

EMS Eco-Notes



Message from an Expert in the Field

Prevent Spread of Pathogens in Diving Ops

NCCOS's Center for Coastal Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research scientist Cheryl Woodley provides tips on the prevention of unintentional spread of disease

If you find yourself either in the midst of diseased corals (or other sick organisms for that matter), to avoid personal harm or act as an inadvertent carrier of a disease agent, particularly in cases suspected to involve infectious disease agent:

1. The first general response to an epizootic (disease affecting multiple species simultaneously) or epidemic (disease affecting many individuals of the same species) is to quarantine. Limiting access to an area can help prevent the innocent spread of disease agents to unaffected areas.

2. If you plan to visit multiple sites, ALWAYS visit a healthy (or apparently healthy) site before entering an area of known disease. You wouldn't want to unknowingly inoculate a healthy reef.

Remember: Movement should always be from 'clean' to 'dirty.'

3. When collecting samples, disinfect equipment/instruments between sampling (or use separate equipment/instruments for each sample) and change gloves between samplings. Sanitize with a simple bleach solution (usually 5-10% for 5-10 minutes) soak followed by a freshwater rinse.

4. When collecting tissue samples, don't let small pieces fall or float away from the site. Each sample should be placed into a separate, clearly labeled, container. Never open a sample container from one site in another area. Document the specifics of the collection site. Information should include: location, morphology of any change (include severity, area of involvement, color, texture, pattern). Identify the specific area collected (i.e., along the margin between affected and non-affected tissue).

5. Consider that you and your equipment may be vectors to other locations. To avoid this, disinfect ALL equipment after leaving an infected area or moving to a new site. As with any disease agent, also take care to thoroughly shower with disinfectant soap prior to moving to a new location.

Disease is disease in or out of the water! Universal Precautions such as these are simple control measures designed to reduce disease transmission risk when dealing with possible disease agents or outbreaks. They are designed to keep you safe and protect the environment and those around you. ☘



Tip of the Quarter

Lights & Paper


Two tips for the price of one! This quarter: smart lighting & recycling all sorts of stuff

Be bright about light

Artificial lighting accounts for 44 percent of electricity use in office buildings.

- Turn off lights when you're leaving any room for 15 minutes or more and use natural light when you can.
- Buy Energy Star-rated light bulbs and fixtures (www.energystar.gov), which use at least two-thirds less energy than regular lighting, and install timers or motion sensors that automatically shut off lights when they're not needed.

Ramp up your recycling

- Recycle everything your company collects. Just about any kind of paper you would encounter in an office, including fax paper, envelopes, and junk mail, can be recycled. So can your old cell phone, PDA, or pager. 
- Place recycling bins in accessible, high-traffic areas, with clear information about what can and can't be recycled.

These tips originally appeared on "The Green Life," a Sierra Club weblog of ideas for living well and doing good. Visit www.sierraclub.org/greenlife for more tips and information.



A Brief Review of EMS at the Charleston Facilities

Fred Holland, Ph.D.
Director, The Center for Human Health Risk at the Hollings Marine Laboratory

The Center for Human Health Risk (CHHR) and Hollings Marine Laboratory (HML) has used its unique partnership framework and the NCCOS Environmental Management System to enhance the environmental stewardship and safety culture of our partners and the campus on which we reside.

The HML building was designed to provide a safe, secure and environmentally-friendly work environment, while at the same conserving natural resources and energy to the greatest extent possible. To ensure researchers are exposed to the minimum possible risk

to laboratory-based air pollutants, the HML building has a one-pass system for inside air. The high energy and costs for this safety feature are tempered by large windows and skylights that allow natural light to reduce the amount of artificial light required while at the same time providing the

the impacts of excess heating during the summer and heat loss during the winter.

Recently, the CHHR/HML engineering team, led by Martin Burnett, recalibrated the sensors for the cooling tower system resulting in a substantial reduction in water use (~1.7 million gallons/year). The engineering team also implemented a preventative maintenance program to routinely check and recalibrate all motors, lighting systems, sensors, controls, and plumbing systems. The preventative maintenance program ensures the infrastructure is operating as efficiently as possible minimizing water and energy use. Supporting an on-site engineering team that sustains environmentally-friendly operations is cheaper than paying excessive energy and water bills. ☞

This was a brief excerpt from Fred's article. To read the rest, please visit the supplemental in the Eco-Notes section of the EMS web site.

EMS Team Representatives
NCCOS EMS Coordinator: Bernie Gottholm
Silver Spring: Bernie Gottholm
Charleston: Rick Meitzler & Raluca Semeniuc
Oxford: Jay Lewis
Beaufort & Kasitsna Bay: Joseph Bizzell
NOS Representative: Jean Durosko
CROSS-FUNCTIONAL REPRESENTATIVES
IT Team Rep: Mark Mohs
Communications Team Rep: Timothy Dorch
Budget/Finance Team Rep: Mia Robinson

natural lighting preferred by CHHR/HML staff and researchers. In addition, most HML lighting systems use motion sensors to ensure that lighting is only on when needed. The window systems are also designed to minimize

Quarterly Highlights

7/16/2008

Montgomery County Recycling Expansion Benefits NCCOS Waste Reduction Goal

Silver Spring Metro Center: CCMA, CSCOR, and NCCOS Headquarters

Effective July 1, 2008, Montgomery County, MD expanded its recycling program to accept plastic bottles, containers, and lids—including jars, pails/buckets, and food-grade tubs—in its recycling program. The Silver Spring Metro Center Environmental Management System (SSMC EMS) Facility Team will be posting signs at each of the recycling stations as a reminder to employees. More information on how to recycle/dispose of plastic bottles, containers, and lids can be found on their web site. Several staff provided input and information on this expanded recycling program. For more information, contact one of your EMS Local Facility Representatives. ☞

9/24/2008

Facility Fire Inspection Exemplary

Center for Human Health Risk, Charleston, SC

NCCOS's CHHR at the Hollings Marine Laboratory (HML) underwent a formal annual fire inspection with the James Island Fire Department on September 17, 2008. The three hour and 45 minute inspection resulted in no findings and no violations. This is "an exemplary achievement in a diverse facility with multiple agencies and the inherent hazard of everyday laboratory activities," according to the James Island Fire Marshal. CHHR staff and HML partners continue to maintain their workspaces in accordance with all requirements of fire safety. ☞

Want to submit to the EMS Eco-Notes, or have a question about an item in these pages? Contact the editors:

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