

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

Generated from Actual Incidents by EHSO

Issue No. 4

September 10, 2001

- Type of Incident:* **Explosion in sink**
- What Happened:* A graduate student found a flask containing a white substance. To test if this material might be sodium, he poured a drop of water into the flask. No reaction occurred. He then brought the flask to the sink and turned on the faucet to let the flask fill up. As he was walking away, the flask exploded.
- Immediate Cause:* Failure to properly handle water reactive material.
- Root Causes:* The container was unlabeled. Proper precautions were not taking in handling an unknown chemical. Procedures were not in place for identifying the contents of the container.
- Corrective Actions*
1. Ensure that all containers including those containing reactants, are properly labeled in accordance with the *UIC Chemical Hygiene Plan*.
 2. Ensure accountability of supervision to require that proper procedures are enforced, including proper labeling.
 4. Ensure that all employees and students are trained in the procedures for labeling and handling reactive chemicals.

