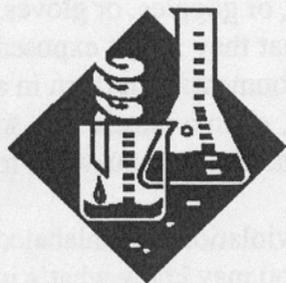
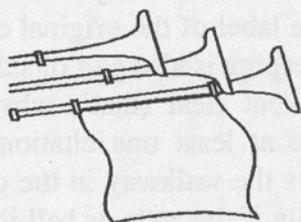

USDA-ARS

Logan Location Safety Notes



February 1999



Congratulations!

For the second year in a row, the Logan location has not had any recordable accidents or injuries. This is definitely the result of the entire group keeping aware of safe practices and procedures. Safety belongs to everyone, not just a safety committee.

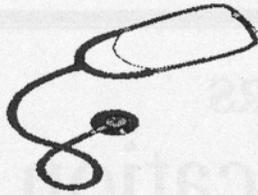
OHMP

It's OHMP time again. This stands for Occupational Health Maintenance Program and is part of the USDA-ARS Safety, Health, and Environmental Management Board. OHMP provides medical monitoring to authorized employees potentially exposed to toxic or hazardous substances or unhealthy work environments. It is designed only for the detection of occupationally significant medical abnormalities and is not a substitute for the care provided by an employee's personal physician.

Now for some definitions! An authorized employee is someone who has been specifically trained and assigned by a supervisor to work with or in the vicinity of qualifying hazards. Qualifying hazards are (1) health hazards such as pesticides and other respiratory hazards; (2) physical hazards such as noise or radiation; (3) biological hazards like human blood and body fluids, biohazards, or rabies; (4) exposure to animals (either small lab animals or large ones like cattle and sheep); and (5) exposure to chemicals which may negatively impact your health.

Supervisors (research leaders at Logan) identify employees who are eligible to participate in OHMP; the employees are then given the choice to participate or not. Participants then fill out form 182B which asks them to list the chemicals or hazards they are exposed to. This doesn't mean you have to list every single chemical in your workplace! In many cases, you can list exposure by class of chemical, i.e., if the pesticides you work with are all organophosphates. The information on these forms is used by the physician to decide what medical tests are necessary. A detailed medical history form (182C) is also provided to the employees; only the employee and the physician will see this information. A final report is then given to the RL on whether or not the employee is medically able to do the work assigned and/or wear a respirator.

The physical exams are scheduled from mid-February through March. Currently, we are gathering bids from medical providers and hope to have one selected by the 15th. In the meantime, the various forms will be distributed to the eligible employees.



If you have any questions about this program, please contact your CDSO or myself (Terrie).

Inspections

Facility inspections are required annually by USDA-ARS. Our location safety committee has been conducting these for the last several years. In that time, we've seen a marked improvement in overall safety attitude and awareness/preparedness. We use several different standards to help guide us: OSHA is the main source (29 CFR 1910 and 1926, dealing with general industry and agriculture) with additional guides from CDC (Centers for Disease Control), national standards institutes, and the USDA.

When we first started inspecting (or auditing) the various workplaces, we found quite a few serious safety concerns. These would be things such as guards missing from grinders or PTO shafts, no eye protection when grinding or cutting, dust masks being used instead of respirators, and inoperable (or no) eyewashes and safety showers. Many electrical outlets were damaged; in some cases, live wires were left exposed. Compressed gas cylinders were not secured; chemicals were stored alphabetically instead of by compatibility. We've come a long way!

Most of the violations we find now are less threatening to life and limb. About 25% deal

with improper storage of PPE, primarily dust masks left hanging around the greenhouse beds or on a lab bench. If you plan on reusing the dust mask (or respirator, or goggles, or gloves, or ...), store them so that they aren't exposed to the lab or work environment. Put them in a ziploc bag, in a drawer, or in a plastic box so they will be clean the next time you want to wear them.

Another common violation is unlabeled containers in the lab. You may know what's in the bottle third from the left on the second bench in, but no one else does. Clearly identify the solution or substance; this means write out the name and any warnings that are found on the label of the original container.

Housekeeping is also part of safety. Aisles need to be kept clear (that's why we nearly always have at least one citation of a hose laying across the walkway in the greenhouse) and especially if the aisle or hall is part of the emergency exit route. Dust accumulation can be both a health and fire hazard. Piles of papers or boxes are prone to slide down, either hitting people walking past or blocking routes. In addition, they're a fire hazard.

Written plans, standard operating procedures, training documentation, and air monitoring results are also looked at. In fact, the lack of a written safety plan (hazcom) is the most commonly cited violation by OSHA.

And there's always the general duty clause. This is invoked when something looks unsafe but there isn't a specific CFR citation for it. That's why we'll ask you questions when we make our rounds to see if you're aware of the hazards or to find out what steps you've taken to minimize the hazard.

So keep up the good work! If you have questions or need information on a chemical or procedure, contact your safety rep or the Location Safety Committee.

Questions? Comments?

Talk to Terrie at 752-2941 or terrie@cc.usu.edu