It’s an Emergency! What Do I Do?

Many times in emergency situations people freeze up and become unclear on what they should do and who they should contact. By planning in advance and taking steps to adequately prepare for potential emergencies you will be better able to respond to unexpected situations. Do you know who to call if you have an emergency and need help?

Always call the WSU Police at 577-2222. Do Not Call 911. The WSU police have a quicker response time. They will assess the situation and notify other emergency responders and personnel as needed.

Prepare in advance. Know where the nearest eyewash, safety shower and emergency equipment are located. Take a minute the next time you are in the lab and identify where these items are located, making sure they are accessible and not stuck behind a pile of boxes. In an emergency, it is essential to reach safety equipment quickly and for it to be operational. Know how to use a fire extinguisher. The Office of Risk Management provides fire extinguisher and evacuation training. In any emergency situation remain as calm as possible. It is easier to stay calm if you know what needs to be done. It is also very important you acquaint yourselves with the emergency evacuation signs in your building(s).

**Fires**
- Pull the fire alarm
- Call the WSU Police at 577-2222
- If you have been properly trained and/or experienced in the use of a portable fire extinguisher and the fire is small, extinguish the fire using the PASS Method:
  - Pull pin
  - Aim nozzle at base of fire
  - Squeeze lever
  - Sweep extinguisher side to side
- Never endanger your life trying to put out a fire. Close doors and evacuate the building
- If you hear a fire alarm, always evacuate the building. Never assume it is a drill.

**Chemical/ Radioactive Spills**
- For emergency hazard spills or afterhours spills call the WSU Police at 577-2222.
- Alert persons in the immediate area of the spill. Confine the spill area by closing doors. Evacuate surrounding areas as needed.
- Without endangering yourself, attend to any injured or contaminated victims. Move victims to fresh air and a safe place.
- Get contaminated victims to an emergency eye wash or safety shower. Remove contaminated clothing. Run the water for at least 15 minutes.
- If the spilled chemical is known to be flammable, turn off all ignition and heat sources.
- For non-emergency spills, contact the Office of Environmental Health and Safety for assistance at 577-1200 during business hours, 8:30-5:00pm.

**Injuries or Exposures requiring medical attention**
- For emergencies contact the WSU Police at 577-2222 and go to Detroit Receiving Emergency Room for assistance.
- For non-emergencies during business hours, 6:30am-5:00pm, go to the University Health Center Clinic, 4K UHC, 745-4522.
- For non-emergencies after hours go to Detroit Receiving Emergency Room for assistance.

Accidents and emergencies do happen. By planning and knowing how to respond in advance you will be prepared for the unexpected.

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**Upcoming Safety Training Events:**
For any training registration: [http://www.oehs.wayne.edu/training/laboratory-training.php](http://www.oehs.wayne.edu/training/laboratory-training.php)

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<thead>
<tr>
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<td>1.00 — 2.15 PM</td>
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<td>4/12/11</td>
<td>1.00 — 3.30 PM</td>
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Animal Allergies

A Serious Health Risk

Allergic reactions to animals are one of the most common conditions that affect personnel involved in the care and use of research animals. Institutions engaged in research that involve laboratory animals will inevitably have personnel that develop allergic symptoms related to animal exposure. Approximately 11% to 44% of regularly exposed animal handlers develop some allergic symptoms with an estimated 4 to 22% eventually developing asthma.

Exposure to Animal Allergens

Animal allergens develop as a result of repeated exposure to animal proteins found in animal dander, urine, fur, etc. This exposure occurs by way of inhalation, skin, and/or mucous membrane contact. Generally symptoms develop within 6 months to 3 years of exposure; nevertheless symptoms can develop after longer periods of exposure. Almost all species of laboratory animals can trigger an allergic reaction, however allergies to rats, rabbits, mice, guinea pigs, cats, and dogs are the most common. Risk factors for becoming allergic to animal allergens include a history of atopy: allergic hypersensitivity, chronic respiratory illness, smoking, and exposure to animals.

Common Animal Allergy Symptoms;

- Runny nose
- Watery itchy eyes
- Nasal congestion
- Skin rash
- Cough or wheezing
- Shortness of breath

Because animal allergies can develop into asthma or other chronic respiratory illnesses, and can also result in life threatening conditions such as status asthmaticus: an acute exacerbation of asthma, or anaphylactic shock: a severe whole-body allergic reaction, it’s important to prevent or decrease developing allergy symptoms by decreasing exposure to animal allergens.

Techniques that Decrease Exposure to Animal Allergens;

- Insure proper ventilation and humidity in the animal housing areas.
- Employ state of the art animal caging systems and bedding materials.
- Provide biosafety cabinets with ventilated hoods for animal manipulation.
- Decrease animal density: number of animals per cubic meter of room volume.
- Educate personnel about animal allergy prevention strategies.
- Provide on-site, eyewash, showers, and laundry facilities.
- Provide personal protective equipment (PPE): gloves, lab coat, N95 mask, and eye protection.
- Implement animal allergy surveillance programs and offer medical treatment.

Animal handlers may contact OEHS Occupational Health Specialist at 313-577-5917 regarding; N95 mask fit test, medical assessment, or other animal allergy concerns.

Mold growth in cold rooms

High relative humidity and limited air exchange in cold rooms can support mold growth. Mold exposure may cause allergic reactions and worsen existing respiratory conditions, such as asthma. Rust on cans or other metal surfaces and mold on non-porous surfaces indicate elevated humidity. Mold growth in cold rooms can be prevented by reducing moisture and removing materials that support mold growth.

The following actions help prevent mold growth in cold rooms:

- Clean surfaces frequently with a dilute dish soap solution and a cloth towel. Dry each surface after cleaning.
- Clean up all spilled liquids (e.g., buffers, media) promptly. Mold can thrive on organic media.
- Remove wood, styrofoam, cardboard and paper. Wood shelves absorb moisture and are an ideal breeding ground for mold.
- Replace wood shelves with open stainless steel shelves that allow air flow throughout the storage area. If paper product (e.g., kim-wipes) use is required, store them outside of the cold room or in a sealed plastic container between uses.
- Keep the door firmly shut to minimize condensation inside the cooler. Excess condensation may indicate that the door does not properly seal.
- Report water leaks to Facilities Planning and Management.
- For shut downs longer than one day, thoroughly clean the unit with dish detergent and keep the doors of the unit open to allow for complete drying of the unit. Do not close the doors until the unit is ready to be re-entered into service.

For dangerous goods shipments:

http://www.oehs.wayne.edu/dangerous-goods.php
Dealing With Peroxide-forming Chemicals

Peroxide-forming chemicals are a class of compounds that have the ability to form shock-sensitive explosive peroxide crystals (for the compound list go to: http://www.oehs.wayne.edu). Many of the organic solvents commonly used in our laboratories have the potential to form explosive peroxide crystals, diethyl ether and tetrahydrofuran are two of the more common peroxide-forming chemicals used in labs. Therefore, it is extremely important that this procedure be followed regarding the identification, handling, storage, and disposal of peroxide-forming chemicals.

Under normal storage conditions they have the potential to generate and accumulate peroxide crystal formations, which may violently detonate when subjected to thermal or mechanical shock. Peroxide-forming chemicals react with oxygen even at low concentrations to form peroxy compounds. The risk associated with peroxide formation increases if the peroxide crystallizes or becomes concentrated by evaporation or distillation. Factors that affect rate of peroxide formation include exposure to air, light and heat, moisture, and contamination from metals.

When possible, only purchase quantities of peroxide-forming chemicals that you expect to use within expiration and disposal timeframes.

All bottles of peroxide-forming chemicals must have the date received and the date opened information marked on the container.

Do not store peroxide-forming chemicals in direct sunlight as light can accelerate the chemical reactions that form peroxides.

If the peroxide-forming chemical is flammable and requires refrigeration, then an explosion-proof refrigerator must be used.

Do not distill, evaporate or concentrate a peroxide-forming chemical until you have first tested it for the presence of peroxides. (Peroxides are usually less volatile than their parent material and will tend to concentrate in the hot distillation pot).

Never touch or attempt to open container of a peroxide-forming liquid if there are whitish crystals around the cap and/or in the bottle. The friction of screwing the cap may detonate the bottle. If you encounter such a bottle, contact the OEHS immediately for removal.

Disposal with OEHS must occur within the timeframe allowed once the container is received or opened, whichever the earlier of the two dates. The expiration period for an opened container is up to six months and is about one year for an unopened.

Thanks to our news contributors:
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