



How's the Water?



Sometimes, you may see colored water coming from your faucet. Some people are so concerned about the taste or odor of the water that they only drink bottled water. **So what about the water?**

OHSU buys water from the City of Portland (or the local utility), and they certify that it is safe to drink. Color in the water is a result of sediment that comes from water pipes. Sediments can be stirred up during the first run of water that has sat in the pipes over time (ex.: over night or weekend); from water pressure variations; or from utility work.

Sediment may include; silt from the water source (ex.: fine river sediment - common in Portland water) and oxidation (rust). Silt poses no harm, aside from an aesthetic (color and taste) point of view. The rust (iron oxide) is actually beneficial to health, but may discolor the water.

OHSU drinking water is safe, but to flush the small amounts of sediments that may be present, simply run the water for at least 30 seconds or until the water runs clear and colorless, particularly in the morning after a weekend. Questions? 503 494-7795.



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Shared Successes

The following are interesting progress notes from SafetyTeam members' activities:

- A spill of dilute peroxyacetic acid in DCH caused minor respiratory irritation among several employees. The OHSU Spill Response Team cleaned up the spill and ventilated the area. The cause of the spill may have been due to operator error: a scope was placed into the cleaning machine, and the lid of the machine was not able to close and seal. Employees who operate the machine were briefed on the incident and retrained in correct procedures.
- A multi-user refrigerator was found to be leaking in an office in Mac Hall. The problem was related to frost buildup in the freezer portion of the refrigerator. The unit was defrosted, the area was cleaned, and no further leaks have been noted. This story should serve as a reminder to us all to periodically check on these kinds of multi-user equipment.

Thanks members... be safe!



Topic of the Month



This month's specialized training topic is a discussion of the **Safety of Young Workers**. This topic is presented to remind managers and employees about special considerations of young workers.

Employment or student internships of young people can yield many benefits for OHSU and for young workers. However, the potential for injuries and death must be recognized and addressed by everyone involved.

Common Problems

- **Safety training.** Inadequately addresses how to safely perform assigned tasks.
- **Task training or experience.** Assigned to perform tasks for which they lack training or experience, or they may take it upon themselves to perform these tasks.
- **Supervision.** Lack of adequate supervision.
- **Experience and maturity.** Lack of the needed abilities to recognize and deal with hazards. More specifically, they may not yet have a sufficient understanding of work processes to recognize hazardous situations!
- **Emergency procedures.** Lack of training or experience to handle emergencies or injuries.
- **Child labor law compliance.** Young workers and supervisors may disregard or be unaware of child labor laws that specify the jobs and the hours that young workers may not work.

Recommendations

Young workers should take the following steps to protect themselves:

- **Learn about and follow safe work practices.** Recognize the potential for injury at work.
- **Participate** in training offered by OHSU, or

request training if none is offered.

- **Ask about hazards.** Don't be afraid to ask questions if unsure about the safety of any task. Discuss concerns with your supervisor.
- **Know your rights.** Be aware that you have the right to work in a safe workplace free of recognized hazards. You have the right to refuse unsafe work tasks and conditions!

Supervisors should take the following steps to protect young workers:

- **Recognize the hazards.** Assess and eliminate hazards in the workplace to reduce the potential for injury or illness. Make sure equipment used by young workers is safe.
- **Supervise young workers.** Make sure that young workers are appropriately supervised at all times; they should never work alone! All supervisors and coworkers must be aware of tasks young workers may or may not perform.
- **Watch for work around and exposure to radioactive substances.** The law forbids or limits exposures depending on worker age.
- **Provide training.** Provide training in hazard recognition and safe work practices. Have young workers demonstrate that they can perform assigned tasks safely and correctly.
- **Report any injury and illness to Risk Management (503 494-2451).** Accident and claim reporting is the same as for employees. Medical attention for injuries and illness should be sought immediately.
- **Work hours.** Child labor laws specify acceptable hours and total time worked per day/week. These vary depending on the age of the worker.

Questions?

*Environmental Health
and Radiation Safety
503 494-7795*

Recycle News: Lights

OHSU uses a lot of light bulbs, and most of these get recycled when they burn out. This keeps glass, metal, and mercury out of our landfills.

“How much,” you ask? Last year, we recycled over 17 miles of fluorescent light tubes and more than 1250 compact fluorescent light bulbs and U-shaped lamps!

In addition, many light fixtures use an oil-filled electric ballast. Older ones contain PCBs, and when these go bad, they are collected, recycled, and the toxic PCBs are kept out of landfills.

Personal Protective Equipment

Often, your last line of defense from hazards in the workplace is your personal protective equipment, or **PPE**. These include gloves, eye protection, face and splash guards, gowns, aprons, masks, respirators, and others.

Not all of these items are required for all jobs, but you may need several different items for a given task. **OHSU will provide you the required gear at no charge**, and we work hard to make PPE conveniently available to you.

The most common complaint against wearing PPE is that it is “uncomfortable.” If you agree with this, remember that **it’s okay to ask for a different size or style to get you comfortable!** We know that if your PPE is more comfortable, you are more likely to wear it and **more likely to avoid injury!**

If you need help with PPE selection, contact the professionals in Environmental Health and Radiation Safety at 503 494-7795.

Q of M Answer!

Last month’s Question of the Month was from the Focus Topic, “**Compressed Gas Cylinders.**”

The question was, “**Who can you contact at OHSU to provide a rack, or install brackets or chains, to secure a compressed gas cylinder?**”

The answer was not stated in the Focus Topic article, but seasoned employees might know: **Facilities Management and Construction has carpenters and maintenance staff that can creatively solve any cylinder securing problem.** Since securing cylinders is not optional (it is required by law), all areas should check their cylinder storage areas for compliance. An unsecured or improperly stored compressed gas cylinder is an accident waiting to happen.

Thank you to each of you who participated! If you answered correctly, you earned 1 SafetyPoint! Contact Ben Richards at 503 494-2586 for answers to questions or to check on your SafetyPoint total.

FM&C Corner

This section highlights safety issues related to Facilities Management and Construction (FM&C):

- Dock 5 (main OHS loading dock) is undergoing extensive remodeling, and space and visibility are at a premium. Please be aware of impacts of these construction activities, and be extra careful driving, parking, and walking near this section of Campus Drive.
- Crosswalk complaints have dropped! The high-visibility signs seem to have helped quite a bit. Keep up the high level of pedestrian awareness, and yield to pedestrians.

Questions? Call Gene Patrick, Construction Safety Manager, at 503 494-2588. **Concerns?** Call the Construction HELP line at 418-HELP (8-4357).



Slow down in Construction Work Zones!

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Question of the Month

The question of the Month is designed to challenge your safety knowledge and give you a chance to earn some cool, free stuff!

QUESTION OF THE MONTH



What OHSU departments can help you with a question about work restrictions for young employees?

Write your answer to the question in the appropriate box on your SafetyTeam Member Update form. Correct answers to this month's Question will earn 1 SafetyPoint.

If you are not currently a SafetyTeam member and would like to participate, contact Ben Richards, SafetyTeam Coordinator, at 503 494-7795.

OHSU

OHSU includes four schools; two hospitals; numerous primary care and specialty clinics; multiple research institutes; and several public service and outreach units. OHSU is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution.

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Oregon Health & Science University
3181 S.W. Sam Jackson Park Road, PP 170
Portland, OR 97239

503 494-7795
safeteam@ohsu.edu