

University of Delaware

Department of Occupational Health & Safety

In preparation for the October National Eye Injury Prevention Month, Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) is recognizing the Center for Composite Materials (CCM) for their diligence with safety in their labs. The Center has a robust, comprehensive eye protection program. They provide quality and comfortable safety glasses to all Faculty, researchers, staff and students. These safety glasses are replaced annually or when necessary. Additionally, they offer to purchase prescription safety glass for all affiliated researchers and staff who perform research in the labs.

The Safety Committee has a zero tolerance stance towards the lack of use or misuse of eye protection and works hard to assure that all laboratory occupants don the appropriate level of protection. The Committee oversaw the installation of safety glass storage bins at the entrance of all laboratories in CCM. This availability of safety glasses at all laboratory entrances helps to assure that visitors and researchers who do not have safety glasses have access to a pair prior to entering the space.

CCM also understands the importance of preparation on the forefront in an effort to provide the optimum amount of protection for their workers. The Safety Committee Chair/Chemical Hygiene Officer approves the purchases of all chemicals and evaluates new processes to determine the type and level of protection, including eye protection, needed to prevent exposures to researchers and students working in the facility. Written standard operating procedures (SOP) are developed for hazardous operations, which outlines personal protective equipment requirements and safe work practices. Because of their dedication to the safety program, there has not been a reported eye exposure or injury in CCM Center in many years.

The Center has made several other notable safety related efforts that are certainly well worth sharing with the rest of the University community. They recently involved OHS in a safety review process of a spray coating operation. The written SOP and material safety data sheets recommended indicated the need for specialized respiratory protection and engineering controls. The hazardous materials involved were toxic by inhalation and absorption so the highest level for respiratory protection/face protection and chemical protective clothing was recommended. The researchers involved in the spray coating operation were entered into Occupational Health and Safety's respiratory protection program and were trained to wear supplied air respirators. CCM also extended an invitation to OHS to observe the first spray operation in an effort to gather additional safe work practice recommendations.

OHS would like to extend our appreciation to all of the Safety committee's efforts to ensure the optimal level of safety for all those who work in their labs.