September Is National Biosafety Stewardship Month

Undoubtedly many of you are aware of the events that have happened at the CDC over the summer that involved improperly inactivated anthrax spores, contaminated shipments of avian influenza, and the discovery of previously unknown vials of smallpox in a laboratory freezer. In order to address these lapses in biosafety protocols and procedures, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has declared September National Biosafety Stewardship Month. During this month the NIH, as well as other federal entities including the USDA, are performing specific activities to evaluate their current biosafety policies with the goal of preventing future lapses.

We are encouraging members of our NDSU research community to participate in Biosafety Stewardship Month! These are some suggestions how:

1. Assess your own lab’s safety procedures, and determine if they are meeting the needs of your lab, or if they might require some updating or modification to reflect new agents worked with or procedures done in the lab.

   (If your Lab Coat Rack looks like the one below, perhaps that is a good place to start!)

2. Reinforce training and emergency preparedness in your laboratory. For example, does everyone know how to handle a spill? Or who to contact if a spill happens? This is the perfect time to review those procedures. Make this an annual event!

3. Conduct an inventory of infectious agents in your freezers. It is important to know what’s in your freezers, and who has responsibility for what. Abandoned boxes full of tubes happen in every lab; however, they present a safety and biosecurity concern. Creating and maintaining a freezer inventory is also very important to have when freezers break down, so that you are able to easily locate and preserve the most important samples.

4. Come to the Biosafety Listening Sessions being held on campus. Jodie Haring, NDSU’s Biological Safety Officer (Jodie.Haring@ndsu.edu), will be hosting several Listening Sessions on campus this fall. These Sessions will be open-ended discussions for members of campus to ask biosafety related questions and to discuss biosafety related topics. They will be organized by department/research area, so watch your email inbox for an invitation!

Biosafety is a team effort. We can all do our part to raise biosafety awareness, make our own individual labs safer, and by extension make our campus community safer.
Fire Prevention Week

Fire Prevention Week is October 5-11, 2014. ‘Working Smoke Alarms Save Lives. Test Yours Every Month!’ is the theme chosen by The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

On average, seven people died in US home fires per day from 2007-2011. Almost 60% of reported home fire deaths in 2007-2011 resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms. Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in reported home fires in half.

Fargo Fire Department recommends installing smoke alarms both inside and outside of sleeping areas and on every level of your home. Test alarms monthly and change alkaline batteries at least once a year.

For more information visit NFPA’s Fire Prevention Week site at: http://www.firepreventionweek.org

Slip, Trip & Fall Prevention Program

In 2013, slip, trip and fall accidents made up 28% of the claims filed by North Dakota state employees incurring 24% of the total claim costs. In an effort to reduce these incidents, ND Risk Management Workers Compensation Program (RMWCP) has announced that a Slips, Trips and Fall Program will be added to the RMWCP Premium Reduction Program for fiscal year 2014-15.

The Safety Office would like to remind you of some actions you can take to prevent slips, trips and falls.

Slips can be caused by constantly wet surfaces, spills or weather hazards like ice and snow. They are more likely to occur when you hurry or run, wear inappropriate shoes or don’t pay attention to where you are walking.

♦ Practice safe walking skills. Move slowly and pay attention to the surface you are walking on.

♦ Clean up spills right away.

♦ When possible, remove ice and snow from sidewalks and wear proper footwear for the conditions.

Trips can happen when your work area is cluttered, lighting is poor or when an area has loose footing. Trips are more likely to happen when you are in a hurry and do not pay attention to where you are going.

♦ Watch where you are going and carry loads you can see over.

♦ Keep work areas well lit and clean. Store materials and tools in closets, cabinets, or specially assigned storage areas.

♦ When using stairs, take one stair at a time and use the hand rail.

♦ Arrange power cords so that they will not be in the way for pedestrians.

♦ Report loose carpeting, stair treads, or hand rails immediately.

Falls occur whenever you move too far off your center of balance. Most falls are slips or trips at ground level, but falls from greater heights pose a much higher risk of serious injury.

♦ Do not jump. Lower yourself carefully from docks, trucks or work stages.

♦ Do not store things on stairs or in aisles.

♦ Wear good shoes.

♦ Always use proper equipment when you have to work at a higher level. Never use chairs to reach higher.

For more tips and information review the Slips, Trips & Falls Safe Operating Procedure on the Safety Office website: http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policessafety/sop/SlipsTrips_Falls.pdf
Autoclave Tape—Get the Lead Out!

If you are using tape indicators during autoclave disinfection you may be generating a hazardous waste without realizing it. A number of years ago indicator tape containing elevated lead levels began a phase out period, however it is still available for purchase. While newer products are using a different technology as an indicator, these older products may still be around in drawers or possibly still in use. It is important that the older tapes be properly handled to include collection as hazardous waste after use or prior to disposal utilizing the Safety Office hazardous waste collection procedures.

Check your autoclave tape if you are using older FisherBrand, 3M, Propper, Shamrock or VWR brands. Most autoclave tapes with stripes at an angle (\ / \ / \ / \ / ) contain lead, however if the indicator is a faint text that reads “AUTOCLAVE” it is most likely lead free. If in doubt, refer to the safety data sheet for the product.

Your sales vendor can assist with selection of lead free tape, so when ordering new tape make sure to purchase a lead free variety. And as always, feel free to contact the Safety Office for more information or assistance.

Annual Checklist for Heating Systems

As the air cools, Cass County Electric Cooperative reminds you to have a contractor do a pre-season check up on your heating system. A typical check-up should include the following:

- Check thermostat settings to ensure the heating system keeps you comfortable when you are home and saves energy while you are away.
- Tighten all electrical connections to ensure safe operation of the system and extend the life of major components.
- Lubricate all moving parts to reduce friction.
- Check controls of the system to assure it starts, operates and shuts off properly.
- Check all gas (or oil) connections, gas pressure, burner combustion and heat exchangers. Any issues can cause equipment to operate less safely and efficiently.

Finally, you should inspect, clean or change air filters in your furnace once a month. A dirty filter can increase energy costs and damage your equipment.

Thanksgiving Safety

Thanksgiving is the leading day of the year for home fires involving cooking equipment. Keep you and your family safe this year by following these tips from the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA).

- Keep children at least 3 feet away from the stove.
- Keep the floor clear of trip hazards.
- Keep knives out of the reach of children.
- Be sure electric cords from appliances are not dangling off the counter.
- Keep matches and utility lighters up high in a locked cabinet.
- Never leave children alone in a room with a lit candle.
- Make sure your smoke alarms are working. Test them monthly.

Happy Thanksgiving

O’ pumpkin pie,
your time has come ‘round
again and I am
autumnrifically
happy!
~Terri Guillemets
Annual Safety Training

Baseline Safety Training is a mandatory training for all NDSU employees—faculty, staff and student employees. If you are a supervisor, it is mandatory that you take both Supervisor Safety Training and Baseline Safety Training. Both courses must be completed on an annual basis.

Online training (including Baseline Safety and Supervisor Safety) is administered through Moodle, an online Learning Management System. Completing the online training courses will require that you log in using your NDUS username and password, review the training content and take the associated quiz. Your completion of the quiz online will record our completion of the training requirement.

Face to face training courses continue to be offered. If attending a face to face training course, please make sure you bring your NDSU employee ID number with you, as it will be used to record your participation in the course. The following are the dates for the fall Safety Training sessions. (Note: all sessions are in the Memorial Union)

Baseline Safety Training:
- 9/22—9 AM—Mandan Rm
- 10/20—9 AM—Mandan Rm
- 11/17—9AM—Mandan Rm
- 12/22—9 AM—Mandan Rm

Supervisor Safety Training:
- 9/23—9 AM—Peace Garden
- 10/21—9 AM—Meadow Rm
- 11/18—9 AM—Meadow Rm
- 12/23—9 AM—Meadow Rm