



INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY

On November 10, 1999 the OUHSC Deans' Council and Provost Joseph Ferretti reviewed and approved a new OUHSC Infectious Diseases Policy. This policy incorporates and modifies existing procedures for bloodborne pathogens and tuberculosis, and expands guidance to the campus on vaccination/ immunization requirements, health and safety precautions, and exposure procedures for other infectious diseases.

This policy was developed with the guidance of a committee comprised of OUHSC infectious disease and occupational health professionals, Personnel Services, and Legal Council. The policy may be reviewed at: <http://w3.ouhsc.edu/ehso/infectious%20diseases/infdisp021500.pdf>.



SAFE NEEDLE DEVICES

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued a bulletin, "NIOSH Alert: Preventing Needlestick Injuries in Health Care Settings." found at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/2000-108.html> which includes strategic measures to protect health care workers from job-related injuries caused by needles in syringes, intravenous delivery systems, and related medical devices. 600,000 to 800,000 occupational needlestick injuries are estimated to occur every year which can lead to serious or potentially fatal infections with bloodborne pathogens such as hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus, or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Hollow-bore needles such as those used in syringes present the greatest risk for needlestick, but potential for injury exists whenever any sharp device is used, the NIOSH Alert reports. NIOSH recommends that the use of needles be eliminated where possible. If safe and effective alternatives to needles are not available, devices with safety features such as shields and sheaths should be used.

OSHA's position on safer needle devices is that their Bloodborne Pathogen Standard requires the use of engineering and work practice controls to eliminate or minimize employee exposure. Instances where safer needle devices might be appropriate, but the actual use of them has not been implemented, could result in a violation and citation.

EARTH DAY

Earth Day, April 22, 2000, is the 30th anniversary of an event



that many regard as the birth of the modern environmental movement.

In 1970 the spirit of Earth Day led to the creation of the Environmental

Protection Agency. Earth Day 2000 is an opportunity to focus community attention to our surrounding environment. Some activities to consider for Earth Day are:

- Plant native shrubs and flowers
- Start a community garden
- Start a neighborhood yard waste composting site

Earth Day events being held in Oklahoma City are:

- **Earth Day 2000;** Co-hosted by Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the City of Oklahoma City will be held Thursday, April 13 from 10am-6pm at Kerr Park to include informative exhibitors and live

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entertainment. For more information contact Becky Durrett at 297-2141 or becky.durrett@ci.okc.ok.us.

- **City Shine 2000**; Oklahoma City Beautiful is planning their downtown litter pickup on Thursday, April 13 starting at 3:00pm and cleanup efforts at some of the City parks on Saturday morning, April 15, 2000. For more information call Ms. Janie Deupree at 525-8822.
- **Adopt A Highway Cleanup**; The ODOT program will be doing their all-state litter pickup on Saturday morning, April 15, 2000. To find out how you can participate call 521-4037.

Earth Day events being held in Tulsa are:

- **EnviroExpo**; Co-hosted by the Tulsa Zoo and the Metropolitan Environmental Trust (MET) Thursday, April 20 from 10am to 2pm at Bartlett Square-Downtown Main Mall. Includes environmental exhibits, music, and fun for children. For more information call (918) 584-0584 or email Rfirmansj@INCOG.org.
- **Earth Day at the Zoo**; Sponsored by MET, Saturday, April 22, 2000 from 10am to 6pm at the Tulsa Zoo. Includes live music, participate in planting a tree, and environmental displays. For more information contact MET at (918) 584-0584 or visit MET's website: <http://www.metrecycle.com>.

For more information see <http://www.earthday.net>.

GLUTERALDEHYDE UPDATE

Gluteraldehyde is commonly found in commercially available cold sterilizing agents for medical, surgical, veterinary and dental equipment. Gluteraldehyde has also found use as a tissue fixative, in radiographic solutions and X-ray developer solutions. Exposure to gluteraldehyde can cause dermatitis, rhinitis, throat irritation, eye irritation, and occupational asthma. Sensitization to gluteraldehyde can occur, causing some persons to experience severe reactions to very small exposures.

In a speech given to the American Nurses Association in Washington, D.C., November 6, 1999, the Assistant Secretary of Labor for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Charles N. Jeffress, stated that one of the items for action by OSHA will be a new permissible exposure limit (PEL) for gluteraldehyde.

One of the most commonly used gluteraldehyde-containing product on campus is CIDEX®, made by Johnson &

Johnson. Johnson & Johnson recently announced a new gluteraldehyde-free product, CIDEX OPA®, which is reportedly nonsensitizing, nonirritating, and compatible with a variety of medical devices. For more information, see http://www.johnsonandjohnson.com/news_finance/139.htm.

ADVISORY ISSUED ON 2,4-DICHLOROPHENOL (2,4-DCP)



Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration are issuing a chemical advisory because skin exposure to even small amounts of heated liquid 2,4-Dichlorophenol (2,4-DCP) can cause rapid death to workers. The substance, which is a solid at room temperature, is used as a feedstock to make herbicides and some other chemical products, and is sold by Sigma-Aldrich and other laboratory suppliers as a laboratory chemical. EPA received a report of a worker death associated with exposure to the liquid form of 2,4-DCP in October 1998. Investigation of the fatality showed that a similar worker death had occurred in 1992 at a facility outside of the United States. All of the cases have involved workers getting their skin splashed with the molten form of 2,4-DCP, followed quickly by collapse and death.

SURPLUS CHEMICALS



The EHSO has the following chemicals available free of charge (for University uses only). Contact Tim Havel at 405/271-3000 or timothy-havel@ouhsc.edu.

Acetonitrile	Papaverine Hydrochloride
Ammonium Hydroxide	Pentoxifylline
Ammonium Sulfate	Petroleum Ether
Amyl Alcohol (Iso-)	Platinum Oxide
Benzoic Acid	Phenol Solution (70%)
Butanol (Iso-)	Phenyl Phenol
Calcium Oxide	Phenylalanine
Dioxane	Phenylenediamine
Ethyl Acetate	Phosphoric Acid
Glycerin	Potassium Cyanide
Glycerol	Potassium Sulfate
Hexane	Quinine Sulfate
Lactophenol Aniline Blue Stain	Selenium Metal, Powder
Lithium Chloride	Sodium Carboxymethylcellulose
Manganese Oxide	Sodium Cyanide
Manganous Chloride	Sodium Fluoride
Methanol	Sodium Tungstate, Dihydrate, Powder
Methylene Chloride	Sulfuric Acid
Molybdenum	Toluene
Molybdic Trioxide	Xylene



Indoor Air Quality Corner

Spring is in the air. Spring brings warmth, sunshine, flowers, and tree blossoms; but also pollen, mold, allergies, and sometimes increased asthma attacks.

MOLD

Molds are microscopic fungi that are found in virtually every environment and can be detected, both indoors and outdoors, year round. No one knows how many species of fungi exist but estimates range from tens of thousands to perhaps three hundred thousand or more. Some people are sensitive to molds. For people sensitive to molds, exposure can cause symptoms such as nasal stuffiness, eye irritation, or wheezing. Some people with serious allergies to molds may have more severe reactions including fever, shortness of breath, and asthma attacks.

Mold growth is encouraged by warm and humid conditions. Here are some ways to control or eliminate mold.

- Humidity levels should usually be kept between 35 and 50%. If you suspect that you have humidity problems, contact the EHSO or your appropriate facilities services office. (Site Support for Oklahoma City, Operations for Tulsa, etc.)
- If a humidifier is used during dry months, it should be cleaned weekly with diluted bleach and the water should be changed daily so that mold does not grow.
- If you keep live plants in the office, place them on a waterproof saucer, not clay which can absorb water and dampen carpets. Do not use decorative fiber baskets (wicker) since they can get wet, degrade, and become an indoor source for mold. Water plants on Monday instead of Friday, so your plant is not damp and sitting in the dark all weekend.
- Wet or moldy ceiling tiles and flooded areas should be reported as soon as possible to Site Support in Oklahoma City (271-3000), Operations in Tulsa (838-4860) or your appropriate facility management office. Wet and flooded areas should be cleaned and dried immediately to reduce the possibility of mold growth.
- For mold control tips for the home, see the links on the EHSO webpage.

ANIMAL ALLERGIES



The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) reports that animals or animal products such as dander, hair, scales, fur, saliva, and body wastes contain powerful allergens that can cause both respiratory and skin disorders, see <http://www.edc.gov/niosh/animalalrt.htm>. Persons at risk include pet owners, laboratory animal and veterinary technicians, researchers, veterinarians, and others who have prolonged, close association with animals. Also at risk are workers who handle animal products or associated materials such as bedding and feed. About 33% of animal handlers have reported allergic symptoms and approximately 10% have symptoms of animal-induced asthma.

Sources of exposure to animal allergens vary with animal species. For example, allergens have been found in the urine of rats; the urine, saliva, and pelts of guinea pigs; rabbit pelts; cat saliva and dander; dog dander; and horse serum and dander. Exposures to rats, mice, and rabbits have frequently been associated with the development of occupational asthma.

Inhalation is one way for animal allergens to enter the body. After a period of time (often several months, but occasionally many years), one may inhale sufficient quantities of allergens to become sensitized - that is, develop symptoms when exposed again, even to tiny amounts of the allergen. Other routes of exposures may come from animal bites or scratches.

Symptoms vary among persons who have become sensitized to animals. Mild reactions include sneezing and runny nose. More serious reactions to an inhaled allergen may result in asthma symptoms such as cough, chest tightness, wheezing, or shortness of breath. In sensitized persons, reactions often occur soon after exposure to the animal product, but they may be delayed for 2 to 8 hours or more.

NIOSH recommends several measures to reduce exposures to animal allergens in the workplace and prevent animal-induced asthma and allergies, including the

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- Provide training to educate workers about animal allergies and steps for risk reduction.
- Perform animal manipulations within ventilated hoods or safety cabinets when possible.
- Avoid wearing street clothes while working with animals. Leave work clothes at the workplace to avoid potential exposure problems for family members.
- Keep cages and animal areas clean. Take particular care to control exposures during cleaning.
- Reduce skin contact with animal products such as dander, serum, and urine by using gloves, lab coats, and approved particulate respirators with faceshields.
- Provide health monitoring and appropriate counseling and medical follow up for workers who have become sensitized or have developed allergy symptoms.

Contact the EHSO for additional information or assistance.

ASTHMA

Asthma affects more than 15 million Americans, including almost 5 million children. In fact, in 1990, costs related to asthma were estimated to total \$6.2 billion, and the projected cost of asthma in this country for the year 2000 is expected to double to \$14.5 billion.

If you or a family member has asthma, here are a few of

ways to control your environment and perhaps avoid or control asthma attacks. Of course, you should always follow the recommendations of your physician.

- Replace drapes with blinds for easier dust control.
- Remove knick-knacks to minimize dust build-up.
- Do not dry dust. Use a cloth dampened with water to trap dust.
- Because insects or mice can aggravate persons with allergies, keep food wastes in your area to a minimum. Because the housekeeping staff may not empty trash on Saturday morning, depending on your facility, it would be best to take the food wastes generated on Friday to the outside dumpster. Also, it is better to store food only in break areas to minimize problems with pests.
- For further information on asthma, check out the links on the EHSO webpage.

SAFETY TRAINING DATES

Because of the recent implementation of the Infectious Diseases Policy, the EHSO is in the process of updating our training materials to reflect these changes. Therefore, the next EHSO safety training sessions have not yet been scheduled. In the meantime you may log on to our on-line training at <http://w3.ouhsc.edu/ehso/logon.html>, or you may request self-study packets from your designated coordinator or the EHSO at 405/271-3000.

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