Laboratory Safety Officer Meeting – Notes
October 26, 2012

1. Opening Introduction:
   a. Effective July 2012, the Radiation Safety Office and Environmental Safety have
      merged into the Department of Risk Management & Safety. Francis provided a
      summary of staffing changes within the department and reviewed the current
      Laboratory Safety Professional’s assignments (now aligned by college). The current
      list is as follows:
         i. Elayna Mellas (emellas@uvm.edu) ➔ College of Medicine
         ii. Lee Diamond (ldiamond@uvm.edu) ➔ College of Engineering & Math, and
             the College of Agriculture & Life Science
         iii. Victoria Carhart (vcarhart@uvm.edu) ➔ College of Arts & Sciences
         iv. Shari Langlois (slanglois@uvm.edu) ➔ Rubenstein School, and Nursing and
             Allied Health
         v. Sonia Godoy-Tundidor (mgodoytu@uvm.edu) ➔ Colchester Research Facility
             Ungulate Facility & Animal Care Facilities in CRF, Given, HSRF and Dewey.

2. Regulatory Updates
   a. UCLA Accident: California district attorney filed criminal charges against UCLA and
      the Principal Investigator. UCLA regents reached a plea agreement in August. The
      hearing for the PI is scheduled for November 16th. This tragedy has changed how
      campuses look at safety oversight in laboratories.
   b. UVM’s Consent Order: An August 2010 inspection by the Vermont Department of
      Environmental Conservation concluded: 1) 60% of laboratories were not conducting
      self-inspections; 2) the University’s Environmental Management Plan was not current;
      and 3) the University did not have an established oversight process in place to ensure
      safety. As a result, the University was fined almost $20,000.
   c. New Laboratory Safety Policy:
      i. Risk Management & Safety has a new website (http://www.uvm.edu/safety)
         Please utilize this site for safety information, training and waste tag entries.
      ii. The link to UVM Laboratory Health & Safety policy is available there.
      iii. The University has a new electronic safety audit program. The goal will be to
           streamline the process and more efficiently track and report internal audit
           findings. Full utilization of this system will take place in December.

3. From Around Our Campus
   a. Accidents: Four recent accidents were reviewed during the meeting as examples of the
      types of accidents occurring in our laboratories. What went right and lessons learned
      were discussed.
      i. In one incident, it was reported that the injured person walked alone to the ER
         after receiving a needle-stick contaminated with a cyanide. This was in error,
         the injured person was accompanied by other department personnel.
   b. Examples of Success:
      i. Dr. Bierman has made safety information pertaining to his lab operations more
         easily attainable by adding them to his website.
      ii. In Anatomy there are new down draft tables to significantly reduce people’s
          exposure to embalming fluid.
      iii. Dr. Weiss’ lab has developed a comprehensive method for labeling and storing
           their chemicals.
4. Fire Prevention and Safety
   a. Burlington Fire Department continues to perform inspections of our buildings looking for fire code violations. During a recent inspection of the Given building, authorities found more than 100 violations. Typical conditions found during inspections are as follows:
      i. Extension cords not properly used (i.e. used as permanent wiring)
      ii. Power strips plugged together like a chain
      iii. Electrical panels are blocked or covered
      iv. Excessive office clutter – hoarding of paper documents
      v. Sprinkler heads crowded by stored materials such as boxes on shelves, etc.
      vi. Fire extinguishers blocked
      vii. Fire doors propped open
      viii. Gas cylinders not restrained or stored improperly

5. Safety Training
   a. Attendees were directed to the new laboratory safety site to view the updated training matrix. Everyone working full-time in a lab must complete both classroom trainings (Keeping Your Lab Safe and Emergency Response). Annual refresher training is being developed for 2013. Also, labs were reminded about the importance of documenting training they perform on specialized equipment, in lab procedures or on particularly hazardous chemicals.

6. Assessing Risks
   a. The lab responsibility for assessing the hazards of materials and controls for the safe use of those materials was discussed. The Chemical Use Planning form was presented as a tool to help with thorough and documented assessments.
   b. An updated draft version of the Chemical Use Planning Form was distributed to the attendees. Participants worked through the form developing an assessment for concentrated inorganic acids. There was great discussion during this forum and a few of the suggestions for improvements are as follows:
      i. For generic chemical groups, the forms (or standard guidelines) should already be completed and available to lab groups on the safety website. This will help standardize the use of hazardous chemicals by laboratories throughout campus. Perhaps use the Hazardous Chemicals Of Concern (HCOC) inventory as a starting point.
      ii. When developing forms, it is important to keep them simple. Not too many check boxes and focus only on the most important hazards.
      iii. Do the forms have to be updated annually? No, only if something has changed (new chemical, different concentration, new handling technique).
      iv. Some chemicals require a specific planning document due to specific hazards, controls or uses.
   c. While the responsibility to assess the risk of all chemicals does fall on the PI, a CUPF (or other appropriate documentation) is required only for those that are hazardous and in use.

7. Waste Reminders
   a. Broken Glass boxes: Please ensure the box has a plastic bag liner and tape the box bottom to eliminate leakage of glass pieces. Also, lab personnel should take full glass boxes to the nearest dumpster and toss them in it as custodians no longer perform this function for the full-size boxes.
   b. Disposal of Non-Hazardous lab materials: pipet tips that contained non-hazardous materials should be placed in either a broken glass box or in a biowaste container. Attendees asked about other lab materials such as conical tubes and weight boats. For
now these should be placed in the broken glass box. A suggestion was made for thicker trash bags to deal with the risks from plastic pipette tips.

c. Biowaste – Red biowaste bags should not be directly placed on the floor. Also, when utilizing the cardboard boxes from Stericycle as a collection container, please cover the box with a hard plastic lid when not in use. Lids can be purchased through Chemsorce (http://www.uvm.edu/safety/lab/purchase-chemicals). Attendees were also interested in purchasing wheeled dollies on which the box fits snugly.
   i. Follow-up: Wheeled dollies will be available for pre-order purchase through ChemSource soon. Place the order online through ChemSource and the dolly will be delivered to your lab once they are received by Risk Management & Safety. The cost for the dolly is approximately $43.00.

8. Open Forum
   a. What is the liability of safety officers and supervisors if something goes wrong?
      i. The University has indemnification for people to which something happens despite following policies and proper safety procedures.
      ii. Depending on the circumstances, external persons may attempt to assign liability to the lab supervisor or PI.
   b. There is no uniformity between PIs. There should be a document that they sign acknowledging their own responsibilities, as well as the assignment of duties to the LSO.
   c. Risk Management and Safety should develop a flow chart to assist with disposal of lab trash.
   d. If custodians do not pick up lab trash and they do not clean in the labs, why do we have them?
   e. Making people wear long pants in the summertime is very difficult to achieve.
      i. There is no mandate insisting on long pants in laboratories.
      ii. Labs should enforce this when they deem it is required.
   f. After an initial lab safety training, it would be ideal for labs [OR RM&S?] to conduct a follow-up training to ensure new employees retain and fully understand the hazards in their workplace.
   g. The laser safety staff should consider restricting access to rooms that have high-powered lasers. Physical Plant, Custodial and other support staff should not enter these spaces without a lab representative. Other labs with specific hazards may also benefit from restricted access.
      i. A Laser Safety Committee is being formed and will review the safety of lasers in labs.
   h. How do safety officers in a lab deal with problem employees?
      i. Safety officers should follow the “chain of command.” If the PI/Supervisor is unresponsive, then let Risk Management & Safety know.
   i. Do undergraduate work-study students go through the same safety training?
      i. Yes, they should be trained like a regular lab employee.
   j. RM&S forms should have fewer check boxes.