

In this issue of the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Newsletter you will find information on:

- ❑ EHS' New Office Location
- ❑ Fire Alarms and Drills
- ❑ Bloodborne Pathogens
- ❑ Confined Space Program

EHS IS AT A NEW LOCATION

EHS has moved their offices to the 2nd Floor of 285 Mercer Street. You can still contact at the same phone number if you have any questions at 212-998-1450.

FIRE ALARMS AND DRILLS

It is the policy of the University that when smoke or fire is discovered, the fire alarm must be sounded. Because of the potential for underestimating the seriousness of a fire condition, there are no exceptions to this policy. When the building fire alarm sounds, every Faculty member, Staff and Student is expected to evacuate. The fire alarm consists of the sounding of four rounds of a coded signal. There is no code to indicate if an alarm signifies a drill or a real fire; therefore, every alarm must be treated as a potentially serious fire.

In 19 University Place, 25 West 4th Street, 19 West 4th Street (formally 269 Mercer Street), 3-5 Washington Place, 285 Mercer Street, 7 East 12th Street, and 20 Cooper Square, office buildings, the fire alarm will only sound on the floor of the activation and the floor above. Only those floors where the alarm sounds should evacuate. A notification tone will sound in all other areas of the building; this is not an alarm. These facilities also have intercoms built into the alarm system and the Fire Safety Director in each building will provide directions regarding evacuation on the floors not in alarm.

- Should you become aware of a fire or smoke ***pull the nearest fire alarm***. Follow the instructions on the pull station. The alarm is automatically transmitted to the Fire Department.
- ***Call Public Safety - from a safe location***. Public Safety can be reached at extension 8-2222 (Washington Square), 8-9828 (Dental), 772-5808 (IFA). Public Safety personnel should be notified of the location of the fire or smoke condition, including the building, floor and/or room number and the name and telephone extension of the individual reporting the incident.
- Personnel at non-campus venues such as the Midtown Center shall rely on the respective building safety plan.
- Do not attempt to fight the fire alone.
- ***Evacuate*** upon hearing the alarm; Faculty members, Staff and Students must exit the building using the nearest exit. Follow the evacuation chart posted in every elevator lobby. If possible, close all doors and windows to prevent the spread of fire and smoke. Leave lights on.
- Never use an elevator. Loss of power will trap you inside.
- Once in the stairway, proceed down to the first floor and exit the building. Move away from the building, out of the way of firefighters and other emergency personnel.
- Do not attempt to re-enter the building for any reason, until you are authorized to do so.
- Should you be aware of a person with disabilities, let Public Safety or the Fire Department know the location of the person. Only the Fire Department will attempt to evacuate the person(s) requiring assistance.

Fire drills are a tool used to train personnel and building occupants on evacuation procedures and to evaluate

evacuation performance. NYU conducts fire drills in academic buildings and dormitories as required by the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) and New York State Department of Education requirements for educational institutions. NYU conducts three fire drills per academic year in each academic building and four fire drills per year in dormitories with fire alarms. Office buildings with more than 100 people have two drills per year. In the academic buildings that have heavy evening use, additional drills are conducted in the evening hours to ensure occupants are familiar with evacuation procedures. Contact Environmental Health and Safety at ext. 81450 for further details.

NYU has a policy on Bloodborne Pathogens. This article gives some information on what are Bloodborne Pathogens and why NYU has a policy.

What are Bloodborne Pathogens?

Bloodborne pathogens are microorganisms (viruses or bacteria) that are present in human blood and that may cause disease in humans. Examples of bloodborne pathogens include the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) that causes AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome), hepatitis B virus (HBV), and hepatitis C (HCV). Other bloodborne pathogens include the microorganisms that cause syphilis and malaria. Bloodborne pathogens can be transmitted if blood or certain body fluids (any human body fluid containing visible blood; semen; vaginal secretions; or fluids surrounding internal organs, the joints, or a fetus) from someone infected with a bloodborne pathogen get into the mucous membranes (eyes, nose, mouth) or directly into the bloodstream through skin that is damaged (e.g., scraped, cut, abraded) or punctured (e.g., needle stick injury). HIV, HBV, and HCV are also transmitted sexually and an infected woman can infect her unborn child before or during birth.

What is the Bloodborne Pathogen Standard?

In December of 1991, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) of the U.S. Department of Labor, published a final regulation titled, *Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens*. The Bloodborne Pathogen Standard provides guidance to eliminate or minimize occupational exposure of employees to human bloodborne pathogens (BBP). The BBP standard applies to all employees working in job classifications with a potential for occupational exposure to human blood or other potentially infectious materials (OPIM) and provides methods to protect oneself from exposure to OPIM. Training must be provided to those workers on how to protect themselves. If your work may present a potential occupational exposure to human blood or OPIM, you must have training each year. Annual training will remind you of the proper procedures to use and the trainer will be able to answer any questions that you may have regarding bloodborne pathogens or the procedures to protect yourself. REMEMBER: reading this information sheet is not a substitute for training.

What is the Universal Precaution?

Practicing universal precautions means that you treat all human blood and some body fluids as if they are contaminated with bloodborne pathogens. Many people that are infected with bloodborne pathogens don't even know that they have an infection. Their blood and some body fluids (any human body fluid containing visible blood; semen; vaginal secretions; or fluids surrounding internal organs, the joints, or a fetus) are still infectious even if they don't feel sick. Body fluids that do not require the practice of universal precautions are sweat, sputum, saliva, urine, feces, vomit, or tears UNLESS these body fluids are contaminated with visible blood.

What precautions can I take?

Understanding the hazards in your surrounding area is a major step at reducing your risk. Other precautions you can take are knowing exactly what type of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be worn when handling bloodborne pathogens. From gloves to eye protection to lab coats or gowns can also greatly reduce your risk if you come in contact with bloodborne pathogens or OPIM. To find out more information on bloodborne pathogen, please review the university policy on the EH&S website, or contact the Biosafety Specialist at 212-998-1440.

Confined Space Program

The Confined Space Program is part of the University's Occupational Health and Safety Program. The purpose of this regulatory program (OSHA 29 CFR 1910.146) is to protect workers from the hazards of entry into a permit-required confined space.

A Confined Space is a space that:

- 1) is large enough and so configured that an employee can bodily enter and perform assigned work;
- 2) has limited or restricted means for entry or exit (for example, tanks, vessels, silos, storage bins, vaults and sewers are spaces that may have limited means of entry); and
- 3) is not designed for continuous employee occupancy.

A Permit-Required Confined Space (PRCS) is a confined space that:

- 1) may contain a hazardous atmosphere;
- 2) contains a material that can engulf an entrant;
- 3) has an internal configuration that can trap an entrant; or
- 4) has any other serious health or safety hazard.

Some examples of a confined space are, but are not limited to, tanks, boilers, sump pits, and crawlspaces). All workers, whether they be NYU employees or outside vendors, whose work involves entering a Confined Space must be properly trained in the correct entry and work procedures. Currently, NYU employees do not enter permit-required confined spaces but the individual facilities personnel do have responsibilities which include the following (refer to NYU's Policy No. 153/154 for all requirements):

- notifying Environmental Health & Safety of upcoming confined space entry work;
 - o for planned work, please contact Stephanie Kung at EH&S at stephanie.kung@nyu.edu or extension 81439 when the work has been scheduled; provide contractor information, when the work is to be performed, etc.;
 - o for emergencies, please contact her as soon as the facility has determined that entry into a permit-required confined space is necessary;
- obtain confined space entry programs for the company and training certifications for each worker (no worker will be allowed to work in a confined space or be allowed to be an attendant or supervisor unless a certificate of training is produced; these must be kept on file;
- informing the contractor that the work area is a confined space and ensure that the contractor follows NYU's policy;
- filling out the permit for confined space entry with the contractor and sending a copy to EH&S on a daily basis;
- ensuring their facilities have the necessary warning signs posted, restricting access into a PRCS;
- ensuring that any equipment in the work area that requires de-energizing (Lockout/Tagout) is performed prior to the work;
- providing emergency contact information/telephone numbers;
- informing the contractor of any building specific nuances within the work area;

Training

Training is required prior to a worker performing work within a confined space. Currently, NYU employees do not enter permit-required confined spaces. There is an upcoming annual refresher training session to be provided through Facilities & Construction Management (FCM) in late November 2007. Please contact Stephen Doyle at extension 81078 to be informed of the date and time of sessions to be held.

If you have any questions on the program, you can contact EH&S at extension 81450.