Lab Chatter

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The OSHA Laboratory Standard

By Peter Nagle

Hazardous chemicals present physical and health hazards to employees in the workplace. For this reason, OSHA has developed standards for employers to deal with toxic and hazardous substances. However, OSHA recognizes that these standards were written for industrial settings and are not necessarily applicable to laboratories. Since chemicals are used in small amounts for short durations in laboratories, it would be impractical to follow the provisions in many of the standards. OSHA laboratory standard 29 CFR 1910.1450 specifically addresses chemicals in laboratories. The standard provides flexibility for organizations to assess chemical hazards in their laboratories and devise a plan to mitigate them, provided that their plans address the required criteria set by OSHA. To achieve this, each workplace that uses chemicals in a lab must develop a Chemical Hygiene Plan that addresses the following:

1. Chemical fume hood evaluations
2. Hazard Assessments and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
3. Employee exposure assessments and medical consultation provisions
4. Provisions for additional protection for work with high hazard chemicals
5. Employee training
6. Management of Safety Data Sheets (SDS)
7. Assignment of Chemical Hygiene Officers

The Chemical Hygiene Plan must be readily available to all lab workers. The UNE Chemical Hygiene Plan can be found in:

Good Housekeeping for Labs

By Jessica Tyre

Eyewashes and Safety Showers: What you should know

By Jessica Tyre

Proper use of flexible power cords

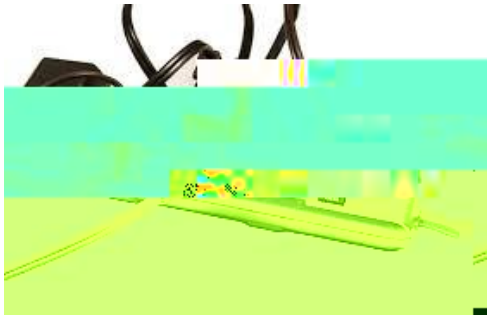
By Ronnie Souza

Improper use of easily overloaded, unapproved extension cords can present a serious fire safety hazard in the workplace.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, electrical distribution equipment, such as extension cords, was the second leading cause of fire deaths in the U.S. between 2004 and 2008.

The most common cause of fires from extension cords is due to improper use and/or overloading, especially when cords have multiple outlets. Most extension cords are only rated for a maximum of ten amps or 1200 Watts. Overloading can occur when multiple devices are plugged into one cord or when cords are “daisy chained” (plugging multiple extension cords together).

The use of unapproved extension cords is a violation of both the OSHA and National Fire Protection Association codes. OSHA Code of Federal Regulations 29CFR1910.303 (a) states that conductors and equipment are acceptable for use only if they are approved by recognized laboratories (such as Underwriters Laboratory, Factory Mutual, etc.).



Hazardous Waste Management

By Peter Nagle

Those of you who have worked in labs on both campuses have probably noticed a difference in the way hazardous waste is managed. For example, weekly inspections must be logged in Biddeford, while labs in Portland are not required to keep a log. The reason for this lies in the state regulations. Portland is a Small Quantity Generator (SQG), while Biddeford is a Large Quantity Generator (LQG). While there are similarities in the regulations for each, there are also many differences. The satellite accumulation area exception is the main culprit for the differences. According to the regulations, a Large Quantity Generator must ship hazardous waste within 90 days of first accumulating it. In other words, a Large Quantity Generator has only 90 days to accumulate hazardous waste on site until it must be shipped. The satellite accumulation exemption provides relief from this. It allows LQGs to generate hazardous waste in small but continual amounts until the container becomes full. Once the container becomes full, the date is recorded on the label and that date becomes the accumulation start date.

The regulations for Small Quantity Generators are a little different; they have 180 days from the container full date to ship their waste off site. Since a SQG is allowed to accumulate hazardous waste on site indefinitely, the satellite accumulation exemption is not needed nor does it apply. In Portland we call the areas where hazardous waste is accumulated, Waste Accumulation Areas, so as to distinguish them, in a regulatory sense, from Satellite Accumulation Areas. Using the term Satellite Accumulation Area in Portland might unnecessarily subject the campus to Large Quantity Generator regulations. Welcome to the world of hazardous waste regulations!

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General Spill Clean Up Procedures

By Ronnie Souza

The UNE Chemical Sharing Program is a great way to reduce hazardous waste, reduce costs for your department, and have a positive environmental impact on campus.

If you have any commonly used lab chemicals you are thinking of disposing of, please contact EHS so they can be listed in the next issues of EHS Lab Chatter as available for the UNE Chemical Sharing Program.

Chemicals currently available: