

- [Training](#)
- [Radon](#)
- [Biowaste Box](#)
- [Disinfectant](#)
- [Radiation Safety](#)
- [Electrical Safety](#)
- [Chemical](#)

## Our Vision

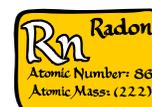
To promote and maintain a safe and healthful environment by ensuring the highest level of environmental health and safety services for faculty, staff, students, and visitors at the University of Connecticut.

**Welcome** to “The Safety Guide *Wire*” UConn’s Environmental Health and Safety Newsletter.

### ~ Biological Health ~



**January is National Radon Action Month**  
**Test your Home. Protect your Health.**



Radon is a cancer-causing, natural, radioactive gas that you can’t see, smell or taste. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in America. It comes from the natural breakdown of uranium in soil, rock and water, and gets into the air you breathe. You and your family are most likely to get your greatest exposure at home, where you spend most of your time. Testing is the only way to know if you and your family are at risk from radon overexposure.

Testing homes for elevated levels of radon is simple and inexpensive. Radon test kits can be purchased for **\$4** at the Main Office of the Eastern Highlands Health District located at 4 South Eagleville Road in the Mansfield Town Office building. Test kits are also available from the Connecticut Chapter of the American Lung Association for \$12 [www.alact.org](http://www.alact.org), through the National Safety Council [www.nsc.org/issues/radon/index.htm](http://www.nsc.org/issues/radon/index.htm) and at many local hardware and home improvement stores. Radon problems can be fixed by qualified contractors for a cost similar to that of many common home repairs, such as painting or having a new water heater installed (anywhere from \$800 to about \$2,500).

The U.S. Surgeon General and EPA recommend that everyone take action during this year’s National Radon Action Month by testing their homes for radon. **There are no EPA requirements or recommendations for radon testing in offices.** For more information on radon, radon testing and mitigation, and radon-resistant new construction, visit the Connecticut Department of Public Health Website at <http://www.ct.gov/dph/site/default.asp>, or visit EPA’s National Radon Action Month Web site at [www.epa.gov/radon/nram](http://www.epa.gov/radon/nram).

## CHANGES TO THE BIOWASTE BOX



*What happened to the handles?*

You may have noticed that the large Stericycle boxes have been redesigned without client input. The pre-cut handholds have been eliminated. These were convenient for moving and lifting boxes. Our Stericycle account representative indicated that many of their customers are dissatisfied with the change. We are hoping that they will reverse their decision in the near future. In the meantime, there are a few things to keep in mind.

## Our Mission

To provide comprehensive environmental health and safety services for the University community by developing and administering effective policies and procedures that prevent personal injuries and maintain regulatory compliance in the areas of biological, chemical, occupational, and radiation safety, thereby supporting the University's mission of teaching, research, and public service.

You **must not** create your own handholds. Holes cut into the box by end users will result in the box being considered compromised. Stericycle will not pick up compromised boxes, therefore, Biological Health and Safety will not pick up compromised boxes. Waste in altered boxes must be repackaged before it will be removed. Lifting boxes by the lid, even if well-taped to the box, could result in broken boxes/lids, spilled waste or personal injury. We suggest that you do not move the boxes at all. If you can, set up and load the waste boxes in your normal pick up location. You should also consider placing less waste in each box. Remember the limit for a large box is 40 lbs.

We are looking into some alternative ways to lift the boxes. These include heavy duty tape-on handles and box-grabbing gloves or equipment. The Biosafety Technician would make use of these alternatives during pick ups. We may consider making them available to laboratories that need to move or lift boxes. If you think you might need an alternative, when we find one, just mention it to the Technician during your next pick up or call me at 486-3180. *David Cavallaro*

### IS ALCOHOL A DISINFECTANT?

Microbial decontamination is achieved by disinfection when dealing with inanimate surfaces, or antiseptics when the surfaces involved are living tissue.



Ethyl (ethanol) and isopropyl alcohol prepared at dilutions of 70 percent are effective antiseptics. The lower concentration of water that is present in preparations above 70 percent weakens the antimicrobial effectiveness of these alcohols.

While 70 percent ethanol or isopropyl alcohol (as found in commercially available alcohol wipes) are good cleaning agents in the laboratory setting, they are not EPA-approved disinfectants and are not considered suitable by OSHA for bloodborne pathogens spill decontamination. Individuals who rely on the use of these alcohols as the sole surgical instrument disinfectant are cautioned that post-surgical wound infection is possible. These alcohols are not sporicidal and cannot penetrate protein-rich materials.

Remember that the major factors that determine the effective action of disinfectants and antiseptics are concentration, contact time, temperature, the number and type of microbe and the nature of the material being decontaminated.

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### ~ Occupational Safety ~



#### ***New Electrical Safety Policy***

As stated in the University's [Health and Safety Policy](#), the University is committed to providing a healthful and safe environment for all activities under its jurisdiction. In keeping with this commitment, the University has developed a new [Electrical Safety Policy](#) to ensure the health and safety of the University community and its visitors.

#### Scope of Policy

The policy applies to all University of Connecticut employees, at the Storrs and regional campuses, working on or near: premises wiring; installations of electric

conductors and equipment and feeder circuit conductors; or the installation of optical fiber cable near or with electric wiring. The policy does not apply to communication installations below 50 volts. In addition, contractors must comply with section 4.3 of the policy.

### Overview

The policy comprises a comprehensive Electrical Safety Program for the University and incorporates the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Electrical Standard (29 CFR 1910) and the NFPA 70E *Standard for Electrical Safety in the Workplace*. The policy provides direction to University employees and contractors for the performance of electrical work, design, and installation at the University through uniform work practices and applicable regulatory requirements.

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## ~ Radiation Safety ~

### **RADIOACTIVE LABELED EQUIPMENT**

If you have radioactive labeled equipment in your laboratory, please answer the following questions:

- Does your radioactive labeled equipment need repair?
- Have you decided to stop using your radioactive labeled equipment for radioactive work?
- Are you getting rid of a piece of equipment with radioactive labels on it?



If you answered "Yes" to any of the questions, you need to call Radiation Safety! **All radioactive designated equipment must be surveyed by Radiation Safety personnel prior to release for unrestricted use.** A piece of equipment is considered to be "free released" when a survey does not indicate the presence of radioactive contamination and Radiation Safety has removed the radioactive labels.

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## ~ Chemical Safety ~

### **DHS CHEMICAL FACILITY ANTI-TERRORISM STANDARDS (CFATS) -**

The Department of Homeland Security has issued a regulation entitled "Chemical Facilities Anti-Terrorism Standards" (CFATS). This rule applies to all entities that possess certain hazardous chemicals, and is intended to prevent the intentional misuse of these chemicals through theft, sabotage, or attack. The regulation requires facilities, including universities, to estimate the quantities of specific chemicals on hand, based on a list of over 300 chemicals and, in some cases, to develop site security plans and measures, perform training and drills, and maintain records. The Final Rule requires that UConn laboratories and non-laboratories review their chemical inventories for a list of chemicals called Chemicals of Interest (COI). This list is available through the Department of EH&S <http://www.ehs.uconn.edu/Chemical/?p=about>. Instructions are posted, as well. The University **MUST** comply with this regulation, it is not voluntary. The full text of CFATS is available on the DHS webpage, [http://www.dhs.gov/xprevprot/laws/gc\\_1166796969417.shtm](http://www.dhs.gov/xprevprot/laws/gc_1166796969417.shtm).

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*Training Training Training Training Training*

Do you work in a **Laboratory Setting**?

Do you work with?

**Chemicals**  **Radiation**  **Biological Agents**  if you answered *yes* to any of these, go to <http://www.ehs.uconn.edu/training/schedule/labtrain.html> to see which training you need.

**If you are an employee who conducts renovations, demolitions or performs maintenance, including custodial personnel, you may need one or more of these trainings:**

Asbestos Awareness  Confined Space  Excavation Safety Awareness  Fall Protection  Hazard Communication  Personal Protective Equipment  Lead Paint Awareness  Lockout/Tagout (Control of Hazardous Energy)  Utility Cart Safety  Back Safety – Proper Lifting Techniques  Hand and Portable Power Tool Safety  Machine Guarding Awareness Training  Material Handling & Storage Safety (MSDS)  Respirator Protection  Electrical Safety Training (non-electrically qualified persons)  Electrical Safety Training for Qualified Persons  Respiratory Protection & Fit Testing (REQUIRED written Medical Approval)  Voluntary Use of Filtering Face-piece Respirator  Office Ergonomics

**If you checked any of these or you are unsure of which training applies to you, go to <http://www.ehs.uconn.edu/training/schedule/occutrain.html> and review the checklist on our web-site.**

All training schedules are updated. Please register on-line at <http://www.ehs.uconn.edu/training> are up on our revised web-site at [www.ehs.uconn.edu](http://www.ehs.uconn.edu). Click on training and then schedules.