

EMS Eco-Notes



Message from the NCCOS EMS Team

Plastics: What's With the Numbers?

Use of the recycling symbol in the coding of plastics has led to ongoing consumer confusion about which plastics are readily recyclable.

Of the seven types of numbered plastics, only No. 1 (polyethylene terephthalate, or PET) and No. 2 (high-density polyethylene, or HDPE) are commonly recycled. Even in those rare municipalities that ask residents to throw all plastics in the same recycling bin, it's mostly just the PET (mostly in the form of beverage bottles) and HDPE (detergent bottles) that get processed. While it's technically feasible to recycle other plastics, the process is expensive and results in plastic that's widely deemed inferior. Products made from plastics No. 3 through No. 7—a range that includes food trays, grocery bags, six-pack rings, and your yogurt cups (designated No. 5)—are typically either landfilled or shipped overseas for incineration. (There's great interest in the developing world in burning plastics to recover the fossil fuels from which they're made.) *From a Slate article by Brendan Koerner.*



Message from Bernie

Audits Are Coming! Audits Are Coming!

You will directly impact the success of our EMS. Everyone will be involved in the audits from **June 17-25** – are you prepared? Below are some sample questions.

- Your work directly impacts the environment – can you describe the potential environmental impacts of your job?
- Can you describe the procedures/protocols of your job?
- Do you know the potential environmental impacts of departing from those procedures/protocols?
- Your products, services, and activities are represented in all of NCCOS's significant environmental aspects – can you identify any of the significant environmental aspects?
- What is the NCCOS EMS policy statement – can you describe or summarize the content of the policy?
- Who do you contact at your facility regarding environmental issues – do you know the person or persons?
- Who are the members of your Local Facility EMS Team – can you name them?
- Does your job function have any legal and/or other environmental requirements – if so, could you articulate them? Do you have access to those requirements (i.e., web, file, other)?

Tip of the Quarter

Save Paper & More

Two tips for the price of one! This quarter: paper saving and reducing office toxins

Go paperless when possible



- Make it a habit to think before you print: could this be read or stored online instead? Request to be removed from mailing lists for any unwanted catalogs, newsletters, magazines, and junk mail. Visit www.newdream.org/junkmail for more information.

- Make it a policy to post employee manuals and similar materials online, rather than distribute print copies. They're easier to update that way too.

Create a healthy office environment

- Make it a habit to use nontoxic cleaning products. Brighten up your cubicle with plants, which absorb indoor pollution.
- Make it a policy to buy furniture, carpeting, and paint that are free of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and won't off-gas toxic chemicals.



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.



COL's EMS Implementation: One for the Glass-Half-Full Crowd

Robert J. Wood, Ph.D.
Director, Cooperative Oxford Laboratory

As one of NCCOS's 'in the field' facilities, the Cooperative Oxford Laboratory has aggressively worked towards achieving regulatory compliance, and meeting the Administration's environmental performance goals by minimizing our total environmental footprint. In doing so it is clear that both ends of the administrative ladder must strive to implement sensible and impactful changes in what and how we carry out NOAA's mission.

In our experiences, we have learned that maximizing the impact of our EMS, just as maximizing the effectiveness of our safety program, cannot

be accomplished simply through top-down controls. It is true that COL's administration can work to make major capital investments in EMS possible, like the lab's new geothermal heating and cooling system, but those actions are not enough to support an effective EMS outcome. Rather, we

As these EMS leaders help to establish an atmosphere of action, COL has benefited from dividends that reach beyond "meeting the Administrative mandates". One leader facilitated (through inquiries, training, meetings, etc.) an official 'clean the highway' program that has increased morale, staff interaction, and appreciation for COL among the Oxford community. Others have pitched in to lead our annual Open house during Oxford Day, and another to further enhance our small boats safety training. So, while implementing a new EMS program has admittedly expended precious time and resources, during this time of declining budgets, not only are we decreasing our environmental footprint, but the leaders among us have helped COL compensate for this investment through dividends that we had not anticipated.

EMS Team Representatives

NCCOS EMS Coordinator: Bernie Gottholm

Silver Spring: Hal Stanford

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

have found that a culture of environmental awareness must be fostered by staff leaders who are 'internally' or 'self-' motivated to take initiative, adopt, and promote, stewardship principles at the workplace.

Quarterly Highlights

4/23/2008

Massive Mold Remediation Project Completed at NCCOS Facility

The Center for Coastal Fisheries and Habitat Research, Beaufort, NC

Thanks to completion of a \$440,000 mold remediation project, all employees at the Center for Coastal Fisheries and Habitat Research (CCFHR) are now working in a mold-free environment. The seriousness of CCFHR's problem became apparent in late 2005 when an assessment at the facility found unsafe levels of mold growth in five buildings. A project to remediate began in 2006, and consisted of two phases. Phase I focused on reducing humidity and repairing building problems that contributed to mold growth. Phase II then thoroughly removed the mold, and disinfected offices, laboratories, ductwork, and public spaces.

6/4/2008

NCCOS Vessel Conversion to Soy Fluid Promotes Environmental Stewardship

The Center for Coastal Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research, Oxford, MD

Hydraulic fluids for the winch and A-frame systems onboard the R/V Laidly were recently converted to soy fluid hydraulic all-season biodegradable oil, obtained from Environmental Lubricants Manufacturing, Inc. After the change in hydraulic fluid, the safe working load for each system was retested, as required. In all respects, the new bio-based fluids appear to be performing at least as well as the old petroleum-based oils. A switch to bio-based fuel is being pursued.

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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