



### Special points of interest:

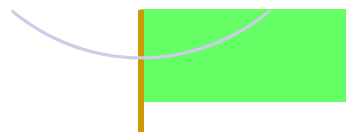
- EHSO Council Meeting March 9, 2006 @ Lehman College
- NYCER Meeting March 21, 2006 @ Polytechnic University
- SEHSA Spring Conference March 21, 2006 @ Hudson Valley Community College
- EHSO Council Meeting April 6, 2006 @ Hostos Community College
- Theater Safety Training Seminar @ New York City College of Technology (NYCCT), April 19, 2006

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# CUNY EHS News



## Environmental Audits

By Michael Spath

Since our last newsletter, Hostos Community College and Medgar Evers College have had their audits. In addition to the positive results of both audits, this was the first time in the EPA-CUNY audit program that neither college had any findings involving fluorescent lights or computer waste.

The Hostos audit was also the first CUNY audit performed by Woodard & Curran. Preparations are underway at John Jay and

Baruch Colleges. The audits are scheduled to begin on March 27<sup>th</sup> and April 24<sup>th</sup> respectively.

CUNY's first internal audits also took place this month at the College of Staten Island and York College, and the audit team consisted of CUNY EHS staff, CSI and York personnel, and EHS Officers from several other campuses. Initial results have been very positive.

The EPA audits are the beginning of the process; sustaining compliance over the



long haul is the ultimate goal.

The CUNY internal audit program is designed to follow up on the EPA audits and ensure that we are applying our lessons learned.

## Lead Paint Debris Disposal

By Michael Spath

In our continuing effort to develop CUNY-wide Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), the CUNY EHS team is preparing a draft SOP for the disposal of lead-based paint debris. The new SOP will address some frequently asked questions about lead-based paint:

1. Should removed lead paint be considered a hazardous waste?
2. What is the proper way to determine if the paint in question is hazardous?
3. Should lead-based paint scrapings be contained in a specific manner to trap dust and chips inside?
4. What is the proper labeling for a container of lead-

- based paint waste?
5. How should any removed wood or wall material be treated?



### Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)

Portable automated external defibrillators are about the size of a laptop computer. These devices deliver a shock to restore a regular heartbeat, and can also determine whether a shock is really needed. They are designed to be simple so that they can be used by people without medical training.

CUNY is working to comply with newly-promulgated New York State AED requirements.



The CDC issued a ban on the importation of birds and bird products from H5N1-affected countries:

Cambodia, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Peoples' Republic of China, Romania, Russia, South Korea, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, and Vietnam (current as of December 29, 2005).

**For NYC information visit**

**<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cd/cd-avianflu-fs.shtml>**

## Molds In Your Home

By Liudmila Liubcina



Molds are fungi that can be found both indoors and outdoors. No one knows definitively how many species of fungi exist, but estimates range from tens of thousands to more than three hundred thousand. Because of their opportunistic nature, molds may be a source of

environmental allergens in the home. Mold exposure may cause cold-like symptoms—watery eyes, sore throat, wheezing and dizziness.

Molds can usually be detected by a musty odor and discoloration of surfaces, changing them to white, green, brown, black or orange.

### How To Minimize Mold

Because molds are naturally occurring and ubiquitous in our environment, it is impossible to eliminate mold activity. Still, it is possible to contain mold growth in many cases. The following tips may help you minimize

mold growth in your home:

1. Reduce moisture levels in the bathroom by opening a window or running an exhaust fan during and after showers;
2. Fix plumbing leaks and seepage to prevent the buildup of moisture;
3. Make sure that clothing is dry and clean to prevent the growth of mold on clothes hanging in your closet;
4. Increase the flow of air within your home; and
5. Prevent the buildup of condensation.

## Avian Influenza: Current Situation!

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/outbreaks/current.htm>

The avian influenza A (H5N1) epizootic (animal outbreak) in Asia and parts of Europe is not expected to diminish significantly in the short term. It appears that H5N1 infection among birds has become widespread in certain areas and that human infections resulting from direct contact with infected poultry will continue to occur. So far, the spread of H5N1 virus from person-to-person has been rare and has not continued beyond one person. No evidence of genetic reassortment between human and avian influenza A virus genes has been found; still, the epizootic in Asia continues to pose an important pub-

lic health concern. Research suggests that currently circulating strains of H5N1 viruses are becoming more pathogenic (capable of causing disease) in mammals than were earlier H5N1 viruses. One study found that ducks infected with H5N1 virus are now shedding more virus for longer periods without showing symptoms of illness. This finding has implications for the role of ducks in transmitting disease to other birds and possibly to humans as well. Additionally, other findings have documented H5N1 infection among pigs in China and H5N1 infection in felines (experimental infection in housecats in the Netherlands and isolation of H5N1 viruses in tigers and leopards in Thailand).

Notable findings of epidemiologic investigations of human H5N1 cases in Vietnam during 2005 have suggested transmission of H5N1 viruses to at least two persons through consumption of uncooked duck blood. One possible instance of limited person-to-person transmission of H5N1 virus in Thailand has been reported. This possibility is being further investigated.

The CDC is monitoring the situation closely, along with WHO and other international organizations. In addition, the CDC continues to work collaboratively with the WHO and the National Institutes of Health on the development and testing of vaccine seed candidates for H5N1.

## “Right-to-Know” and Hazard Communication Training

By Aldo Orlando



Both the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Hazard Communication Standard and the New York State “Right-To-Know” law require that employers provide safety training to all employees who work with hazardous materials in the course of their duties. CUNY Environmental Health and Safety Officers (EHSOs) provide such

training for their respective colleges on both a regular and an as-needed basis. During training, employees are provided with general as well as campus-specific safety information regarding the proper storage, handling, and disposal of hazardous materials.

In addition, instruction in the use of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) must also be provided. The MSDS is a document that manufacturers, importers, and distributors of hazardous chemicals must develop and supply with shipments of hazardous chemicals. Recipient entities must in turn collect, maintain, and make these MSDS sheets available to their employees for each hazardous chemical being used. Em-

ployees may request copies of MSDS sheets for the particular hazardous materials they work with. The information must be provided within 72 hours of receipt of a request.

These laws also require that labels on chemical containers indicate the identity of the hazardous chemicals, appropriate hazard warnings, and the name and address of the manufacturer, importer, or distributor. Original labels must not be removed or defaced until each container is empty.

If you have any safety-related questions or concerns, please contact the Environmental Health and Safety Officer at your campus.



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## EHS Meeting Updates

By Karen Belin

The February meeting of the Environmental Health and Safety Officers (EHSO) Council was held at the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) on February 9, 2006 from 12 pm to 2 pm. The meeting was hosted by Martin Levine, EH&S Officer at BMCC, and featured guest speaker, Patricia A. MacCubbin, Director of the Office of Research Conduct at The City University of New York and the Research Foundation, who gave an informative overview of the CUNY Institutional Review Board and discussed research with human subjects. The January EHSO Council

meeting was held at Brooklyn College on January 12, 2006 from 12 pm to 2 pm. Aldo Orlando, EH&S Officer at Brooklyn College, hosted the meeting, which featured a presentation on the protection of bird habitats in New York City by E. J. McAdams, Executive Director at the New York City Audubon. The presentation, titled, “A Bird’s-Eye View of CUNY,” provided fascinating insight on avian wildlife within our region and was followed by an interesting discussion.

The next EHSO Council meeting will be held on Thursday, March 9, 2006, from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm at Lehman College. The

meeting will include a Chemical Hazard Communication training course provided by Kurt Klein, Health and Safety Manager, and Bill Knoop, Project Manager, of the CUNY EH&S.

The upcoming NYCER meeting will be held on March 21, 2006 at Polytechnic University, from 12 pm to 2 pm. January’s NYCER meeting was held at The City College of New York (CCNY) and was hosted by Richard Belgrave, EH&S Officer at CCNY. The meeting included a presentation on “Crisis Management and the Avian Flu Pandemic” from Neal Drawas, Managing Director in Corporate Preparedness at Kroll Associates.





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### Lab Hygiene Tips:

1. Wash your hands after handling chemicals and before you leave the lab.
2. Remove gloves to answer phones, use computers, or touch door knobs.
3. Remove your lab coat before leaving the lab.
4. Do not eat or drink in the laboratory.

## INTERNATIONAL EARTH DAY

April 22

The International Earth Day started in 1970 as an early symbol of environmental movement's demand for a healthy and sustainable planet.

Earth Day is now widely celebrated around the world. Take note of posters on your campus advertising local Earth day programs and activities, and be sure to join in.

## Laboratory Safety

By Amy Roman



Laboratory safety is crucial to preventing accidents while performing experiments. Last year, there were a number of accidents that occurred in labs at CUNY. To ensure a safe working environment for the entire CUNY community, the following guidelines should be observed:

### General Practices

For safety reasons, there should always be at least two people in a lab when experiments are being conducted. If you must work alone, make sure that someone else nearby is aware that you are working in the lab and has agreed to check in on you. For your protection, wear proper lab attire that includes a lab coat, safety glasses and closed-toed shoes. Use a fume hood when working with toxic and/or volatile chemicals to minimize inhalation exposure. Know the location of the MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheets) and know how to read one.

### Gloves

There are many types and sizes of gloves that are available to protect workers from dermal exposure to chemicals. Glove types include, but are not limited to, latex, nitrile, and butyl, each of which has specific properties that make it accept-

able for working with only certain types of chemicals. Ensure you have selected the proper glove type for the chemicals you will be using by consulting the MSDS. Proper glove sizing is also key. A glove that is too small will be uncomfortable and will not likely be worn. A glove that is too large will reduce manual dexterity, fall off, or get snagged in machinery. Offering a variety of sizes will ensure that everyone in the lab can wear gloves comfortably and safely. Be sure to change your gloves immediately if you notice that there is a small tear or that the glove becomes chemically contaminated.

### Fire Safety

It is important to know the location of the nearest fire extinguisher and make sure never to obstruct your access to the extinguisher with boxes or other items. Most labs will be equipped with a multipurpose type ABC extinguisher. This extinguisher is good for putting out paper, flammable liquids, and electrical fires. If you work with combustible/reactive metals such as sodium or magnesium, make sure to have a type D extinguisher handy as well. If you do need to put out a small fire, remember PASS (Pull, Aim, Squeeze, Sweep). Never attempt to put out a fire that you feel uncomfortable handling.

### Safety Shower / Eye Wash

Safety showers and eye wash stations are required in any laboratory where there is the potential that a person may be exposed to chemicals that can injure the skin

or eyes. You should know the location and proper operating procedures of the nearest safety shower and eye wash unit. All units should be flushed weekly to ensure that clean water will be available when needed in an emergency.

### Respiratory Protection

The best way to control inhalation exposure to harmful chemical vapors is with engineering controls such as fume hoods. When engineering controls are not available or are insufficient, additional respiratory protection may be required. For dust hazards, a dust mask may be sufficient. For chemical vapors an air-purifying respirator may be required. If you must wear a respirator to perform work functions, you must be part of the college's Respiratory Protection Program (RPP). RPP includes proper selection of a respirator, medical clearance, fit-testing and training.

For more information visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/chemical-safety/>

<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/odhsb/labsfty/hygiene.htm>

<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/laboratories/>

