

The Safety Net

Eastern Virginia Medical School's Environmental Health and Safety Newsletter
https://myportal.evms.edu/research/safety/environmental_health_and_safety

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Special Interest Articles:

- Fire Prevention Week
- Parking Safely in Parking Garages
- Occupational Noise Exposure and Prevention

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October is National Biosafety Month

The American Biological Safety Association (ABSA International) is proud to announce the 5th anniversary of Biosafety Month in October 2018. The theme for this year is **"Promoting a Culture of Biosafety and Responsibility"** with the social networking hashtag **#getyourcultureon**.

The 2018 Biosafety Month is a period of time when individuals and organizations are encouraged to focus on and reinforce their attention to biosafety and biosecurity standards. In 2014 the National Institutes of Health (NIH) introduced Biosafety Month as an initiative to promote stewardship of the life sciences and biosafety awareness. In previous years, the NIH highlighted a biosafety theme for organizations to consider and implement at their institution.

Thematic elements of enhancing a culture of biosafety include:

- Enhancing biosafety training
- Promoting the development of comprehensive biosafety standard operating procedures
- Engaging senior leadership to advocate for biosafety programs
- Supporting researchers to take an active role in biosafety efforts in their laboratories
- Encouraging institutions to develop non-punitive incident reporting systems and provide lessons learned
- Highlighting successes in the conduct of ethical and safe research
- Promoting public transparency regarding institutional biosafety oversight

Biosafety Month provides an opportunity for biosafety professionals to demonstrate their value to the research community and general public by working to promote safe research and help cultivate a culture of safety.



Fire Prevention Week

On October 8th through the 9th, in the year of 1871, a disastrous fire blazed through Chicago, Illinois. It burned down 17,400 structures and blackened more than 2,000 acres. The fire killed approximately 250 people and left 100,000 homeless. The tragedy was named the Great Chicago Fire of 1871.

So that our nation would never forget this event, in 1920 President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the first National Fire Prevention Day. Henceforth in 1925, President Calvin Coolidge made it official that the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 would be memorialized by setting aside a national annual Fire Prevention Week. To this day Fire Prevention Week is the longest running public, health and safety observance on record.



The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has designated this year’s Fire Prevention Week to be October 7-13, 2018. Its theme is: **Look. Listen. Learn. Be aware – fire can happen anywhere.** The NFPA states that, “The three simple calls-to-action identify the basic but essential ways people can reduce their risk to fire and be prepared”.

- **Look** for places fire can start. Take a good look around your home. Identify the potential fire hazards and take care of them.
- **Listen** for the sound of the smoke alarm. You could have only minutes to escape safely once the smoke alarm sounds. Go to your outside meeting place, which should be a safe distance from the home, a predestinated place where everyone should know to meet.
- **Learn** two ways out of each room. Confirm that all doors and windows leading outside open easily and are free of clutter.

For more information about Fire Prevention week please visit <https://www.nfpa.org/fpw>.

Battery Recycling for 2018

Alkaline	234.6 lb.
Lead Acid	469.8 lb.
Ni-MH	7.6 lb.
Li-Ion	16.6 lb.
Other Non-rechargeable	33.0 lb.

Total = 761.6 lb.!

Respirator Fit Test Fee Schedule

As of **July 01, 2018** the respirator fit testing costs are **\$7.25** per person. Be aware, EH&S will charge departments for “No Show” appointments and “Turn Away” tests. Students and employees will be turned away when arriving for their fit test appointment if (1) they arrive with facial hair and/or (2) if their prerequisites are not complete: the Respiratory Protection Blackboard training course **and** the Medical Questionnaire completed and cleared by Occupational Health.

Parking Safely In Parking Garages

Eastern Virginia Medical School strives to maintain safety for all users entering and exiting assigned parking garages. Persons with parking privileges are given AVI (Automated Vehicle Identification) tags to affix to their vehicle's windshield. Upon entering a parking garage the AVI tag signals the TransCore reader box which activates the access gate arm. Like many automatic controls, the gate controls require specific protocols to work properly; the following suggestions are provided to ensure good communication between the AVI tag and the reader box to help reduce user induced delays:

1. Stop your vehicle 2-3 feet from the gate arm. Stopping too close to the gate arm places the AVI tag on your windshield past the gate reader box so the AVI tag and gate control are unable to communicate.
2. Please don't rush the gate. The access gate arm is design to allow one vehicle to enter at a time.
3. The AVI tag must be affixed properly to the vehicle's windshield.
4. Upon entering, stop your vehicle so that the driver's window/door is adjacent to the call-box. This allows the AVI tag to communicate with the reader box. Also, if there is a malfunction, the driver may communicate via the call box for assistance more easily.
5. The reader box may take up to seven (7) seconds to activate the gate.
6. Remember your vehicle does not activate the access gate.
7. EVMS Employees are assigned to specific parking facilities; your AVI tag will only give access to your assigned facility.
8. Remember that many employees come to and leave work at approximately the same time. This may cause delays and backups. Please be PATIENT.
9. Employees are not permitted to back into spaces in the Staff/Employee garage.



Keeping each other safe while traveling on the medical center property is everyone's responsibility. Courtesy and patience are two characteristics that are invaluable for achieving that goal.

Radioactive Material Inventory



Fall is finally here! Soon the weather will become cooler, leaves will shed, and animals will prepare for the winter. Also, fall is the season for semiannual radioactive material inventory at EVMS. Formal letters and inventory forms will be sent to each Authorized User to be completed and returned to the EHS Department. The inventory form includes instructions on how to complete the form as well as EVMS's Radioactive Material Inventory policy. In addition, you may use the decay spreadsheet that will be electronically sent to each Authorized User, which will help your data compilation process.

Completion of the inventory form is imperative. The inventory packets should be returned no later than October 16th. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact the EHS office at 446-5798.

Occupational Noise Exposure and Hearing Loss Prevention

Hearing loss is one of the most common occupational illnesses in the United States. According to OSHA, twenty-two million workers are exposed to potentially damaging noise at work each year. Why has this problem become so extensive? Perhaps the reason is that hearing loss is often gradual, or because loud noises are common in our culture or because there are no externally visible physical changes when hearing loss occurs. Hearing loss is often not respected until it is too late.

Hearing loss can be temporary or permanent. Temporary change in hearing can be the result of short-term exposures to loud noise and often go away minutes to hours after leaving the noise, but not even hearing aids or surgery can help permanent hearing loss. Loud noise can create psychological and physical stress, interfere with communication and concentration, reduce productivity and contribute to accidents and injuries in the workplace when one is unable to hear warning signals.

Noise exposure is measured in units of sound pressure levels known as decibels. Decibels are measured on a logarithmic scale meaning that just a small change in decibel number results in a huge change in the amount of noise and therefore a huge change in the possible damage to one's hearing. In an effort to control this noise and reduce worker exposure, controls can be put in place.

Engineering controls involve replacing or modifying equipment or making related physical changes at the noise source to reduce the level of noise at the worker's ear. Inexpensive examples of engineering controls include low-noise tools and machinery, keeping machinery and equipment lubricated and placing a barrier between the noise source and the employee.

Changes in the worker's schedule or in the workplace in order to eliminate worker exposure to noise are known as *administrative controls*. Examples include operation of noisy equipment at night when less people are around, and limiting the amount of time an individual spends at a noise source.

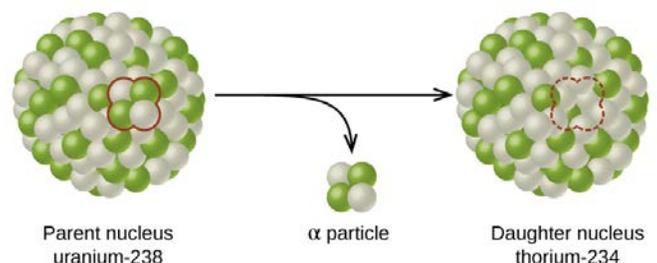
Make sure colleagues, family (especially children) and friends are alert to the hazards of noise. Research continues with the physiology of the hearing system and drug therapies and may one day lead to treatment strategies to reduce noise induced hearing loss; however, the most fundamental recommendation is the best, PREVENTION.

NORM Risks

Radionuclides of natural origin contained in or released from materials may pose a risk to the environment and those in close proximity. These radioactive elements in minerals and ores originally found in the environment are commonly known as NORM (naturally occurring radioactive material). Some NORM materials require specific regulations to minimize exposure.

During the extraction of minerals from the Earth's crust and their physical or chemical processing, the radionuclides may become unevenly distributed between the various materials arising from the process. These human activities can significantly increase the concentration of NORM radionuclides around us. NORM associated with these industrial activities can exist in many forms — it can be ore, process feedstock, intermediate product, end product, by-product or process residue.

Uranyl Acetate, often used as stains in electron microscopy, is the most commonly used NORM compound at EVMS. Uranyl acetate contains the isotope Uranium 238. U238 emits alpha particles, which are less penetrating than other forms of radiation. However, if inhaled or ingested, its radioactivity poses increased risks of lung and bone cancer. The chemical properties of U238 can be toxic in high concentrations and can cause damage to internal organs. Please call EHS if you have any questions or need help managing your NORM.



Ask the S.O.B.

Q: Dear S.O.B.,

I was updating my chemical inventory, but I was unable to access ChemTracker to make the changes. Am I doing something wrong?

-Kim Akal

A: Dear Kim,

The ChemTracker chemical inventory management system is no longer supported by Stanford University. It is now part of the BioRAFT online research platform.

If you have an EVMS account, you can access your chemical inventory by clicking on “ChemTracker” on the left side menu of the BioRAFT homepage. You can then view your current chemical inventory and add and delete chemicals. If you have questions or need assistance please contact EH&S at x5798 or EH&S@evms.edu.

If you have a question for the S.O.B., send an email to finlayba@evms.edu.



Safety Office Boy to the rescue!

Notes from the Office

EH&S Training Courses

Course	Date/Time	Location
Chemical Hygiene Plan	October 18, 2018 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM	3172 Lewis Hall
	November 15, 2018 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM	
	December 13, 2018 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM	2162 Lewis Hall
Biosafety in the Laboratory Biological Materials Shipping Autoclave Safety Training OHSP Training	Available on BioRAFT	https://evms.bioraft.com/
Schedule a Respirator Fit Test		https://evmsfittest.acuityscheduling.com

Morgue List

We've added many new items to our [Morgue List](#). Phone, come by, or look on the EH&S [Chemical Safety](#) web page to see what chemicals we have available!

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OCTOBER 2018

Biosafety Month



#getyourcultureon



<https://absa.org/event/2018-biosafety-month/>

Promoting a Culture of Biosafety and Responsibility



ABSA
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The Association for Biosafety and Biosecurity