Working Safely at NMHU

Updated: November 15, 2008

Emergency Response (Police, Fire, Threats, Medical Problems) phone 5555
Tell them your campus location and your name. They will ask about the type of emergency. Indicate whether an ambulance is needed.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

There are hazards associated with working at NMHU, as with any job, but you can protect yourself from them. The risks you face depend on your job. Protecting yourself depends on the specific tasks you undertake in your job.

This document provides an overview of some of the most important hazards associated with some of the work done at NMHU, how to protect yourself from them, and where to go for more information or help.

OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration (http://www.osha.gov/)) requires more training than can be provided at this website for specific tasks and jobs; this document is designed to help you identify which training is appropriate for your job. Remember, your supervisor is the first individual you should go to for safety information. If you need more help after talking with your supervisor then call any of the persons or offices below, as necessary:

- NMHU Campus Security: (24 hours) 5555 (on-campus) or 454-3378
- Campus Safety Officer: 454-3392
- Chemical/Biological Hygiene Officer: 454-2035
- Poison Control Center: 9-1-800-222-1222

2. Specific Safety Concerns

A. Security

1. Property protection requires everyone on campus to stay alert. Most buildings on campus are open to the general public. You won't know everyone that visits your workplace on any given day.

2. ***Emergencies phone 5555***. This will connect you to the City of Las Vegas Emergency Services Center and Campus Police.
   Other emergency contacts include:
   - NMHU Campus Security (24 hours) 5555 (on-campus) or 454-3378
   - Campus Safety Officer 454-3392
   - Chemical/Biological Hygiene Officer (454-2035)
   - Poison Control Center 9-1-800-222-1222

3. Keep valuables locked or out of sight. Do not leave an unlocked office or room where you have left a purse, laptop computer, or other "walkable" item unlocked. Report any suspicious people wandering through buildings to campus police.

B. General Safety

1. *Fire Safety*

   - At the first sign of fire, start a building evacuation by ringing the fire alarm, or going door by door. *Remember a fire can become dangerous in less than a minute.*

   - After evacuation has begun, **call 5555 from a safe phone**. Report the problem.
   - If the fire is smaller than a wastebasket and the proper type of fire extinguisher is available, you may try to suppress the fire. Remember: ***Leave yourself an escape route!!***

   - For more detailed information on fire emergency actions and evacuation procedures see ***NMHU's Handbook on Research Policy, Section 6.4***.

2. *Ergonomics*
   - Working with computers can create significant health and safety problems because people spend too much time in one position. It is important to adjust the setup of the table, chair, and computer so that people who work are comfortable, and do not create a situation where particular parts of the body (e.g., wrists or neck) are under constant stress. The campus safety officer (phone number 454-3392) can help you with making proper adjustments. OSHA also provides eTools for *providing guidance information for developing a comprehensive safety and health ergonomic program at OSHA Computer Workstations*.

- People who lift materials place their backs at risk if they do it improperly. This is true whether you lift 20 pounds every day or 15 pounds occasionally. Back safety information is available from the **Campus Safety Officer at 454-3392**.

- The development of micropipettors and other devices which make it possible to run many processes at the same time have placed laboratory workers at risk for repetitive motion injuries. Plan work carefully to avoid injuring yourself from repetitive motion injuries.

3. *Driver Training*
   - Driver safety training is required to drive a NMHU vehicle; either university owned or rented. Arrangements for Driver Safety training can be made with Facilities Management (x-3260)
   - Accidents involving NMHU vehicles must be reported to Facilities Management as soon as possible.

4. *Indoor Air Quality*
   - Many people have concerns about the air quality in their workplace. Strange odors, exhaust, and unusual health symptoms associated with a NMHU workplace should report this to the Campus Safety Officer at 454-3392. For additional information relevant to indoor air quality in the workplace see OSHA's Health and Safety Topics: Indoor Air Quality.

5. *First Report of Injury*
   - Workman's Compensation Insurance pays for medical bills and time off due to workplace injuries. Any workplace injury must be reported to the building supervisor so that they can complete a First Report of Injury form. The form is to be sent to the Campus Safety Officer at 454-3392.

6. In accordance with OSHA, the following issues must follow specific procedures and training, where appropriate:

   - **Confined Spaces**. Many workplaces contain spaces that are considered "confined" because their configurations hinder the activities of employees who must enter, work in, and exit them. A confined space has limited or restricted means for entry or exit, and it is not designed for continuous employee occupancy. Confined spaces include, but are not limited to underground vaults, tanks, storage bins, manholes, pits, silos, process vessels, and pipelines. OSHA uses the term "permit-required confined space" (permit space) to describe a confined space that has one or more of the following characteristics: contains or has the potential to contain a hazardous atmosphere; contains a material that has the potential to engulf an entrant; has walls that converge inward or floors that slope downward and taper into a smaller area which could trap or asphyxiate an entrant; or contains any other recognized safety or health hazard, such as unguarded machinery, exposed live wires, or heat stress. For additional information relevant to confined spaces in the workplace see OSHA's Safety and Health Topics: Confined Spaces.

- **Lockout/Tagout (LOTO)**. LOTO refers to specific practices and procedures to safeguard employees from the unexpected energization or startup of machinery and equipment, or the release of hazardous energy during service or maintenance activities. For additional information relevant to the control of hazardous energy (lockout/tagout) in the workplace see Control of Hazardous Energy – Lockout/Tagout.

- **Bloodborne Pathogens and Needlestick Prevention**. In 1991, OSHA issued the Bloodborne Pathogens Standard (29 CFR 1910.1030) to protect workers from this risk. In 2001, in response to the Needlestick Safety and Prevention Act, OSHA revised the Bloodborne Pathogens Standard. The revised standard clarifies the need for employers to select safer needle devices and to involve employees in identifying and choosing these devices. The updated standard also requires employers to maintain a log of injuries from contaminated sharps. For additional information relevant to bloodborne pathogens and needlestick prevention in the workplace see OSHA's Safety and Health Topics: Bloodborne Pathogens and Needle stick Prevention and ***NMHU's Exposure Control Plan for Bloodborne and Other Pathogens in NMHU Teaching and Research Laboratories.***

- **Respirator Use**. Respirators protect workers against insufficient oxygen environments, harmful dusts, fogs, smokes, mists, gases, vapors, and sprays. These hazards may cause cancer, lung impairment, other diseases, or death. Compliance with the OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard could avert hundreds of deaths and thousands of illnesses annually. For additional information relevant to use of respirators see OSHA's Safety and Health Topics: Respirator Protection.

- **Other Topics.** OSHA offers other occupational safety and health information at Safety and Health Topics. The webpage page also provides assistance for complying with OSHA standards to enable employers (e.g., faculty, students and staff) to ensure a safer workplace.

C. Chemical Safety

Chemicals have the ability to react when exposed to other chemicals or certain physical conditions. The reactive properties of chemicals vary widely and they play a vital role in the production of many chemical, material, pharmaceutical, and food products used daily. When chemical reactions are not properly managed, they can have harmful, or even catastrophic consequences, such as toxic fumes, fires, and explosions. These reactions may result in death and injury to people, damage to physical property, and severe effects on the environment. Process safety management (PSM) is used to prevent and mitigate chemical reactivity hazards.

For information on the university's procedures see **NMHU's Hazard Communication Program**. Additional references to reactive chemicals in the workplace can be found at OSHA's Safety and Health Topics: Chemical Reactivity Hazards. NMHU'sChemical-Biological Safety Officer may also be contacted for chemical safety on specific projects at 454-2035. Below are examples of chemicals and mandatory procedures for protection against chemical reactivity hazards.

More detailed example and practices can be found at Essential Practices for Managing Chemical Reactivity Hazards. This book provides guidance to help identify, address, and manage chemical reactivity hazards. The electronic on-line version of this book is made available for free by support from OSHA, the US EPA, CCPS, the American Chemistry Council, the Synthetic Organic Chemical Manufacturer's Association and Knovel Corporation.

1. Chemical *examples:*
   - Laboratory chemicals
   - General service formulated chemicals
   - Pesticides
   - Lead and asbestos

2. Examples of ways to *protect yourself*
   - Information: Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) and other sources ***NMHU's Hazard Communication Program, Section 3.1***

   - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
     *For more information see **NMHU's Hazard Communication Program, Section 4(4)** and OSHA's Safety and Health Topics: PPE.*

   - Engineering controls: ventilation
     *For more information see **NMHU's Chemical Hygiene Plans for Labs or Studios in Sections 3.2(A), 4.1 and 4.2**.and OSHA's Safety and Health Topics: Ventilation.*

   - Environmental and medical monitoring
     *For more information see **NMHU's Chemical Hygiene Plan (Section 8)** and OSHA's Safety and Health Topics: Medical Screening and Surveillance.*

D. Laboratory Hazards

In accordance with OSHA 1910.1450, all employers engaged in laboratory use of hazardous chemicals shall be aware of definitions, employee exposure determination, the chemical hygiene plan, employee information and training, procedures for medical consultation and medical examinations, and hazard identification procedures. For more detail see ***NMHU's Exposure Control Plan for Bloodborne and Other Pathogens in NMHU Teaching and Research Laboratories***. Below are examples of hazards, procedures and training most common to NMHU.

1. *Biological Hazards*
   - Infectious Agents
   - Bloodborne pathogens
   - Biosafety levels

2. *Radiation Training (not implemented at this time)*

3. *Animal Care and Handling*. Assurances accreditation processes, regulation policies and compliances by federal entities are provided in ***NMHU Research Policy Handbook, Section, 8: Research on Laboratory Animals***.

E. Hazardous Waste Minimization and Disposal

In accordance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Hazard Communication Standard set forth by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), NMHU has created two policy guides to assist in the minimization and disposal of hazardous waste material:

- NMHU Hazardous and Potentially Infectious Waste Management Plan (HPIWMP); and
- NMHU Hazard Communication Program (HCP)

The purpose of the guides are to communicate essential information for providing protective measure to faculty, students and other employees, and to reduce the occurrence of employee occupational illness and injury due to hazardous chemicals.

Examples of proper hazard waste treatment and disposal provided in NMHU's guides described above include, but are not limited to:

1. Clean Air Compliance: Do not evaporate things unnecessarily.

2. Clean Water Compliance: Don't put hazardous wastes down the drain. If you are not sure contact the Chemical-Biological Safety Officer (454-2035).

3. Hazardous Waste Minimization
   - See EPA Requirements: Wastes-Hazardous Waste-Waste Minimization
   - Chemical Inventory Control (see NMHU's HCP, Section 2)
   - Process Redesign

4. Hazardous Waste Disposal
   - Any liquid, solid, powder, dust, or gas should not go into the regular trash without a hazard determination first.
   - Hazardous waste procedures are available in *NMHU's Hazardous and Potentially Infectious Waste Management Plan.*
   - For additional information contact the Chemical-Biological Safety Officer (454-2035).

3. Environmental Safety and Health Organization

- Roles of Personnel (See NMHU Handbook on Research Policy, Sections 6.2 and 6.3)
- NMHU Policy Statement on Environmental Health and Safety (See NMHU Handbook on Research Policy, Section 6.1.1)

4. Conclusion

Safety suggestions are always welcome. Send them to the Campus Safety Officer (454-3392) or Chemical/Biological Hygiene Officer (454-2035), where appropriate.