

Chemistry Safety Notes

Volume 4, Issue 3

May 2016

"Chemistry Safety Notes" is published by the Chemistry Dept. Safety Committee, written & edited by Debbie Decker, Safety Mgr.

Hazardous Waste Reminders:

1. Now's the time! Get that unused/unusable inventory, cruddy containers, and legacy stuff from generations of graduate students out of your lab. What will happen with hazardous waste costs when this current initiative runs out on June 30th is unknown. So take advantage **now!**
2. The hazardous waste technicians will no longer remove containers that have been overfilled. Overfilled means liquid above the fill line on carboys and above the shoulder on bottles. It's a handling safety issue

FR Gloves—Update

The new FR glove ensemble has been distributed to those using pyrophoric materials outside of a glove box. The pyrophoric materials SOP template has been updated and Safety Net #135 is in process. I'll work with Henry to stock the approved gloves. Please be sure everyone has been trained and knows when to use the new gloves. Thanks!

Lab Safety Refresher Training

The online [UC Laboratory Safety Refresher](#) course is now available. The refresher course must be successfully completed every three years by all personnel working in laboratories and technical areas with hazardous materials and/or operations. Laboratory personnel will continue to receive reminders to take the refresher course prior to their three-year anniversary date.

The UC Laboratory Safety Refresher course will take 20-30 minutes to complete and provides information on the following topics:

- Rights and Responsibilities
- Safety Culture
- Identifying Hazards and Protecting Yourself
- Engineering Controls
- Administrative Controls
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Safety Day to Day
- Exposure Awareness
- Emergencies





Stop Using Your Foot to Push the Elevator Button!

An elbow or a knuckle work just as well.

Sheesh!

Safety Glasses

Over the past few weeks, I've noticed a distressing uptick in the number of people who are not wearing their safety glasses while in the lab. No matter what you may be doing in the lab, **when you step across the threshold, you need to have safety glasses on.** If your safety glasses are uncomfortable, please see me and we'll find you a pair that fits properly. The goal of PPE is for it to be comfortable enough you forget you're wearing PPE. Wear your safety glasses!



Saving energy doesn't have to mean sacrificing thermal comfort

A thermostat measures room temperature, but the people in the buildings are better at telling us if it's the right temperature. Combining these two pieces of data allows analysts in the Energy Conservation Office to simultaneously uncover potential energy savings and improve thermal comfort on campus. We're looking for a new layer of data, and it comes from you. Use [TherMOOstat](#) to let us know when your room is hot, warm, perfect, chilly, or cold.

ECO takes these responses and tries to fine-tune and optimize the energy use in a space – whether through mechanical repairs or changes to the heating, ventilation and air conditioning programming. For example, if making people comfortable requires increasing the amount of energy needed to heat or cool a space, ECO drills down further into trends in the data and makes site visits to identify potential mechanical issues or other culprits that can be addressed to fix the problem. This is all done with your comfort and happiness in mind, because being comfortable in a space can help boost productivity and learning.”

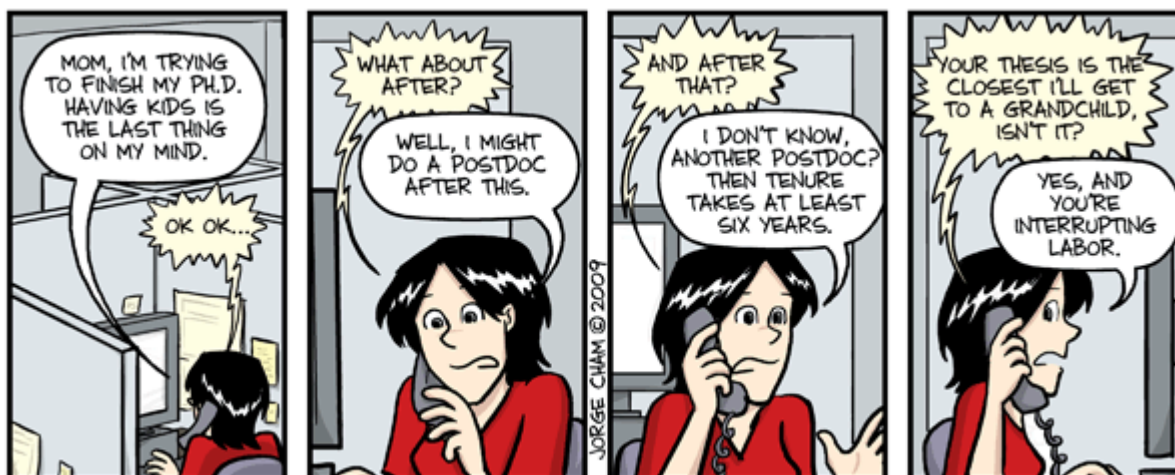


Managing Stress—Some Tips

While managing stress isn't typically associated with safety, stress does interfere with your ability to maintain focus, work slowly, and think through potential hazards and risks. With apologies to the [USC Masters of Social Work](#) program, I offer the following:

1. **Remember to breathe.** Sounds obvious but a deep, slow breath can help to steady you and clear your head when you're feeling overwhelmed.
2. **Take a break—it's okay!** Even a quick walk with a friend to get coffee can be remarkably restorative. Getting some distance from your work can help you see connections and solutions you miss when you've been slogging away without a break.
3. **Create a study plan and stick to it.** Take the time to write down what you need to do and come up with a plan of action. Some of your colleagues use a variation of this technique to keep track of their lives: <http://bulletjournal.com/> Personally, I use a white board. It's very satisfying to put a big ol' checkmark next to an accomplishment.
4. **Don't be afraid to ask for help.** There are lots of places to go for help. Your professor, your classmates, and department resources are here for you. The campus Student Health Center Counseling and Psychological Services ([CAPS](#)) and [Graduate Studies](#) have resources that can help you cope.

We all want you to succeed—please don't feel there's no one else who is going through what you're going through or that no one else would understand. Those around you have gone through challenges and come through those challenges stronger for the experience. Please reach out if you need to!



Spark from pressure gauge caused University of Hawaii explosion, fire department says

Postdoc Thea Ekins-Coward, who lost an arm in the incident, was using a gauge not specified for work with flammable gases



Debris littered a lab bench after the explosion. *Credit: Honolulu Fire Department*

A 29-year-old researcher was seriously injured in a lab explosion at the University of Hawaii, Mānoa, on March 16.

The researcher is [Thea Ekins-Coward](#), and she lost an arm and suffered other injuries, according to [local media reports](#). When C&EN inquired about her condition on March 20, Queen's Medical Center, the facility where she is hospitalized, declined to release any information.

Ekins-Coward is listed as a postdoctoral researcher in the alternative fuels group at the [Hawaii Natural Energy Institute](#) (HNEI), which is a research unit within the university. The university has not confirmed that Ekins-Coward was the person injured.

The lab in which the explosion happened was operated by HNEI and focuses on renewable energy and degradable bioplastics, said Brian Taylor, dean of the School of Ocean & Earth Science & Technology, during a March 17 news conference. At the time of the incident, the researcher who was injured was combining hydrogen, carbon dioxide, and oxygen gases from high-pressure cylinders into a lower pressure container. The mixture was to be used as a feedstock to grow cells. "Since 2008, when the project began, the process has been used almost daily and without incident," Taylor said. ...

Editor's Note: Here's the link to the C&EN story, also by Jyllian Kemsley: <http://cen.acs.org/articles/94/web/2016/04/Spark-pressure-gauge-caused-University.html>

There are images included in the article—which are not for the faint of heart.

Release of the final report has been delayed to end of June.