CHEMICAL SAFETY MOMENT

Issue 55 – February 2021

Do not let chemicals evaporate in the hood as a means of disposal

Evaporating Waste Solvents

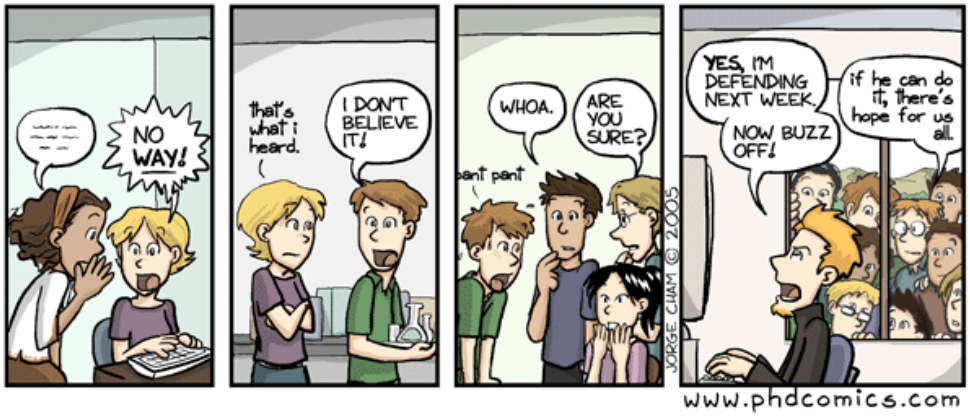
In the past, a fairly common lab practice was to get rid of spent solvents by evaporating them in a fume hood. We don't see that much anymore at UD because of regulations and policies that prohibit the practice.

However, a recent incident indicates that there are isolated cases of waste evaporation still occurring. Last month, a PI contacted EHS to complain about an odor permeating his lab, and he could not locate the source. An EHS investigation revealed that a lab down the hall had closed and the investigator had left the University. She had decided to get rid of her xylene, a hazardous waste, by pouring it into a large pan placed in the fume hood and allowing it to evaporate. The large amount of xylene involved overwhelmed the fume hood, creating fugitive emissions that migrated to the lab that had initially complained about the odor.

Evaporating spent solvents is considered unauthorized treatment/disposal of hazardous waste without a permit. If State or federal regulators had discovered this was happening, it would have resulted in a significant fine for the University as well as adverse publicity. Please inform your staff not to do this. It does not save money or time – EHS will pick up all of your hazardous waste faster than you can evaporate it **without exposing anyone to the fumes or charging your lab for the service**. Remember, there is a reason it is called "hazardous waste."

Annual Chemical Inventory Reconciliation

EHS annual inspections will begin again this year. Please remember your lab's chemical inventory audit is a part of your inspection. Inventory audits do not have to take long. With the ChemInventory system and scanners you can borrow from EHS, most labs can complete an inventory in 1-2 hours. If you have questions about the process, contact EHS: dehsafety@udel.edu, or scan the QR code below for a "how to" video.



The video can be view by scanning the code above or visiting https://youtu.be/ThkDPOa4TaY