



# Lab Notes

February 2004

IUPUI ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

## Infectious/Biohazardous Waste Disposal Update: Important Changes

*By Kevin Mouser*

The Department of Environmental Health and Safety has recently undertaken an effort to assess infectious waste (also commonly referred to as a biohazardous waste) management on campus. At this point in time, it appears that a high percentage of campus laboratories have direct or indirect access to autoclaves and are capable of treating their own waste.

In years past, the campus has had the luxury of referring untreated biohazardous waste to Indiana University Hospital for treatment. This service will no longer be available to campus entities after March 31, 2004 unless the location has a direct tie to the Clarian system.

The few points of generation that do not have in-house treatment capabilities will be required to contract the disposal of their infectious wastes directly with a private disposal vendor after March 31, 2004. Currently, there are two such disposal vendors servicing the Indianapolis area at a reasonable rate. Additional information will be forthcoming from EHS by means of this newsletter and by direct mailings to campus laboratories.

Additionally, there will no longer be unmanned drop-off locations within campus buildings for either treated or untreated infectious wastes. Building Services staff will collect all treated infectious wastes at the point of generation for final disposal.

EHS offers these reminders for all generators of infectious wastes:

- All infectious wastes that have been treated in-house in a manner to render it non-infectious must be labeled in a fashion that clearly indicates that the waste has been effectively treated. For wastes that have been autoclaved,

the use of tape similar to masking tape that develops dark brown or black hash marks or other wording indicating treatment that appears on the tape when exposed to the heat of an autoclave will meet this requirement.

- All infectious waste containers, whether bags or sharps containers, must be effectively closed before they are allowed to leave the lab. The top of bagged waste must be sealed off by means of a bag tie or taped closed to prevent the release of the bag's contents. Sharps containers must be closed according to the manufacturer's directions. (Please note that this is a responsibility of the laboratory generating the waste and not that of Building Services staff).
- Universal biohazard labels should only be used on items that truly present a potential infection hazard to humans. Biohazard labels should never be used on chemical waste containers as a means of communicating a chemical hazard unless the chemical is known or suspected to be contaminated with a potentially infectious substance. Containers in which infectious agents have been placed into solutions of recognized disinfectants including methanol and ethanol do not need to be labeled with the universal biohazard label.

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration Hazardous Materials Identification System (HMIS) labeling system offers a much clearer method of indicating the potential physical and chemical hazard of a given chemical agent.

## The Old Exploding Sink Trick (Do not try this at home)

By Lee Stone

It's important to know the characteristics of the chemicals you are using in your laboratory as well as how and where to store them. This information along with the associated hazards, proper handling, and how to handle exposures can be found in the material safety data sheets (MSDS) for each chemical. Mixing incompatible chemicals is a potential problem in laboratories.

A perfect example of incompatibility occurred in October 1996 in a chemistry lab at a large university. A postdoc reacted elemental sodium with an alcohol and poured it down the drain, not realizing that the sodium would ignite on contact with water. The resulting spark broke a nearby bottle of acetone. Acetone is a common solvent in many labs. The bottle broke, the material spread, and the fire spread out of control. Storing the acetone in a safer place would have limited damage. You can access MSDS sheets

on our webpage at [www.ehs.iupui.edu/ehs/prog\\_msdsearch.asp](http://www.ehs.iupui.edu/ehs/prog_msdsearch.asp) to learn the characteristics of your chemicals.



### ON-LINE CHEMICAL WASTE MANIFEST NOW AVAILABLE

The Department of Environmental Health and Safety is pleased to announce that chemical waste inventories can be submitted electronically by means of the Department's website. Please go to [http://www.ehs.iupui.edu/ehs/manifest\\_form.asp](http://www.ehs.iupui.edu/ehs/manifest_form.asp) or click on **Waste Disposal Manifest** under **On-Line Forms** at <http://www.ehs.iupui.edu>.

EHS encourages our campus customers to try this new service. We believe that you will find it a quick, convenient and effective tool for the disposal of your chemical wastes.

### NEW EMPLOYEE TRAINING SCHEDULE

#### Union Building Roof Lounge - 6th Floor

**General Safety**-For all new employees.  
10:00- 12:00 Noon

January 6, 13, 20, 27, 2004  
February 3, 10, 17, 24, 2004  
March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, 2004  
April 6, 13, 20, 27, 2004

#### Union Building (North) - Room 542

**Bloodborne Pathogens**-For all employees who may be exposed to human blood, body fluids or tissue. Session held the 2nd & 4th Monday of every month from 8:30 - 9:30 A.M.

January 12 & 16, 2004  
February 9 & 23, 2004  
March 8 & 22, 2004  
April 12 & 26, 2004

**Biosafety Training**-All employees who work with biohazardous materials are encouraged to attend. Session held the 4th Monday of every month from 9:30 - 10:30 .M.

January 26, 2004  
February 23, 2004  
March 22, 2004  
April 26, 2004

**Chemical Lab Safety**- For all employees who work with chemicals in laboratories. Sessions held the second Monday of every month from 9:30 - 11:30 A.M.

January 12, 2004  
February 9, 2004  
March 8, 2004  
April 12, 2004

## Infectious Substance Shipping Compliance

By Kevin Mouser

In past issues of *Labnotes*, we have discussed ongoing compliance issues regarding the air shipment of infectious substances and diagnostic specimens. Over the past several months the Department of Environmental Health and Safety has been directly involved in two compliance inspections relative to this issue.

The first inspection resulted when an IUPUI researcher shipped a biological specimen from a Pathology laboratory located at Wishard Hospital. Two inspectors representing the Federal Aviation Association (FAA) randomly selected the package for inspection from a local shipping hub of a major air-freight carrier. The inspectors traced the package back to the Wishard lab and presented themselves for an unannounced inspection. Labeling on the package and the training records for the staff that actually prepared the package for shipment were found to be deficient. The final outcome of the inspection is still pending.

The second inspection resulted when EHS was pulled into another random, unannounced inspection within the Clarian system by a federal Department of Transportation (DOT) inspector. Again, training records and packaging requirements were closely evaluated during the two day inspection.

Are these types of inspections an anomaly? Both the FAA and the DOT have stated that infectious substance shipment compliance is a priority for these organizations. As an illustration of their concern, the FAA has hired in excess of 100 inspectors nationwide to increase their inspection capability. It is certainly reasonable to anticipate additional inspections on the IUPUI campus.

How do IUPUI shippers of infectious substances and biological specimens ensure their compliance? At this point in time, it is the responsibility of each person involved in the preparation of packages for shipment to acquire and complete a Saf-T-Pak® *Compliance Training for Infectious Substances and Diagnostic Specimens* training compact disk which



is available for a three-day checkout from the Medical Library located in the Medical Research Library Building. It is essential that a certificate of completion be printed and filed following completion of the training module.

To further assist campus personnel with this issue, EHS staff have also completed the module and are available as technical resources for those in need of shipping infectious substances, biological or diagnostic specimens or other chemical reagents. Contact Steve Bozinovski at 8-3328 or Kevin Mouser at 4-4351 for further assistance.

## Environmental Health and Safety Welcomes Lee Stone



Please welcome K. Lee Stone as the new Laboratory Safety Manager for IUPUI. Lee is a graduate of Purdue University with over 17 years of both clinical and research laboratory experience including over 10 years of management experience. Mr. Stone's office is in the Environmental Health and Safety Department located in the Union Building room 043D. If you have any laboratory safety issues, questions or concerns please contact Lee by phone at 278-6150 or e-mail at [leestone@iupui.edu](mailto:leestone@iupui.edu).

Letter from the Editor

The Vision of our Environmental Health and Safety department is as follows. Our vision at IUPUI is to be recognized as one of the nation's best urban universities. IUPUI will not be recognized as such, unless the University demonstrates a strong commitment to protecting the health and safety of employees, students and the public as well as protecting the environment. Our goals are to have a workplace free of injuries and hazardous exposures, to prevent or minimize any adverse impact to the environment, to provide services of the highest quality to all associated institutions and to be recognized as leaders in the areas of environmental protection, health, safety and fire protection.

I think it is important to look at this vision statement a little closer. If you look closely, you will find the word protect is used more than any other word in our vision statement and this is for a reason. Our responsibility is to protect both you and your environment from illness or injury due to negligence or poor laboratory safety practice. We accomplish this by providing technical guidance, compliance assistance, quality assurance, remediation oversight, and training.

We strive to manage environmental, health, safety and fire protection issues by giving them the highest priority, utilizing best management practices and adhering to departmental values. Our department values are to practice our profession by following recognized scientific principles and management practices, factually informing affected parties of the findings in an honest, straight-forward manner, exhibiting the highest level of integrity and honesty while never compromising the public's welfare.

We will strive to be involved in continual education and professional development, to provide superior customer service in all areas, to perform service only in the areas of our competence and maintain information as confidential when appropriate.

As the Laboratory Safety Manager, I will strive to uphold these statements. I hope to become a familiar face to you as we advance this program. I cannot do my job without your help. Please contact me with any questions or concerns and understand that when we inspect your laboratories we are working to protect you and the interests of IUPUI. I will strive to develop a strong line of communication between the laboratory safety coordinators and myself. Without the help of the laboratory safety coordinators, our tasks would be impossible. Remember, with your help we can have a safe work environment as we continue to develop into one of the nation's best urban universities.

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