

August 2010 SCS Safety Newsletter

Topics in this issue:

- **Appropriate Laboratory Attire and Personal Protective Equipment**
- **RAL Fire**



http://www.claybennett.com/images/archivetoons/workplace_safety.jpg

Appropriate Laboratory Attire and Personal Protective Equipment:

Proper attire worn in the laboratory provides some protection to the body. Wear clothing that will adequately cover the torso and legs. Absolutely no shorts are allowed in the lab. Loose clothing should not be worn as it could easily become caught in machinery, come in contact with chemicals, and/or catch on fire. Long hair must be tied back for the same reasons. Do not wear skimpy clothing as it provides very little protection against chemical spills or splashes. Always wear shoes that completely cover the entire foot. Open or perforated shoes/sandals are not permitted. A lab coat or apron should be worn for additional protection. Gloves and safety glasses should also be worn in addition to a lab coat.

Prior to conducting an experiment, researchers should evaluate the proposed procedure to determine if additional personal protective equipment is needed. Lab coats treated with a fire-resistant material may be needed or the experiment may warrant wearing a special type of glove. Researchers should also evaluate whether a blast shield, face shield, splash goggles, or other personal protective equipment is needed.

RAL Fire:

A fire occurred on Thursday, July 15th in South Roger Adams Lab. The Urbana Fire Department was dispatched after the fire alarm pull was manually activated. Two individuals sustained minor injuries. The source of ignition for this fire was determined to be caused by static electricity build up during a rapid cannula transfer.

Several correct actions taken during this fire incident proved critical in preventing the situation from developing into what could have been a much worse incident outcome. The researcher who was working at the hood where the fire started was wearing a lab coat treated with fire-resistant material, safety glasses, and gloves. The use of the correct lab coat proved crucial in protecting the researcher from serious injury. The actions of others in the immediate vicinity of the fire also proved vital in preventing the fire from becoming uncontrollable and in preventing the affected researcher from sustaining serious injury. These actions included, someone quickly pulled the fire alarm, several individuals quickly began fighting the fire with fire extinguishers due to the fact the fire was still of a manageable size, 911 was called to report not only the fire but that an ambulance was needed, and finally, someone placed the affected researcher in the safety shower.

Researchers and employees should review the location and operation of the safety equipment located closest to their work area. This equipment includes safety showers/eyewashes, fire extinguishers, and spill kits. The nearest emergency exit should also be located. Knowing the location of the nearest safety equipment and proper emergency response procedures can prevent a manageable lab incident from becoming unmanageable.