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CONTACT EHS



Ronnie Souza
EHS Director
Biological Safety Officer
Radiation Safety Officer
Phone: x2488
Email: rsouza@une.edu



Peter Nagle
EHS Specialist
Phone: x2791
Email: pnagle@une.edu



Jesse Millen-Johnson
EHS Specialist
Phone: x2046
Email: jmillenjohnson@une.edu



SAFETY SPOTLIGHT: Be Reachable in an Emergency

By Jesse Millen-Johnson

The Lab Emergency Contact Information Cards posted in UNE laboratories are required for several reasons. Besides giving laboratory users the phone numbers for UNE Security and Facilities, as well as the EHS main line and staff cell phone numbers, they also provide contact information for the designated Lab Manager and Alternate Lab Contact.

This information must include:

- *The two responsible individuals with full names and UNE phone extensions clearly printed*
- *Current cell phone numbers for both contacts that will be answered 24/7 if called in an emergency by UNE. For example, a personal cell phone placed in “do not disturb” mode at night can still be set to allow certain phone numbers through*

In the event of a leak or power failure, critical research may be lost if Lab Managers cannot be reached in a timely manner. Responding emergency personnel and UNE Security, Facilities, or EHS individuals will not know the exact material present in every laboratory refrigerator, freezer, or cabinet. They also won't know all needed steps to protect valuable research unless they can easily reach the Lab Manager or Alternate Lab Contact during this time.

Finally, a reminder that 9-1-1 should always be called in a true emergency where health, safety, or structures are in immediate danger. For other urgent incidents like laboratory chemical spills, UNE Security is the proper contact. They can be reached directly at x366 or 207-283-0176.

Reporting a Work-Related Injury

By Cat Martins, Benefits and Disability Specialist with UNE Human Resources

If you are an employee at the University of New England and are injured at work, it is important to report the injury to UNE Security and/or Human Resources within 24 hours. This will allow us to begin the workers' compensation process should you need to seek medical attention.

HR asks for all work-related injuries to be reported. It is in your best interest to report, no matter how minor the injury may initially appear. If your injury is deemed work-related, workers' compensation will pay for your mileage to/from doctor visits, co-pays, prescriptions, and more.

There are steps you can take to help minimize the risk of work-related injuries, including:

- Requesting an ergonomic evaluation of your workstation
- Contacting UNE Security or Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) immediately if you see a potential hazard
- Working with your supervisor and EHS to ensure you are using appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Some things to consider if you are injured at work:

1. Dial 9-1-1 or UNE Security at x366 or 207-283-0176 for emergencies
2. For non-emergency medical treatment, please notify Security at 207-602-2298 (main number) and go to one of the following facilities:

ConvenientMD

191 Marginal Way
Portland, ME 04101
(207) 517-3838

*No appointment needed. Saco, Westbrook & Brunswick locations also available.

Concentra

85 Western Ave.
S. Portland, ME 04106
(207) 774-7751

*Walk-ins only. Please notify HR prior to visit.

SMHC WorkWell

10 Wellspring Road
Biddeford, ME 04005
(207) 283-7600

*Appointments only.

3) Make sure you complete an accident report and send it to HR within 24 hours of the injury. You may scan/fax/email the report to Cat Martins directly, or call UNE Security to come pick it up.

4) Keep HR informed of your work-related injury or illness:

- Let HR know if you miss time from work
- Communicate any restrictions due to your injury to HR
- Keep your supervisor informed of any anticipated missed time from work due to your injury (i.e. doctor appointments)
- Contact Cat Martins in Human Resources at cmartins@une.edu or 207-602-2394 with any questions



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INNOVATION FOR A HEALTHIER PLANET



Never Assume

By Jesse Millen-Johnson

Three UC Berkeley graduate students cleaned a laboratory refrigerator in 2008 after noticing what appeared to be a condensate of water on the interior walls. The refrigerator was overcrowded and the students were performing a chemical inventory at the time. During the cleanup, a bottle of 99% liquid bromine with a leak was discovered. This leak was actually responsible for the condensate.

The cleanup was quickly stopped and lab doors were posted with do not enter signs. The Office of Environment, Health & Safety was notified and the area was subsequently cleaned by its emergency response team. The students reported chest tightness, nausea, and lightheadedness, all signs of bromine exposure. They were treated at the university's urgent care center and released.

Bromine can be fatal if inhaled and cause major eye and skin damage. The grad students responded appropriately by leaving the scene, closing off access, and immediately reporting the incident. They were lucky to avoid additional health effects. Water is a natural assumption when condensation appears in a refrigerator or on other surfaces. However, it is especially important in a laboratory setting to never assume an unidentified or spilled liquid is just water.

At UNE, all laboratory spills except very small amounts that can be properly contained/cleaned by a person trained to do so should be immediately reported to EHS. Depending on the spill size and potential hazard(s), Security may need to be called. Security can be reached immediately at x366 or 207-283-0176. They will notify all appropriate personnel.

Quick access to Safety Data Sheets is also essential for laboratory users. SDS information for all applicable chemicals should be given to medical providers or emergency personnel in the event of an accident. This allows them to provide the most effective care and response. For example, if an emergency room physician is treating someone with chemical burns, they need to know the properties of the chemical and the recommended post-exposure treatments. Each laboratory is required to have either a physical SDS notebook or know how to quickly access the SDS files on the UNE share drive:

<V:\UNEDocs\SDS-Forms\SDS Laboratory Chemicals Both Campuses>.

MINOR vs MAJOR SPILLS

As defined by the American Chemical Society

Minor Spill:

- A spill that can be managed by one person
- A spill that does not spread rapidly other than by direct contact
- A spill that does not pose immediate danger to the environment
- The hazards (physical, health, and environmental) are understood by workers (toxicity, flammability, corrosivity, and reactivity)
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) and a spill kit are available

Major Spill (requires help):

- A spill that also involves injury
- A spill of a highly toxic or flammable material requiring immediate evacuation of the area
- A spill in a stairwell or other high traffic area
- A spill that has serious potential for impact on the environment

Who to Notify:

- As always, use the posted EHS Lab Emergency Contact Information Cards to call the appropriate numbers
- Please report everything but the most minor of indoor spills and ALL outdoor spills
- UNE Security can be immediately contacted for major spills at 207-283-0176 or x366



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