LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

Generated from Actual Incidents-Written by EHSO

Issue No. 22 May 22, 2006

Type of Incident: **Chemical splashes in eyes**

What Happened: One researcher was pouring guanidine chloride crystals from weighing paper into a 10mL volumetric flask.. He lost control and the guanidine chloride splashed into his unprotected eyes. Another researcher was opening a micro tube when TRIzol (phenol solution) splashed into his eye. Both researchers' eyes were irritated and reddened and eyelids slightly swollen.

Immediate Cause: Non-use of eye protection, specifically safety glasses.

Root Causes:

1. Lack of awareness that even small quantities of chemicals and non-hazardous chemicals should only be handled while wearing proper protective equipment.
2. Inadequate lab safety training.
3. Attitude of personal risk-taking in lieu of safe work practices.

Corrective Action:

1. At minimum, wear safety glasses with side shields at all times in the laboratory.
2. Complete "Lab Safety and Hazardous Waste Management" training before working in a laboratory and annually thereafter. On-line chemical safety training can be found at www.uic.edu/depts/envh under "Training".
3. Follow up by EHSO with department and supervision to foster a "safety culture."

If you have questions regarding lab safety, contact EHSO, health-safety@uic.edu or 6-7411.

UIC Environmental Health And Safety Office