

Department of Occupational Health and Safety

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Lessons Learned Texas Tech Missing Plague Case

On January 14, 2003, Dr. Thomas Butler from Texas Tech University reported that 30 vials of the plague bacteria were missing from his lab. Following an FBI investigation Dr. Butler later stated he had accidentally destroyed the samples.

Several issues came to light along with this false report of the theft. He had brought samples into the country literally on the plane in his pocket without the appropriate permits. He stated he was unaware of the regulations covering select agents which include plague, and of proper transportation requirements. In all, 69 charges were brought against him.

On December 1, 2003 he was convicted of 47 charges. Most of them were related to theft from the university. He was cleared of most of the charges related to the plague incident, though he was found guilty of making a false statement on a pack-

age of plague samples he sent to Tanzania and their unauthorized export. He had labeled the samples as "laboratory materials." He faces up to 240 years in prison and fines of up to \$11.75 million.

Lessons Learned

- Hazardous materials must be shipped according to federal regulations. This includes almost all biological materials and samples, as well as chemicals. Even dry ice is considered a hazardous material. Contact the Department of Occupational Health & Safety (DOHS) for guidance on shipping any specimens or lab materials.

- Some biological materials require permits for either import or export. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Commerce control

these permits. Contact DOHS for further guidance.

- Take this opportunity to do some early spring cleaning. Go through your refrigerators and freezers. Make sure all specimens are labeled. Discard any materials that are no longer needed, and update (or start) an inventory of your biological materials.

- Think about security in your lab. Be sure valuable and hazardous materials are secured. Keep your lab locked when unattended.

- The Select Agent regulations are now in effect. You must contact DOHS if you are considering work with any of these organisms or toxins. A list of the regulated agents is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/od/sap/docs/salist.pdf>.

DATE	TOPIC	TIME OF CLASS	FACILITATOR
Feb. 11	Environmental Programs at the UD	10:00-11:00a.m.	Dave L.
Feb. 12	Confined Space Part 1	10:00-11:00a.m.	Joe M.
Feb. 12	Biosafety Awareness	1:00-2:00p.m.	Krista M.
Feb. 12	Biosafety Training	2:00-3:00p.m.	Krista M.
Feb. 13	Is There Asbestos In Your Home	9:00-10:00a.m.	Sharon S.
Feb. 13	Right-to-Know /Lab	11:00a.m.-12:00p.m.	Leslie Y.
Feb. 20	Confined Space Part 2	9:00-10:00a.m.	Joe M.
Feb. 24	Chemical Waste	1:00-2:00p.m.	Kevin E.
Feb. 25	Right-to-Know	9:00-10:00a.m.	Joe M.
Feb. 26	Chemical Waste Training - Lewes	10:00-11:00a.m.	Kevin E.
Feb. 27	Forklift Refresher	8:30-9:30a.m.	Robin E.

* Note: All trainings take place in GSB 130 unless otherwise specified.

The SAFETY BEAKON

Department of Occupational Health and Safety

Volume 1, Issue 1

February 2004

The Department of Occupational Health and Safety's New Newsletter

This is the first issue of the Safety BeakOn Newsletter generated by the Department of Occupational Health and Safety (DOHS).

We will strive to make this a quarterly publication in both a hard copy and electronic format, which will be distributed to all departmental Safety Chairs.

Our ultimate goal with this endeavor is to increase the level of communication between DOHS and individuals on campus to ultimately raise the level of awareness about occupational health, safety and environmental issues.

Each edition will include articles relevant to these

types of programs/subject matter.

It will also feature regular columns such as "Know Who's Safe?" highlighting individuals around campus that strive to make safety a priority and "Lessons Learned" from campus safety incidents.

Our entire staff at DOHS

will be contributing to this project so content will vary widely.

Additionally, if anyone in the University community would like to submit articles or ideas please feel free to present your idea to any of the following emails: leslieyh@udel.edu, klmurray@udel.edu, or dlbowman@udel.edu.

Once your article or idea has been reviewed we will contact you for details.

While we are on the subject of DOHS, please take a moment to look over the Organizational Chart. **(continued on page 2)**



The staff of the Department of Occupational Health and Safety

DOHS Offers Many Options to Fulfill Safety Training Requirements

Each year the Departmental Safety Committees have the responsibility to facilitate required safety training for their respective department. All new graduate students must be provided with a safety training seminar coordinated by the department.

The committee may accomplish this by develop-

ing a program to meet the various training requirements in several ways. They may send personnel to a scheduled DOHS class, arrange with DOHS to provide department specific training, or use the DOHS's WebCT courses.

Please visit our web site at <http://www.udel.edu/OHS/safetytraining.html> for a complete listing of scheduled training classes, available safety re-

lated WebCT courses and directions on how to access WebCT, or the list of videos in the DOHS video lending library.

If you are using WebCT for training, you must provide your University of Delaware username to Terri Lineback at 831-4899 or tlinebck@udel.edu. It takes 24-48 hours for you to receive access to our programs on WebCT.

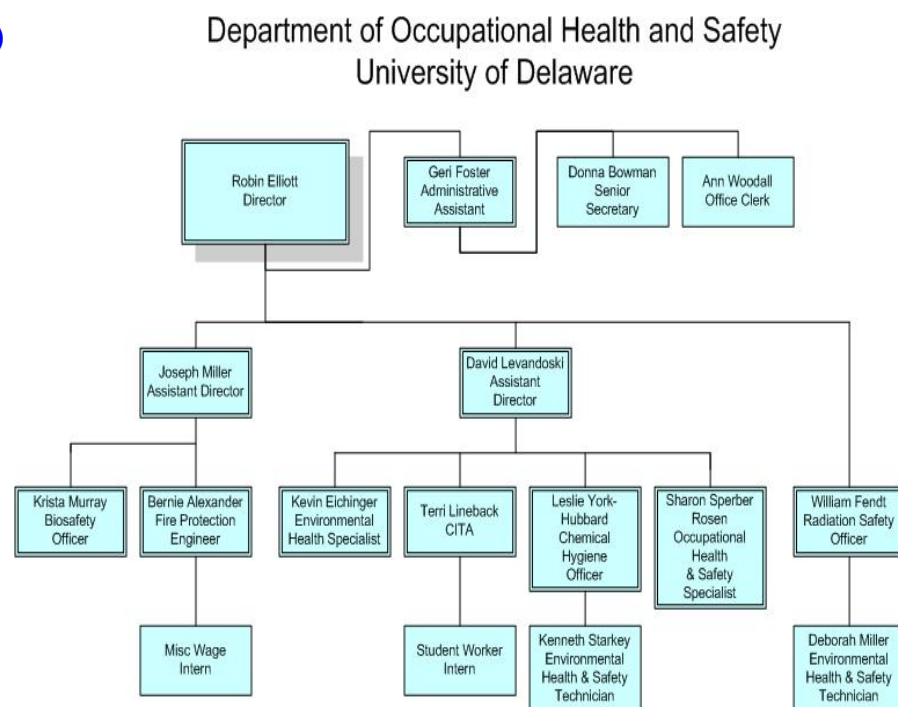
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(Continued from Front) New Newsletter

You will find each member of our DOHS team listed with their corresponding program for your reference. It is our mission to maintain a safe and healthful campus environment in concert with the mission of the institution while ensuring compliance with applicable federal, state and local regulations.

In short; we are all here to help provide the best support possible so please feel free to contact our office with questions, comments, concerns, or suggestions (additional contact information on back page).



Shoes for the Season

According to the National Safety Council's Injury Facts 2002, falls accounted for the **deaths** of approximately 4,500 people nationally and comprised 24% of the total unintentional deaths of members of the public in 2001.

Did you know that some of the most severe injuries we have had on campus are the result of slips and falls? Last fiscal year we had 20 employees injured due to slips and falls that resulted in

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the injured persons missing a total of 690 days of work. One employee was out more than 180 days!

Especially at this time of year, choosing the proper footwear can drastically reduce your chances of suffering a serious injury. When outdoor conditions are hazardous choose your footwear based on safety rather than style.

Our department can assist you with determining the proper footwear to wear on the job. Please don't let your health be limited by a fall.

UD's New RSO

Join us in congratulating Bill Fendt on his appointment as the University of Delaware Radiation Safety Officer (RSO).

As RSO, Bill will be responsible for the safety of UD researchers using radioactive materials or x-ray producing devices. Bill must also manage the radiation safety program so that it complies with all Nuclear Regulatory Commission and State of Delaware regulations.

Approximately 400 workers use either radioactive materials or x-ray devices for scientific research in campus laboratories. Bill joined the University as Radiation Health Physicist in 1990. He holds a degree in Biology from the University of Pennsylvania where he also spent ten years working as a Radiation Safety Technician.

When he is not busy corralling errant atoms, Bill enjoys traveling and camping.



Bill Fendt the University Radiation Safety Officer

Chemical Storage Information on the Web

As we all know, proper chemical storage is one of the most fundamental necessities for a safe laboratory. One effective way to minimize a chemical accident is to isolate chemical hazards. Chemical compatibility and security are critical when making storage decisions. The Department of Occupational Health and Safety has recently developed new information on our web page that provides detailed chemical storage guidance.

Outlined below are the pages found on our Chemical Hygiene web page under the chemical storage link and a brief description of each, including good chemical storage practices, chemical classification segregation (which chemical classes are compatible for storage),

and a list of chemicals with a corresponding classification.

[General Chemical Storage guidelines](#) - A list of general prudent chemical storage guidelines for safe storage practices.

[Chemical Classification List \(alphabetical\)](#) - Provides an alphabetical list of chemicals with the corresponding classification assignment.

[Chemical Hazard Classification Segregation table](#) - Provides guidance for classification segregation. Once the chemical class has been established, use this guide to determine which classifications can be safely stored together.

[Chemical Classification Request Form](#) - If you do not find the chemical you are looking for on the chemical classification list, we developed a link for a classification request form. The researcher can complete this form and submit it to our office for a storage recommendation.

We hope that this information will raise the level of awareness about proper chemical storage and aid the lab personnel in establishing safe chemical storage.

If you have any question please contact Leslie York-Hubbard x3123 or leslieyh@udel.edu.

Chemical Waste Funnels – Safety Ecological Funnels

In an effort to make it easier to maintain compliance with the chemical waste management regulations and policies, DOHS is promoting chemical waste funnels called *ECO-Funnels*. These funnels attach to a chemical waste container and allow for safe and easy chemical waste accumulation while meeting all federal and state regulations for chemical waste management. Simply open the lid, add your waste then close the lid. You will no longer have to transfer a funnel in and out of a waste container. These new funnels increase safety and allow a



laboratory to assure that chemical waste containers are sealed and closed, except when adding waste, which is a

common violation for which other institutions have received fines.

The funnels come in four-inch and eight-inch diameters and can fit reused chemical bottles, *Nalgene* carboys with either a 53B or an 83B cap and other types of waste containers. Optional HPLC inlets are also available. The funnels are manufactured by *California Pacific Labs INC* and are available from VWR Scientific. A few have been placed around campus with great success. Contact Kevin Eichinger at 831-2103 or eich@udel.edu for more information.

Know Who's Safe

Our featured individuals this issue are Chad Landis, Elton Marchena, and Jeff Price who are undergraduate students in the Electrical Engineering department. These model students have worked closely with the DOHS to ensure that all new or changed lab processes include a Standard Operating Procedure that is first reviewed by DOHS for safety issues prior to the initiation of work.

Their "philosophy on safety: we take no risks when it comes to safety. Before using any equipment (especially for the first time), we make sure everything is accounted for. When using dangerous chemicals, it is important to be aware of all possible safety hazards, and to avoid them at all costs. The reason for this commitment to safety is simple: we do not want to hurt ourselves or anyone else in the surrounding area."

Great job and thanks for your commitment to safety!

