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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.



The beginning of a new academic semester is upon us again. Please read through our newsletter for interesting information and reminders. Enjoy the beauty of the Autumn Season.

~ Chemical Safety ~

UNKNOWN CHEMICALS



Whether it is a five gallon container of methylene chloride or a small bottle of deionized water, every container in the lab needs to be **labeled**. In the last few years, unlabeled containers have become increasingly common in labs at UCONN. Many students come to the university, conduct their research and often times leave before properly disposing of their samples and chemicals. It is illegal to transport or dispose of unknown chemicals and further testing to characterize the waste can be costly to the University. Depending on their contents, unknown chemical containers can also be extremely dangerous to those working in labs as well as to those involved with transport and disposal. It is the responsibility of each researcher at UCONN to make sure every container/sample is labeled with words or abbreviations that are legible and understandable to everyone working in the laboratory. If unknown chemicals are encountered in your lab, please avoid the following actions:



- Do not dispose of unknown chemicals down the sink.
- Do not add unknown chemicals into other known chemical waste containers
- Do not allow the unknown chemicals to remain in the lab without taking corrective action



If unknown chemicals are present in your lab, proceed with the following steps to have the container(s) removed from your lab:

- Find out as much information about the container(s) as possible. This may involve speaking with your principal investigator (PI), fellow researchers or actually contacting the person (even if he or she is no longer present at the University) who generated the waste.
- Place the unknown samples/containers in a designated area of the laboratory with tight-fitting caps or lids and label the containers with the words "**Hazardous Waste**" if you know for example that it is a solvent, but just are unsure what solvent, OR, you can label it "**Sample awaiting hazard determination.**" and call **Chemical Safety** to make the final determination. If the contents of the container are identified and

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.

EH&S Services

Training schedules which are updated on a regular basis.

Waste Pickup and Delivery Request Forms

determined to be hazardous after speaking with other researchers, place a “Hazardous Waste” sticker on the container, label the container using full chemical names, and place it in the “Satellite Accumulation Area.”

- Once the unknown container has been properly managed in the lab, submit a chemical waste pick-up request form at <http://ehs.uconn.edu/cwc/request.php>.

Generation of unknown chemicals in labs at UCONN is completely avoidable as long as every researcher takes the time to properly label their chemical containers and replace labels on containers that have faded or peeled off. In addition, principal investigators are responsible for making sure that the work areas of their researchers are clear of unknown wastes prior to them leaving the University, [Lab Clearance Form](#). With the combined effort of both researchers and PI's, there is no reason why unknown chemicals should continue to surface at the university.

~ Occupational Safety ~



Bleach – the Pros and Cons

Lately, we've all heard about the need to sanitize and disinfect surfaces. When we think of disinfectants, we naturally think of bleach. It's available everywhere and is probably in every household. But there are pros and cons to using bleach and many misconceptions about its use.

Pros

- It's cheap
- It's effective
- It's easy to get

Cons

- It can be very harmful to the user and other occupants
- It **cannot** be mixed with anything but water!
- Fresh solutions have to be made every day, because it loses its effectiveness

Misconceptions

- It's a great cleaner (it's **not** a cleaner at all – it doesn't remove dirt, it kills cells)
- It's more effective the more concentrated it is (**Wrong** – it only takes a small concentration to be effective. Increasing strength only increases the hazards to you.)
- If I mix it with other cleaners or disinfectants, I make a better product (this is the **worst** possible thing to do, mixing bleach with any other material produces harmful vapors that are destructive to lung tissue!)

Bleach (sodium hypochlorite) is a corrosive chemical to eyes, skin, mucus membranes and the respiratory tract. That slippery feeling on your fingers if it gets on your hands is the result of the bleach destroying skin cells. When mixed with other cleaners, it can produce toxic and explosive gases as well as harmful vapors that are destructive to lung tissue. Care needs to be taken for its use. Because of its health hazards, bleach is not our first recommendation for disinfecting purposes.

There are many disinfectant products available that are safer to use for the employee and other affected personnel. *Bleach is only to be used in specialized*

circumstances, using specific controls:

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** necessary includes chemical splash goggles and heavy duty nitrile gloves. Disposable gloves should not be used. Heavy use of bleach solutions may also require the use of nitrile aprons, to protect skin and clothing.
- Adequate **ventilation** is also necessary to minimize exposure to bleach vapors during application (spraying or wiping) and during the mandated disinfecting contact time prior to rinsing.
- Proper **rinsing** is essential between cleaning steps! Bleach will readily react with any cleaning product residue and produce harmful vapors.
- Bleach residue left behind can still produce a hazard. Adequate **rinsing** after disinfection and sanitization are important.
- Follow specific requirements for mixing solutions of bleach and water and avoid splashing of bleach.

The same concerns hold true for disinfecting wipes that contain bleach (sodium hypochlorite). Again, there are many non-bleach disinfectants (including wipes) available on the market that produces less of a hazard for use. Contact EH&S for direction on the type of disinfectant necessary for your situation. As always, review the product labels and MSDS **prior** to using the product. If we recommend bleach due to your specific situation, specific controls will be necessary to reduce hazards to you and other affected personnel.

Preparing for H1N1 at UCONN – the Employee Perspective



How do I protect myself at work?

If your job requires you to come in close contact with ill students your supervisor, in conjunction with EH&S and Student Health Services, will provide you with the appropriate training and PPE in order to do your job safely.

Generally, though, the best advice is the following:

Practice respiratory etiquette – cough and sneeze into tissues, your arm or elbow, not into your hands. Stay at least six feet away from others if you or others are coughing or sneezing.

Practice good hand washing techniques – wash hands often with soap and water, especially after sneezing or coughing; wash your hands thoroughly for between 20 and 30 seconds.

Use hand sanitizers – when soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Purchase a hand sanitizer and carry it with you.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth as this easily spreads germs.

Avoid contact with others who are ill.

Know the symptoms:

- Primary symptoms — fever or chills **and** cough or sore throat.
- Additional symptoms — runny nose, body aches, headache, tiredness, diarrhea, or vomiting.

Stay home from work and avoid contact with others if you are ill. Return to work

only when you are without a fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

Frequently clean all commonly touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label.

If you meet with students, customers, employees, etc. routinely as part of your job, there are basic precautions you can take if you encounter someone who is obviously sick:

- As with other forms of flu or contagious illnesses, maintain a reasonable distance from the person (greater than 6 feet)
- Ask the person to follow good respiratory etiquette; offer them a tissue and hand sanitizer, if available.
- Avoid physical contact, such as shaking hands
- Use disinfectant wipes to wipe those areas of your work station that the person has touched.
- Consider other forms of contact, such as phone or e-mail



Should I wear a face mask?

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) does not at this time recommend the use of surgical face masks by healthy people in public settings as a preventative measure. Face masks are better used to stop droplets from being spread by the person wearing them. If you are sick, wearing a mask may help to protect others by preventing the spread of the H1N1 virus when you sneeze or cough. Once a face mask is removed, it must be disposed of promptly, and hands must be thoroughly washed. Reapplying a used face mask can spread contamination to the hands and face.

In areas with confirmed cases of H1N1 virus infection, the risk for infection can be reduced by following the actions listed above.

[Interim recommendations or Facemask and Respirator Use to Reduce Novel Influenza A \(H1N1\) Virus Transmission](#) can be found on the CDC website.

As the situation evolves, recommendations and guidelines may change. The Student Health Services website http://www.shs.uconn.edu/swine_flu.html will post changes based upon CDC recommendations.

~ Radiation Safety ~

RADIATION SAFETY TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

For **Radioactive Material, Laser and X-ray Laboratory Personnel**



If you are new to the University of Connecticut or returning to campus and will now be working in a laboratory that uses **radioactive materials**, or you will be working directly with **lasers** or **x-ray producing equipment**, there are **required initial training** programs that need to be completed **prior** to working in those laboratories.

Radioactive Material Laboratories have training requirements for both **non-users**

and **users in Radioactive Material Labs:**



Non-Users in Radioactive Material Labs

Non-users are classified as workers who work in a radioactive materials designated laboratory but do not handle or use radioactive materials
Non-users only need to attend the first 1.5 hours of a 4 hour initial training session.



Users in Radioactive Material Labs

Users work directly with radioactive material.
Users need to attend the entire training session.

Register for training:

<http://www.ehs.uconn.edu/training/schedule/RadiTrainingSchedule.php>

Both users and non-users must complete both the initial training and the laboratory-based training.

Laboratory-based training should be completed with the laboratories Licensed Investigator as soon as you join the laboratory.

Both **Radiation Training** and **Laboratory Based Training** should be completed prior to unescorted access into a radioactive laboratory.

Laboratory-based training sheets are found at the following link:

<http://www.ehs.uconn.edu/Word%20Docs/Lab%20Based%20Training%20Check%20List.doc>



X-ray producing equipment users must review the **on-line PowerPoint presentation** at: <http://ehs.uconn.edu/Radiation/Analytical%20X-ray%20Training.ppt> then schedule an appointment (call 486-3613) to watch an X-Ray Safety Video and take an exam. Once completed, an **X-Ray Users Laboratory-based training form** must be completed by the X-Ray supervisor and sent to the EH&S office.

Laser Users



Initial training must be completed through the HuskyCT system at: <http://huskyct.uconn.edu/webct/entryPageIns.dowebct> . The laboratory-based training form at:

<http://www.ehs.uconn.edu/Radiation/Laser%20Safety%20Lab%20Based%20Training%20Check%20List.pdf> must be completed by the Laser supervisor and returned to EH&S.

~ **Biological Safety** ~

Clean Air Device Service Contract Awarded.



Technical Safety Services Inc (TSS) has been awarded the contract for certification, maintenance and repair of biological safety cabinets, laminar flow benches, PCR enclosures and other Clean Air Devices. The contract with TSS covers the University of Connecticut Storrs and regional campuses. Biosafety will continue to coordinate all service calls.

Notice for Animal Handlers

For researchers using animals and any animal handlers on campus, filling out the *University of Connecticut Occupational Health and Safety Program for Animal Handlers – Personal Profile*, otherwise known as *Form A* is a yearly requirement. All of the animal handler forms (Form A, B, and C) have recently been updated. The proper forms are Revision 5 released 8/17/09 and can be found on the EH&S web site: <http://www.ehs.uconn.edu/forms/> Look for Animal Handlers Personnel Forms (Forms A,B & C). Please recycle any previous versions you may have.



Biological Health



Temporary Food Service Events

Organizations planning to serve food or beverages to the public on campus must apply to EH&S for a Temporary Food Service Event Registration at least **10 working days** prior to the event. The two-week requirement allows us sufficient time to process and review the application as well as schedule staff to inspect the event if necessary. The application form can be filled out and submitted on line at <http://www.ehs.uconn.edu/food/request.php> . **Your application may be denied if you miss the deadline.** If University Catering provides food service at your event, the event is exempt from registration. There is a \$30 registration fee if you use an outside caterer. All temporary food service event organizers must watch a short food safety video on HuskyCT prior to the event. Please call our office to make arrangements to watch the video, 486-3613. Our pamphlet '[Temporary Food Service Events – A Guide to Food Safety](#)' is available on our website.

Compliance with the requirements explained in the pamphlet can help prevent a food borne disease outbreak. Food borne illnesses are caused when individuals eat food that has been contaminated by types of bacteria or other microorganisms that make people sick. Most cases of food borne illness are related to one of the following factors – Improper hot and cold holding temperatures, improper cooking temperatures, infrequent hand washing, improper food handling, contaminated equipment, unapproved sources of food or water. You can take several simple steps to prevent harmful microorganisms from multiplying in the food you serve.

Maintain proper food temperatures - Cook all foods to the required minimum temperatures listed in the Guide. Check temperatures with a thermometer. Maintain hot potentially hazardous foods at 140°F or higher. Maintain cold potentially hazardous foods at 45°F or lower.

Wash hands often - A sink with hot and cold running water or a temporary hand washing station is required for all temporary food service events. Hand sanitizer, hand wipes and gloves are **not** a substitute for hand washing at food events. Wash hands for 20 seconds using warm water and soap and dry with a paper towel. Use tongs, spatulas, scoops, deli papers or gloves when handling food that will not be cooked. No one may work while sick with a communicable illness including colds and flu.

Keep equipment clean – Clean and sanitize surfaces and utensils used to prepare and serve food before use, every four hours while in use and after preparing raw

potentially hazardous foods such as chicken, meat and fish.

Use food from an approved source – All food and ice must come from a licensed commercial or retail establishment. Home cooking or preparation of potentially hazardous foods is not allowed. Water must be potable.

Workplace Safety should be at the top of every department's priority list. **Environmental Health & Safety** offers various training year round to employees and students. Your supervisor can help you determine if you need training, or go to the [Laboratory Safety Checklist](#) and the [Occupational Health and Safety Checklist](#).



On-line registration for **Biological, Chemical, Radiation** and **Occupational** training classes. All schedules are on-line.



- ☞ Go to <http://www.ehs.uconn.edu/> and **click on Training**.
- ☞ Click Training Schedule for the appropriate section and to see which dates are scheduled
- ☞ Click the [HERE](#) button to register

You will need your **NET ID** to register. If you are not sure what your NET ID is, go to <https://netid.uconn.edu> and follow the prompts.



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