in an office, it is crucial that you know what to do in an emergency. Contact EHS to discuss any emergency planning questions.

Did you know . . . that your lab coat is the last line of defense?

Lab coats:

- are made with a tightly woven material to slow the spread/penetration of contamination to your personal clothing or skin.
- minimize contamination of clothes and skin from contaminated surfaces.
- are designed to be quickly removed in the event of a spill/splash.
- are mandatory anytime you are working in the laboratory.
- must be laundered with NYP Laundry on a regular basis to minimize contamination.

Always:

- wear your lab coat fully closed/buttoned.
- use fire-resistant lab coats (e.g., Indura or Nomex) when working with pyrophoric materials.
- remove your lab coat when finished working in the lab (e.g., going to lunch, meetings) to prevent the spread of contamination and the perception that you may be spreading contamination.

How to obtain:

- General Lab Coats: NYP Laundry (212-746-1290) located in the NYP Annex Building, 3rd Floor, Room 305.
- Fire-resistant Lab Coats (for use with pyrophoric chemicals and highly flammable materials): VWR or Fisher Scientific provide these lab coats. Contact EHS to discuss further.



Current newsletter available electronically at:

<http://weill.cornell.edu/ehs/news>

646-962-7233 (1-7233)

ehs@med.cornell.edu

2009 – Another Year of Service to WCMC

Another year has passed providing another chance to look back and review how EHS supported the College's mission of education, research and patient care in 2009. Here are some of our most notable achievements.

Do you have suggestions on areas where EHS can improve? Email EHS at ehs@med.cornell.edu.

Emergency Planning

- Led and participated in several emergency drills designed to test WCMC's strategic approach to emergency planning through prevention, planning, communication and drilling.
- Launched, with the Emergency Planning Committee, the WCMC Emergency Management Tool which is a web-based program that assists departments in creating emergency plans:
<http://ready.weill.cornell.edu>

Fire Safety

- Developed and implemented a NYC Compliant Emergency Action Plan at the Weill Greenberg Center approved by the FDNY for addressing non-fire emergencies.
- Maintained an inventory of an average of **1,263** Fire Extinguishers.
- Issued **647** permits to contractors welding or doing work that could affect the fire alarm system in WCMC buildings.



Customer Service

- Responded to over **536** calls requesting immediate assistance, some of which included: indoor air quality assessments, chemical spills, chemical hoods repairs, biological waste issues, and construction safety concerns.
- Replied to **1,355** emails to ehs@med.cornell.edu requesting general information and / or assistance.
- Investigated **129** employee and student accidents and provided accident prevention recommendations.

Laboratory Safety

- Developed the new Research Safety Checklist (RSC), a Risk Assessment tool for the College that assists Principal Investigators and EHS in recognizing hazards and compliance issues in research.
- Coordinated **262** FDNY lab inspections for over **752** lab rooms and ensured **100%** resolution of violations.
- Performed **451** chemical hood surveys.
- Performed **228** safety shower surveys.
- Posted **83** Health and Safety Door Signs.

Biological Safety

- Reviewed **207** Biohazard and research Proposals.
- Conducted **100** risk assessments for research involving biological or chemical use with animals.
- Investigated and provided accident prevention assistance to **46** employees and students who had a needle stick injury.



Waste Disposal

- Hazardous Waste: Received **667** collection requests to collect **4,890** containers (23.08 tons) within an average of **1.7** days of submittal.
- Biological (Sharps) Waste:
 - ❖ Labs: Received **1,108** collection requests to collect **6,455** sharps containers (65 tons).
 - ❖ Clinics: Collected **2,309** sharps containers (9.78 tons).
 - ❖ Reusable sharps containers (provided by EHS), saved **\$262,920** and prevented **26,300** lbs of plastic from going into landfills.
- Universal Waste:
 - ❖ Recycled **5,420** lbs of florescent lamps/bulbs
 - ❖ Recycled **105** computer monitors
 - ❖ Recycled **55** computer CPU's
- Recycled **147** mercury thermometers.



Construction Safety

- To assist in the construction of the new Medical Research Building, EHS worked with occupants vacating Kips Bay to assist in disposing of chemical and universal waste; worked with Capital Planning to coordinate laboratory shutdowns and moves; and continued to be proactively involved in reviewing design plans to ensure that new laboratory spaces promote a safe working environment.
- Performed **2248** Construction Site inspections and ensured **100%** of construction safety issues were resolved.

EHS Safety Training Program

- Provided over **50** small group trainings to Departments, Divisions, and units that were tailored to address the specific safety issues of each group.
- Provided over **76** regularly scheduled instructor-led safety trainings.
- Developed a new Fire Safety compliance training program for laboratories which includes a visit to each lab to review common violations the FDNY finds when during annual inspections.
- Created a Training Matrix for non-laboratory and non-clinical employees to increase compliance with required annual safety training.

General Safety and Administrative

- Developed and implemented the *Responding to Water Damage and Preventing Mold Growth* EHS Update which provides guidance to protect WCMC property and the health and safety of students, faculty and staff.
- Received **67,764** visitors and a total of **1,042,039** hits to <http://weill.cornell.edu/ehs>.
- Distributed **620** Material Safety Data Sheets.