Lubbock Campus Conducts First Full Evacuation Drill

Victor Means, MBA, CSP - Director of Safety & Emergency Management Coordinator

On Wednesday, February 6, 2013, at 1:08 PM, TTUHSC Lubbock successfully conducted its first planned Evacuation Drill. Many hours were spent on planning, training, and coordination with internal and external stakeholders in the preceding few months. We believe the drill was a great success. Other campuses can expect to see similar drills “coming soon to their campus!”

Besides testing of the institutional building evacuation plan, the drill provided an opportunity for departments to test their site-specific evacuation plans. Did the drill meet your department’s expectations? Did your plan work? Were there problems? Were you able to communicate with others in the department? Did all personnel understand where the evacuation meeting place was located? The drill gives departments the opportunity to answer these and other questions about evacuation. Much better to learn now than in a real emergency!

Departments were asked to provide a “Hotwash” (After Action Review) following the drill. The purpose of the Hotwash is to identify what went well, not so well, and areas of improvement for future drills, exercises, and actual emergency events. Many departments have already provided their Hotwash reports which will be used to develop the official After Action Report (AAR) for the institution. When completed, the AAR will be available online for your review.
Isn’t an Evacuation Drill the Same as a Fire Drill?
Victor Means, MBA, CSP - Director of Safety & Emergency Management Coordinator

One of the most frequently asked questions regarding the drill was how the Evacuation Drill differs from a Fire Drill. A primary difference is that fire alarms were not used to notify personnel of the evacuation. Specific to Lubbock, the drill affected all floors of the main building simultaneously (Fire Drills evacuate a single floor at a time), and the drill included all buildings at the location evacuating simultaneously.

The STAT!Alert Emergency Notification System was the primary means used to notify the campus of the evacuation. Overhead paging was also used, however, is often not heard in areas throughout the campus. STAT!Alert provides text (SMS), telephone, and e-mail messages to those who have registered. If you have not registered, all that will be received is an e-mail. Multiple telephone numbers can be added to STAT!Alert, however it is up to the individual to add their own information. To register in STAT!Alert, go to the following link:
http://www.ttuhsc.edu/emergencyalert/

Thank You!

TTUHSC Emergency Management and the Department of Safety Services want to thank everyone on the Lubbock campus who helped to make the building evacuation drill a success. Evacuation Coordinators (orange vests), Unit Safety Officers (orange vests), assigned observers (green vests), department Chairs and administrators, and the TTUHSC leadership all had a hand in our success.

By exercising these kinds of plans (conducting drills and exercises), the institution is better prepared for a real emergency event.

Everyone should have a plan, should know their role in that plan, and practice that plan to continually improve.
Health & Safety Review App
Renee Witherspoon, MS, CSP, CIH, CHMM

Safety Services will be releasing a new Health & Safety Review App by March so that Unit Safety Officers (USO’s) will have the option of completing their reviews digitally, or by the current paper method.

Brian Nordstrom, Lead Programmer/Analyst with Information Services developed the App where the USO’s can log into their eRaider accounts and complete their review on their digital device, computer, Ipad or smartphone.

Medication Cleanout Volunteers Needed!

Medication Cleanout event dates:
Amarillo - March 23rd
Abilene - April 13th
Lubbock - April 27th

(password: 18002221222)

QUESTIONS? Call or email Robbi Rivers at robbi.rivers@ttuhsc.edu or 806-351-5626.

130 in El Paso Team Up With Safety Services
Jose Melchor - El Paso Safety Services Manager

The El Paso Safety Services Department is fortunate to have the support of various Staff Employees who support our Safety Mission; “Promoting a Safe and Healthy workplace environment to all TTUH-SC Employees, Students, Volunteers, and Visitors.” With eight buildings at the main campus and eight off-site, this assistance is very much appreciated.

We have a total of 83 Unit Safety Officers (USO’s) that are our liaison, to the departments and assist us in promoting our safety programs. These individuals assist their Department Administration in implementing the Safety Programs within their department. In addition:

* They assist their department in coordinating the accident reporting process for employee and student injuries.
* They coordinate safety training activities for the department.
* They assist in conducting the annual Health and Safety Reviews.
* They coordinate hazard reporting for the department.
* They assist their department in preparing them for emergency evacuations. During evacuations, they ensure that people within their area evacuate quickly, and they close all room doors once that area is cleared.

In addition, we have 47 Safety Team Members. These individuals are assigned within the building they work in. They are provided a bright orange safety vest and are assigned to a designated area outside their building. They assist during building evacuation events, and provide direction and assistance to staff, patients, and visitors during fire alarms and building evacuations. They also provide crowd control while people are outside during an evacuation event, and ensure that no one goes back into the building until the “all clear” sign is given by the TT-Police Department.

Our team of 130 USOs and Safety Team Members work hard to ensure that we provide a safe workplace for all our employees!
What Goes Where?
Tim Taylor, BS  -Amarillo Safety Services Manager
Charles Dabney  -Amarillo Safety Technician

With the advancements of modern laboratories and regulations regarding the waste generated, it is of high importance to handle and dispose of this waste properly. It is always important to remember what goes where. Whether you’re dealing with radiation, biological agents or animals, safety is everyone’s responsibility.

For instance- you would never dispose of radioactive waste in a common office trash can nor would you want to dispose of a “sharp” in a non-approved sharps container. It is very important to learn and remember how to dispose of your labs waste properly to ensure the safety of yourself and those around you.

Please take a moment and look at the following pictures of waste containers. Do you know what waste goes where? We challenge you to test your knowledge!

DO YOU KNOW WHERE IT GOES?
TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Used gloves.
2. Dry biological waste.
3. Empty barcoded chemical bottle.
4. Waste that has been in contact with radioactive materials.
5. Empty & rinsed chemical bottles not on chemical inventory.
6. Any sharp in need of disposal.
7. Glass Pipettes that are not contaminated with hazardous biological or radiation contaminants.
8. Chemical waste.
10. Pipette tips used in radiolabeling experiments.

Emergency Procedures for Laboratories

With the recent evacuation drill for the Lubbock TTUHSC campus under our belt, I want to present those who work in labs with an additional challenge.

Laboratory environments pose unique problems in emergency situations. There may be procedures conducted in laboratories that cannot safely be set down and walked away from when an alarm sounds.

What if you are working with a highly toxic reagent?  
What if you are working with a dangerous pathogen?  
What if you are working with a valuable and irreplaceable cell line or reagent?

Should you just step away from these experiments in the event of building evacuation or emergency? If not, to what extent should you “button-up” the experiment before you leave?

Don’t forget that others, such as police or fire fighters, will be walking through the area after you leave. You cannot leave the area in such a way that others are put in danger due to hazardous agents being left out.

There is a balance between the safety of the science and the personal safety of the laboratory worker who needs to evacuate. I urge anyone working in a lab to think about these issues, and discuss them with their Principal Investigator and other lab staff. Think about the particular hazards and procedures in your lab, and what you should do in an emergency. Having a plan in place before an emergency occurs is our best defense against potential injuries and damage.
Chemical Inventory Program at TTUHSC

Toni Denison - Laboratory Safety Manager

Since 2009, Safety Services has been managing a program for maintaining chemical inventories in our research labs using a bar code system. The program works slightly different on each campus based on the resources and staff available, however, we work to add new chemicals to the inventory as they are purchased, and delete chemicals that have been used up. In Lubbock and Amarillo, the labs throw empty bar-coded chemical containers away in special green bins that we provide. Then we can pick up these “empties” and scan out the bar-codes.

Each investigator can log into the web application to view and manage their chemical inventory. Access can also be given to lab staff upon request. The on-line system is found here: http://www.ttuhsc.edu/admin/safety/chemlist

One benefit of this program is that we have the ability to search the inventory database by chemical description or CAS#. With this tool, we can help when an investigator needs to borrow a small amount of a chemical, by letting them know who might be able to loan them the chemical.

Finally, we also have an on-going program of inventory reconciliation; in which we visit each lab one-by-one and scan the bar-codes to verify the inventory. If you have a lab, look for Safety to be contacting you soon!

Can you guess how many chemical entries we have in the database for all campuses combined? Email me your guess today at Toni.Denison@ttuhsc.edu. Winner will be selected March 8th. The person whose guess is closest without going over will win a prize. I look forward to hearing from you!

Do I Need Respiratory Protection?

Art May - Permian Basin Safety Services Manager

Manufacturers of any product that contains a component(s) that is toxic, carcinogenic or flammable must disclose in the product SDS (Safety Data Sheet), among other things,
1. The concentration of the dangerous component(s) (measured in % by weight)
2. The Permissible Exposure Limit (measured in Parts Per Million (PPM))

The permissible exposure limit (PEL) is the maximum exposure an individual can be exposed to for eight hours per day, 40 hours per week, not wearing any protection, and should have no ill effects. The lower the exposure limit in PPM, the more dangerous the material is.

In order determine if you need protection to keep from exposing yourself to dangerous concentrations of the material, compare the concentration and the PEL. However because they are given in different units, it is difficult to compare them.

To fix this problem, one should convert the concentration from % by weight to PPM. To do this, multiply the ‘Wt. %’ by 10,000 and that will give you the concentration in PPM.

BEWARE: A small percentage by weight can be a big number when converted to PPM.

Read the SDS carefully and recognize the risks!