



# Safety Talk

## Department of Environmental Safety NEWS

Volume 1, Issue 1

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK

Fall, 2005

### Director's Spotlight

Greetings,

I am very pleased to introduce myself as the new Director of Environmental Safety, having arrived at the University of Maryland in September 2004. My previous position was as Director of Environmental Health and Safety at Stony Brook University, SUNY.

I am thrilled to be a "Terp" and hope to meet many of you as I find my way around this large campus. In the meantime, I hope you will avail yourselves of our web site at [www.des.umd.edu](http://www.des.umd.edu) or contact any of our DES staff if you have questions or are in need of information.



Maureen Kotlas, Director of Environmental Safety

The Department of Environmental Safety (DES) was created at the University of Maryland to provide a wide range of technical, regulatory and related management services in order to achieve a safe and healthful campus environment. The policies and programs we develop are designed for the campus to achieve compliance with many federal, state and local regulations.

Our main divisions include Biological Safety, Environmental Affairs, Fire Safety & Code Services (Fire Marshals' Office), Occupational Safety & Health, Radiation Safety, Risk Management & Communications, and Business Management & Customer Service. Within these divisions, DES is responsible for a variety of important programs and services such as Workers' Compensation, Insurance Services, Diving Safety, Industrial Hygiene, Safety Training, Events Planning, Hazardous and Regulated Waste Management and Natural Resources Permitting to name just a few.

The 35 members of the DES staff are proud of our leadership role in working with faculty, staff and students to arrive at innovative, cost-effective solutions to their needs and to create a culture in which all share the responsibility for safety and protection of people, the environment and its natural resources and campus assets.

Sincerely,

*Maureen Kotlas*

#### Special points of interest:

- **UM community can view their DES training records online.** Visit <https://des.umd.edu/training/viewanemp.cfm>
- **Safety Orientation for Graduate & Teaching Assistants & Faculty Training.** Learn key environmental, health and safety considerations for working in UM labs.

**Date:** August 29, 2005

**Time:** 8:00 AM to 12:30 PM

**Location:** Chemistry Bldg.

Lecture Hall 1407

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#### Online Resources

- [www.des.umd.edu](http://www.des.umd.edu)
- **Information and Programs by DES division**  
[www.des.umd.edu/general/map2.html](http://www.des.umd.edu/general/map2.html)
- **Reduce Ergonomic Hazards at Work/Workstations**  
[www.des.umd.edu/os/erg/index.html](http://www.des.umd.edu/os/erg/index.html)
- **Training**  
[www.des.umd.edu/risk\\_comm/edu/guide.html](http://www.des.umd.edu/risk_comm/edu/guide.html)

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3115 Chesapeake Building  
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## UM Environmental Stewardship Guidelines

Environmental Affairs Office

In 2002, the University completed a 20 year Facilities Master Plan that established broad goals including improvements to the campus environment. Provost Destler established an Environmental Workgroup to review the goals and provide specific implementation recommendations.

The Environmental Workgroup, chaired by Assistant Professor Jack Sullivan (Department of Landscape Architecture), proposed that the University develop an Environmental Management System (EMS), a structured program that emphasizes continuous environmental improve-

ment. Within this framework, the Workgroup developed campus Environmental Stewardship Guidelines that establish campus-wide environmental sustainability goals and best management practices.

The draft Guidelines were supported by the University's Facilities Council which also endorsed the expansion of the Workgroup into a permanent Environmental Stewardship Committee. The draft Environmental Stewardship Guidelines were presented at a public forum on March 3, 2005 and will be presented as a final draft to the Facilities Council in May 2005. A copy of the draft Environmental



UM Energy Plant

stewardship Guidelines may be viewed at: [www.facilities.umd.edu/MasterPlan2/envguide.htm](http://www.facilities.umd.edu/MasterPlan2/envguide.htm).

## What Would You Do?

### How social pressure can cause accidents

Social pressure is one cause of workplace accidents. A worker typically does not want to come across as a goody-goody. So what do they do? They take chances that put them in potentially dangerous situations. Right? Maybe you've made some hasty or bad choices at work. How would you handle the following scenarios? Be honest.

- You leave your safety glasses in your

locker. You tell your co-worker you'll be right back. Your co-worker says: "Dude, we don't have all day. Besides, you don't need those things anyway. Look at me, I'm not wearing mine. What could go wrong, the job will only take a few minutes".

- You are asked to use a new cleaning product. Your supervisor tells you to carefully read the material safety data

### Jack Ellison

sheet (MSDS). Your co-worker says, "We don't need to read the MSDS, I know what I'm doing. Don't worry."

- A co-worker spills coffee on the floor. You ask politely that he/she clean up the spill before someone slips and falls. Your co-worker says, "What am I, a maid?" and walks away. Several co-workers witness this laugh and make jokes.

## Radiation Safety - Are you in Compliance?

Radiation Safety Office

Tritium, Carbon-14, S-35, P-32, P-33, and I-125, are commonly used radioisotopes found in research laboratories across the USA, and on the UM campus. If you have these or other isotopes in your lab, you must be in compliance with the Code of Maryland Annotated Regulations (COMAR) pertaining to Radiation Safety. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), and the UM Radiation Safety Office (RSO), govern the use of isotopes on the campus, as well as the use of ionizing radiation producing devices such as X-ray diffraction units, spectrophotometers, and accelerators.

The NRC does not regulate radia-

tion producing devices; however MDE through its Radiological Health Department registers and certifies that such machines are in compliance with COMAR. The RSO acts as the agent for the campus where such devices are concerned.

### Are You in Compliance?

To be in compliance, you must: (a) be authorized to possess, use and store radioactive material; (b) secure your areas from unauthorized access; (c) label all laboratory equipment that may come into contact with isotopes; (d) conduct and keep a record of surveys for contamination in your lab; (e) wear appropriate personnel



monitoring devices; (f) attend training; and (g) practice ALARA ("As Low As Reasonably Achievable"), or keep exposure as low as possible and well within the allowable limits of ionizing radiation exposure.

These are just a few of the important compliance issues that must be observed and practiced in order to use isotopes for research on our campus.

If you use an X-ray producing device, it must be registered with the State through the RSO and certified by a MD State Certified Inspector. For more information contact the RSO at (301)405-3985 or visit [www.des.umd.edu/rs/index.html](http://www.des.umd.edu/rs/index.html)

## Removal of Equipment from Biological Labs

Biological Safety Office

Laboratory equipment that has been used to store microorganisms and human clinical material must be decontaminated before it can be moved, discarded, given to Terrapin Trader, or sent for repair.

Lab personnel should empty equipment used to store these materials, such as refrigerators, freezers, and incubators, and then decontaminate all surfaces using an appropriate disinfectant. After

the equipment is decontaminated, all bio-hazard labels should be removed.

Biosafety cabinets (often called tissue culture hoods) require special decontamination using formaldehyde gas before being moved or discarded.

The University has a contract for this service, since it must be performed by an individual with specific training in handling gaseous formaldehyde.

Please contact the Biosafety Office

*Janet Peterson*



(301-405-3975) if you need to have a biosafety cabinet decontaminated.

## Mold and Indoor Air Quality

Occupational Safety and Health Office

Concern about exposure to indoor mold has been increasing as the public becomes aware that exposure to mold has been attributed to a variety of health effects and symptoms, including allergic reactions.

Molds can be found almost anywhere; they eat organic substances. Moisture and oxygen must be present. There are over 100,000 species of mold. Some molds emit chemicals, called mycotoxins. Mycotoxins are mold byproducts and can defend the mold against other molds or other organisms. Mycotoxins have been reported as causing reactions in persons who are susceptible. Medical researchers

have tried to find a link between specific molds and symptoms, but progress has been slow. Therefore, it is not possible at this time to link a mold and its effects.

The key to mold control is moisture control. Basement and roof leaks, condensate pipe sweating, and faulty ventilation systems can all lead to excessive moisture and humidity, leading to mold proliferation. It is impossible to eliminate all mold spores from an indoor environment. But it is possible to minimize mold growth by eliminating or minimizing water intrusion and maintaining humidity levels below 60%.

If you have mold related concerns,

*Rob Galemba*



"You know, it's probably your egg salad, but I'm going to call in the unusual odor anyway."

or other indoor air quality problems, contact DES at 301-405-3960.

The EPA ([www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)) offers a free guide on mold called "Mold Remediation in Schools and Commercial Buildings".

## What is Workers' Compensation?

Risk Management and Communications—Workers Compensation Office

Workers' Compensation insurance is a program established by state law. It is a no-fault system under which injured employees receive benefits in connection with work-related injuries or occupational illnesses. UM's workers' compensation carrier is the *Injured Workers' Insurance Fund*.

**What is the first step I should take if I am injured while at work?**

Make your supervisor aware of the incident immediately, seek medical treatment if necessary, then complete the

injury report forms.

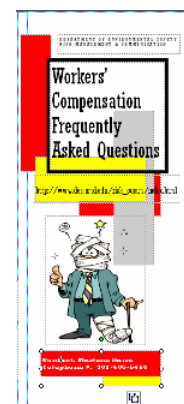
**If I am disabled and cannot work for a period of time, how will I be compensated for lost wages?**

- If you are in a "regular" employment status you are eligible for accident leave. Only accidents, not occupational illnesses are covered by accident leave.
- If you are not eligible for accident leave and you are disabled, the University's workers' compensation carrier will cover your lost wages.

*Marlene Rains*

- Both compensations are two thirds (2/3) of your gross salary and non-taxable.
- Any disability has to be medically documented.

**If you have any questions regarding job injury procedures, call the workers' compensation office at 301-405-5466.**



Worker's Comp FAQ brochure, available in English and Spanish



## SAFETY TALK

### DES News

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Para información en español llame al 301-405-7528  
o consulte [www.des.umd.edu/Spanish](http://www.des.umd.edu/Spanish)

# www.des.umd.edu

## What is a Compliance Officer?

Stacey Spinella Crossan

The University of Maryland has instituted the Compliance Officer (CO) program to ensure the highest level of quality in environmental, safety, and health practices. The CO are delegated by the Dean, Chair, or Director for managing environmental, safety and health activities in the College/School or department. They also establish processes, investigate complaints and incidents, and audit performance.

Some examples of CO job duties include attending scheduled CO training, problem solving, serving as a contact person for DES initiatives, and notifying DES and the delegating authority of unresolved compliance issues. For more information on the CO program, check out the DES web site @ [www.des.umd.edu/compliance/index.html](http://www.des.umd.edu/compliance/index.html).

## Candles in Campus Housing

Fire Marshal's Office



Candle fire at South Campus Commons

Fire safety has been a significant consideration at the University of Maryland since the Great Fire of 1912 destroyed every dormitory and half of the classrooms and offices. Today, University's compliance with the Maryland State Fire Preven-

tion Code and other applicable fire safety laws and standards is managed by the Fire Marshal's Office, a division of the Department of Environmental Safety.

The Fire Marshals are delegated fire prevention and investigation authority by the Maryland State Fire Marshal. The Fire Marshals provide fire safety education and training, investigate all fires that occur on University property and perform plan review and construction inspections. Life safety is the primary objective of the fire safety program.

A significant cause for fires today is the use of candles. According to the National Fire Protection Association the number of candles fires is on the rise. Nine out of 10 reported U.S. candle fires occur in homes. Candles are prohibited in Univer-

sity housing. If you use candles at home, use them with care. Never leave candles unattended, always extinguish candles before going to sleep, place candles in sturdy holders, and keep candles away from children and pets.

For more information on candle safety, you can go to [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org) or contact the UMD Fire Marshal's Office at 301-405-3960 or online at [www.des.umd.edu/risk\\_comm/fire/index.html](http://www.des.umd.edu/risk_comm/fire/index.html)



Candle Fire at South Campus Commons

*Alan Sactor*