Energy, Environment and National Security Directorate

GARS ESH Newsletter

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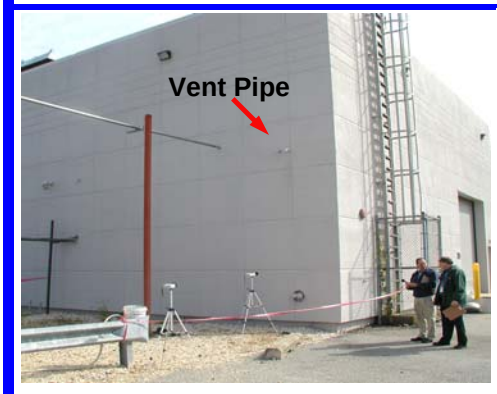
BNL Leadership Action Plan

As you may have heard, over the last year the Laboratory has experienced a series of significant operational events (Well House explosion, Accelerator Test Facility Fire and others). In the last month of FY09 and first month of FY10 two workers at BNL sustained serious injuries requiring hospitalization, and an additional worker required emergency medical treatment. While GARS has maintained its excellent safety record, these events have once again raised serious concerns with how the Lab in general performs its work. Events such as these hurt BNL's reputation as a world-class scientific research institution. BNL's senior management is very concerned about these events and has developed a Leadership Action Plan to aggressively address these issues. Key to the success of this plan is each individual's commitment to the Laboratory's mission and reputation as a world-class scientific research institution. This mission cannot be accomplished without safety as a core value. To improve safety and operational performance the plan has two main goals:

1) Strengthen line management leadership by direct accountability and ownership.

2) Expand and re-energize employee involvement in work planning, Job Risk Assessments (JRAs) and other key aspects of BNL safety programs to reduce injuries.

The implementation of this plan has already started with the Supervisors Meeting and All-Hands Meeting held by the Laboratory Director last month. This month each Associate Lab Director will have a safety Stand Down for their Directorate. The stand down will include an all-hands meeting to discuss the status of the Laboratory's safety performance and their Directorate's overall safety performance, as well as other activities that will be performed to improve safety. Your feedback and input at the all-hands meeting will help improve communications and provide important information to help drive improvement. Please make every effort to attend this meeting. If you would like more information on the Plan please contact Linda Bowerman (x4265).



Recent Lessons Learned

Recently, a BNL employee experienced a severe injury due to the unexpected release of high pressure gas from a vent pipe that created a loud noise. Two hazards need to be considered: the noise exposure (sometimes over 140 decibels) and the startle response that can lead to adverse reactions. ***On October 9***, a rigger walking underneath vent pipes outside Building 1005H (the RHIC Compressor Building) was startled by an extremely loud noise and a water vapor plume caused by cold helium gas vented from the building at high pressure. This venting procedure was a scheduled maintenance event. Unaware of the vent valve and associated hazards, the rigger ran from the source, fell when his legs collapsed, and was unable to stand due to injuries to his tendons. He was transported to the hospital and had surgery on both knees. The vent pipe is located approximately 14 feet above ground near the corner of the building and is painted the same color as the building. There was no sign or other obvious indication that the vent pipe existed and no one cleared the area prior to the manual release. The Department of Energy has initiated an investigation of the incident. In the meantime, the Collider-Accelerator Department put administrative controls in place at the Compressor building to ensure personnel have cleared the area prior to venting any helium. **The key lesson here is that sometimes operations inside a building can pose hazards outside the building that need to be identified and controlled. If you see something like this or other possible hazards please "say something" and notify your supervisor, Building Manager or Research Operations (x4265).**

Laptop Battery Collection

Another recent event at the laboratory has prompted a recycling opportunity for old laptop batteries. Building 911 was evacuated due to a fire caused by a dead laptop battery. An investigation was performed by the BNL Fire Protection Engineer. The fire in the laptop appeared to be the result of using a damaged or dead battery on a charger. The manufacturer's web site was searched for battery recalls and none were found for this particular battery (no manufacturer was given in the report). A safety observation was made by the former EENS ALD in an office of Bldg. 815 that identified an old laptop (under a stack of papers) that was plugged into just such a charger. So if you have any dead Li ion batteries do not continue to charge them or run them on a charger. To recycle old batteries please contact your Building Manager. Research Operations will provide collection boxes for the batteries and have them recycled. If you wish to dispose of old and unused laptops please contact your Property Manager Lou Gerlach (x7876). As part of preventive maintenance, when new batteries/computers are received place a sticker with a date stamp on the laptop so the age of the battery can be monitored.

490 Lab clean-out of rad samples accumulated over the years.

2009 Operational ESH Performance

Or in other words the annual ESH Management Review of Environmental, Safety and Health operations and goals for the fiscal year. Overall, there were no significant findings in any of the 12 assessments in 2009. Two injuries were reported: a slip resulted in an ankle injury requiring first aid and an employee burned their hand and required medical treatment (DOE recordable). There were two ORPS (Occurrence Reports) in the Directorate and 1 RAR (Radiological Awareness Report) that occurred during the year. All Directorate ESH Goals for FY09 were met. Significant progress was made in cleaning up the laboratories but more work remains to be done. Traffic violations were down from last year; we had 7 moving violations and 1 parking violation.

Thank you for your part in an effective ESH program.

For more information on the management review go to the Research Operations Web site: http://www.bnl.gov/eens/resops

Holiday Safety—Preventing Christmas Tree Fires

Selecting a Tree for the Holiday—Needles on fresh trees should be green and hard to pull back from the branches. The trunk should be sticky to the touch. Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree trunk on the ground. If many needles fall off, the tree has probably dried out and is a fire hazard. **Caring for Your Tree -**Do not place your tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace or heat vent. Be careful not to drop or flick cigarette ashes near a tree. Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times. **Disposing of Your Tree -**Never put tree branches or needles in a fireplace or woodburning stove. When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly. The best way to dispose of your tree is by taking it to a recycling center or having it hauled away by a community pick-up service.

For more info go to : http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/citizens/all_citizens/home_fire_prev/holiday-seasonal/holiday.shtm

For the video clip of tree fires go to: http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/citizens/all_citizens/home_fire_prev/holiday-seasonal/treefire.shtm

Research Operations wishes everyone a safe, healthy, and happy holiday season!