

WORKPLACE SAFETY

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 needed for workplace safety concerns.

Data:

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



Trends:

By identifying trends, the highest priority safety concerns can be more effectively targeted.

Prevention:

Some safe practices and routines are common sense and come naturally, while others require training and the development of 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 review a number of resources for workplace safety and training.

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Environmental Health & Radiation Safety 503-494-7795

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

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 within OHSU.

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



Reporting

By submitting incident and 'near miss' reports, you are contributing to a clearinghouse of valuable data. This data is used by groups who assess areas of risk at OHSU and identify opportunities for improvement.

Where do you submit an incident or near miss 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 page 2 for more on **NEAR MISSES**.

(A link to the Patient Safety Network (PSN) is on pg 3. Use PSN for reporting patient and visitor incidents and near misses.)



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.

Employees who experience a near miss and do not



address the problem are almost twice as likely to experience an accident as those who have not experienced a near miss.

You might 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 fortunate. Many times, as tough as the lesson may be, we learn from our mistakes. Let’s not wait until somebody gets hurt to correct an issue.

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 report and fix potential problems before they become incidents. It only takes a few minutes to address a problem, and safety is everyone’s business!

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

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

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

SAFETYTEAM MEMBERSHIP



Do you know anyone who might like to volunteer 15 minutes each month for workplace safety?

If so, contact the SafetyTeam Coordinator at safeteam@ohsu.com or 4-7795.

Safety Training For Everyone

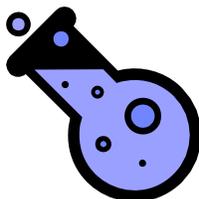
There are excellent training modules available on Big Brain regarding Safety at OHSU. Safety Training applies to everyone! This includes all interns, students, volunteers and anyone else working at OHSU.

So which training must you take? Let's see:

- 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!**

To take these training modules, login to Big Brain (see link in OHSU Resources section of this page), search the listings and add your required courses to your cue. If you see a course populate in the "optional" section but you know it to be required, please contact EHRS at 4-7795 or safeteam@ohsu.edu.

*In order to reach Laboratory Safety, you must first complete General Safety. You'll be offered an option to either finish or continue with Laboratory Safety training.



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. If there are OHSU resources you'd like to see linked, please send suggestions to the SafetyTeam Coordinator at:

safeteam@ohsu.edu

Questions? Ask Environmental Health & Radiation Safety:

503-494-7795

