RISK MANAGEMENT & SAFETY

SAFETY ALERT

Lab-Related Incidents

Event: Lab-Related Incidents
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Category: Lab Safety
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There has been a recent influx of lab-related incidents leading to injury. A few things to remember to help prevent incidents include (1) being mindful while conducting lab operations, (2) always being aware of your surroundings, and (3) anytime there is an incident or injury, no matter how small, report it to your supervisor. Below are examples of some of these recent lab-related incidents.

- **Chemical Exposure** – several incidents occurred where lab personnel were exposed to chemical (s) used in their lab. Some were caused by splashes, inadequate vapor control, and inappropriate PPE being used.
  - Wear appropriate PPE rate for the chemical's specific hazard(s).
  - Be mindful of surfaces, edges, and fume hood sashes to avoid hitting chemical containers on them, which creates splash hazards.
  - Use extra caution around chemically contaminated sharps (needles, broken glass, blades, etc.) and dispose in appropriate waste containers.
  - Use the sash of the fume hood or ballistic shield as a barrier when disassembling glassware.
  - Double check chemical compatibility prior to adding chemical wastes into waste containers to avoid incompatible materials from being mixed.

- **Needlestick** – a couple needlestick incidents occurred when using a syringe to re-suspend cells and when using a needle to administer chemicals.
  - Avoid recapping as studies show recapping greatly increases the rate of needlestick incidents.
  - Ensure used needle management is part of the lab SOP / protocol.
  - Use safety needle / syringe systems whenever possible.
  - Always conduct a risk assessment or job hazard analysis when scaling up experiments to account for safety gaps such as increasing the number of syringes needed and not having appropriate used needle management in place.

- **Cuts from Glassware** – occurred while cleaning glassware or glass / plastic lab supplies
  - Replace glassware whenever it becomes chipped, cracked or broken.
  - Wear cut-resistant gloves whenever possible.
  - Be cognizant of the amount of pressure you are applying while cleaning.
  - Use cleaning tools instead of your hands.

Contact your RMS liaison or labsafety@nd.edu with any questions on these or other safety-related topics.

Need additional resources?

For more information regarding laboratory safety, see the Laboratory Safety resources provided on the RMS website http://riskmanagement.nd.edu/