**EMERGENCY RESPONSE TRAINING FACT SHEET**

*Based on Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations (29 CFR) 1910.120, Hazardous waste operations and emergency response.*

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**CHEMICAL SPILLS YOU CAN HANDLE YOURSELF**

Principal investigators, employees, and students working in research labs should be aware that required safety training for lab workers includes emergency response training

Emergency training applies to building evacuation procedures during fires and explosions, recognition of system alarms, and appropriate action in the event of spills of hazardous materials in the lab. Lab workers must receive training to distinguish between the types of spills they can handle on their own and those spills that are classified as “MAJOR.” Major spills dictate the need for outside help.

Lab workers are qualified to clean-up spills that are “minor.” A minor spill is defined as a spill that does not pose a significant safety or health hazard to employees in the immediate vicinity nor does it have the potential to become an emergency within a short time frame. Lab workers can handle minor spills because they are expected to be familiar with the hazards of the chemicals they routinely handle during an “average” workday. If the spill exceeds the scope of the lab workers’ experience, training or willingness to respond, the workers must be able to determine that the spill cannot be dealt with internally.

Emergency assistance is provided by EHS and the University Hazardous Materials Team. Spills requiring the involvement of individuals outside the lab are those exceeding the exposure one would expect during the normal course of work. Spills in this category are those which have truly become emergency situations in that lab workers are overwhelmed beyond their level of training. Their response capability is compromised by the magnitude of the incident. Emergencies such as this involve:

1. the need to evacuate employees in the area
2. the need for response from outside the immediate release area
3. the release poses, or has potential to pose, conditions that are immediately dangerous to life and health
4. the release poses a serious threat of fire and explosion
5. the release requires immediate attention due to imminent danger
6. the release may cause high levels of exposure to toxic substances
7. there is uncertainty that the worker can handle the severity of the hazard with the personal protective equipment (PPE) and equipment that has been provided and the exposure limit could be exceeded easily
8. the situation is unclear or data is lacking regarding important factors.

Depending on the circumstances, what begins as a minor spill could at some point escalate into a major emergency. Responding lab workers must monitor changing conditions. Again, lab-specific training must cover how to tell the difference!

EHS employees have received in-depth training qualifying them for emergency response beyond the level of minor spills. They are prepared to answer calls which exceed the training scope of lab workers. Lab workers are encouraged to play it safe and contact EHS for clean-up assistance when in doubt about the status of a spill. EHS assistance is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. **EHS: 865-6391**

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**ALL SPILLS THAT REQUIRE OUTSIDE INTERVENTION**

**A. Emergency Response Procedures.** Call 911 to report fires, explosions, medical emergencies, and hazardous material spills. Dispatch will contact EHS and appropriate emergency response personnel at anytime to respond to hazardous material spills.

An *Incident Report* form must be completed for each emergency incident involving laboratories.

Following a “MAJOR” incident, EHS responders may determine, based on the circumstances of the spill or release, that clean-up of the site can be handled by lab workers or other University employees (under the direction of the lab supervisor or EHS

In the event that EHS is called to a “minor” spill (i.e., lab workers have been conservative in assessing hazard and assumed worst case), EHS representatives will participate in or oversee the clean-up to support the lab workers. In both of these cases where clean-up becomes a lab responsibility, EHS can provide clean-up supplies and equipment, personal protective equipment (to the level of training of the workers), and safety instructions.

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**GENERAL UNIVERSITY EMERGENCY INFORMATION**

**A. Building Emergency and Evacuation.**

In the event of a fire, hazardous material release, or other hazardous situation requiring emergency, the person who discovers the emergency will:

1. evacuate the zone
2. activate the fire alarm, if needed
3. call Police Services and report the incident
4. assist emergency personnel by providing information regarding location of the incident, origin, and persons involved.

The person who discovers the emergency shall not be placed in imminent danger.

**C. Incident (Accident) Reporting.** All laboratory incidents shall be reported to EHS, including minor spills, fires, or injuries. Laboratory incidents shall be investigated. The supervisor shall be responsible for implementing corrective action to prevent repeat incidents.

**In the event of worker injury, the immediate supervisor of the injured employee must fill out the** [***First Report of Injury***](http://www.ohr.psu.edu/workerscomp/injury.cfm)

**D. Signs.** The following signs and labels are required for **all** laboratories in University facilities:

1. A “Laboratory Information” sign shall be posted outside all laboratories, either on the outside of the door or on the wall beside the door. This sign provides information on specific hazards in the lab and telephone numbers of responsible faculty and staff. The information shall be updated as necessary.
2. An “Emergency and Laboratory Safety Phone numbers” sign shall be posted in a prominent location inside the lab, near the door or telephone. This sign provides emergency numbers in case of an emergency.
3. A label bearing the University Police emergency number shall be placed on each telephone in the lab.