

WORKPLACE SAFETY: Data, Trends & Prevention

In order to maintain and improve workplace safety, there are three closely related areas of concern. By addressing these we can paint a clear picture of the appropriate attention and action to workplace safety concerns.

Data:

Reporting incidents and near misses helps build the case for needed improvements.



Trends:



By identifying trends, the highest priority safety concerns in the workplace can be more effectively addressed.

Prevention:

Some safe practices and routines are common sense and come naturally, while others require training and new habits.



With clear communication, careful reflection and safe practices, everyone can contribute to safety and further the mission of OHSU. In this issue, we'll hit upon a number of resources that help us all participate in the process.

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Environmental Health & Radiation Safety 503-494-7795

BEING RESPONSIBLE MEANS YOU CAN RESPOND

OHSU employees are geared toward helping, whether supporting the health and healing of patients and visitors, serving the mission of a specific department, or providing customer service to others at OHSU: our co-workers. Yes, we are each other's customers!



SafetyTeam members have a special responsibility in that we share information to help respond to safety concerns in our workplace.

Reporting

Through the correct channels, incident and 'near miss' reporting contributes to a clearinghouse of data. This data is used by groups who assess areas of risk and identify opportunities for improvement.

Where do you submit a report?

Worker & Student Injury Reporting System (WSIRS)

<http://ozone.ohsu.edu/wsirs/>

This online reporting tool is designed to streamline the communication between an injured party, their supervisor or proctor and Risk Management. It should be used for injuries sustained during OHSU directed work. It should also be used to report certain incidents that do not result in injury but have that potential. Turn to



Topic of the Month:

NEAR MISSES

Near misses are incidents that do not involve injury or damage, but have the potential for injury or damage. Sometimes referred to as “close calls,” these incidents are indications that something is not right in the workplace. It is extremely important that all near misses be reported and that corrective action be taken.

But why report if everyone is OK?

The reason is simple – because you now have a “wake-up call” indicating the need for corrective action to make your workplace safer and prevent a future accident.

Interestingly, employees who report having experienced a near miss are almost twice as likely to experience an accident as those who have not experienced a near miss.



You can consider yourself ‘lucky’ when a near miss occurs from the standpoint that nobody has been

injured. If the near miss goes unreported, next time you may not be so ‘lucky.’ Many times, as tough as the lesson may be, we learn from our mistakes. Let’s not wait until somebody gets hurt to correct the situation.

Unreported, unresolved?

What if you don’t report a near miss and the problem is not fixed? Someone may get hurt! Take responsibility to prevent serious injury or damage. You’ll be taking action to protect others who may not be aware of hazards you have noticed. Gather all the information you can for the report.



Investigate Possible Causes

While it is a supervisor’s responsibility to ensure that the workplace is safe, each employee must contribute to the process through awareness, reporting and group effort toward prevention.

Possible causes might include:

- **Poor equipment condition or maintenance.**
- **Failure to wear personal protective equipment.**
- **Inadequate or missing machine guarding.**
- **Slip, trip or fall due to poor housekeeping.**
- **Lack of, or poor, training and supervision.**
- **Lack of procedure enforcement.**



When investigating a near miss, it’s a good idea to assume that employees acted in good faith and to avoid placing blame. Those assumptions discourage future reporting and prevention opportunities.

We must also hold patients, visitors, and contractors to the same high safety standards that we follow.

Safety comes from careful planning and corrective action as conditions change. Take the time to fix or report potential problems before they become incidents. It only takes a few minutes to fix or report a problem, and safety is everyone’s business!

Report near misses through Risk Management by visiting the Worker & Student Reporting System:

<http://ozone.ohsu.edu/wsirs/>

For reporting patient and visitor incidents, see “Related Links” on page 3.

SAFETYTEAM MEMBERSHIP

SafetyTeam Members spend approximately 15 minutes per month to help ensure a safe workplace at OHSU. Members receive monthly email with a link to this newsletter and a few brief questions to answer.

Members then channel safety concerns from locations and departments all over OHSU to the SafetyTeam Coordinator, who then helps connect members with resources and when necessary, brings concerns to the OHSU Safety Committee.



To join, contact safeteam@ohsu.com or 4-7795.

Safety Training For Everyone

You may have seen the recent announcement in Staff News regarding the new training modules available on Big Brain. Safety Training applies to everyone! This includes all interns, students, volunteers and anyone else working at OHSU.

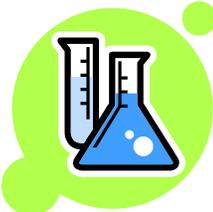
So which training must you take? Let's sort this out:

- Complete **Environment of Care** if you work in any capacity within OHSU hospitals, clinics or patient care areas.
- Take **Laboratory Safety** if you work in research areas. This includes supervisors and administrative support staff who visit these areas.
- **General Safety**—EVERYONE ELSE!

These last two modules are paired. In order to reach Laboratory Safety, you must first complete General Safety. You'll be offered an option to either finish or continue to Laboratory Safety training.

If you've logged in to Big Brain and added the courses to your cue, you might notice that they' are

currently listed under the "optional" section. This will no longer be the case once the system is loaded with "required" lists for those specific modules.



If you have questions, please contact EHRS.



RELATED LINKS

OHSU Resources:

Risk Management's homepage linking to WSIRS:

<http://www.ohsu.edu/ohsuedu/central/risk/>

Patient Safety Network for reporting patient/visitor incidents and near misses:

<http://ozone.ohsu.edu/healthsystem/dept/risk/UHC-PSN/>

Big Brain information via the Integrity Office:

<http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/about/services/integrity/training/bigbrain/index.cfm>

Outside the Bubble:

OSHA's resource webpage:

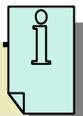
<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/index.html>

CDC's Workplace Safety Page:

<http://www.cdc.gov/workplace/>

Great article in Nature on risks at the bench:

<http://www.nature.com/naturejobs/2009/090402/full/nj7238-664a.html>



For a current issue of SAFETYNEWS online, and for archives, visit:

<http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/about/services/integrity/ehrs/safety/gen/safetynews.cfm>

The SAFETYTEAM page is available at:

<http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/about/services/integrity/ehrs/safety/gen/safeteam.cfm>

These pages are updated regularly. Send suggestions to the SafetyTeam Coordinator at:

safeteam@ohsu.edu

**Questions? Contact
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