

# Health Sciences Safety Committee Meeting

## Minutes

May 25, 2006

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### Present:

Kim Bryner  
Nina Clovis  
Doug Crowell  
Andy Cockburn  
Cindy Dalton Trudy Weery  
Stephanie Graham-Sims  
Marilyn Howton

Jeff Kerns  
Bob Lemley  
Kevin Simpkins  
Bob Smith

### Absent:

Mike Cain  
Ben Cantoni  
Brad Fansler  
Dianne DeAngelis  
Lt. Allen Hill  
Tom Hussion  
Ben Johnson  
Buck Pennington  
Debbie Pikel  
Nasser Razmianfar

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### Agenda:

1. **Transportation of Animals on Passenger Elevators in HSS.**
2. **Lab Personnel Carrying Unknown Liquid on Passenger Elevator HSS.**
3. **Laboratory Equipment Transfer Manifest from New P.I.'s.**
4. **Ethidium Bromide and Acrylamide Gel Disposal.**

### The meeting opened at 1 PM.

**Mr. Smith:** Opened the meeting by introducing the Safety Committee to Mr Doug Crowell, Asst Director for OLAR in the Animal Quarters. Mr. Smith indicated Mr. Crowell is to become a member of the Committee because of the issues of persons transporting animals on passenger elevators and the expansion of research dealing with animals at the facility.

**Mr. Smith:** Read an e-mail forwarded from Ms. Dalton that had been sent to her attention from an employee in the School of Nursing. This person was concerned not only about the animals on the passenger elevators but also lab personnel carrying liquid in a flask. This person was wearing gloves and PPE's. into a public elevator when there are service elevators close by.

**Mr. Crowell:** Indicated, he wasn't sure why there is a breakdown in the system on transporting animals. Whether it in the communication, training or whether it is they might not have been aware of our system policy. Procedures have been posted in the animal quarters and information will get provided throughout the facilities. Just this past month, we had a meeting about this issue I think Andy Cockburn brought it to our meeting. He said the subject had come up in the Safety Committee Meeting. All animals transported out of the animal quarters are supposed to be covered and transported up the service elevators. I want to bring this issue up at the CHO Training on June the 6<sup>th</sup> as I'm part of the training. It isn't good for people and the animals riding in the same elevator. It is more harmful to the research animals than it is for people. The animals can be exposed to a lot of things that people normally carry.

**Mr. Smith:** We have had this problem before in HSN. In fact it was brought up at last months meeting but since we now have research labs in HSS that are working with animals I can see where the problem has become an issue for the whole HSC.

**Dr. Cockburn:** I think there are two or three research groups up there. I think the most of the animal work is done on the HSN side.

**Ms. Howton:** Is there a time when infectious animals from the animal quarters are transported up there?

**Dr. Cockburn:** No there isn't that I know of at this time. I f it were happening, it would be a Bio-safety issue.

**Ms. Weery:** Do I understand that animals are to use the service elevators in HSS? I have been at two meeting at the hospital with Ron Bane and Debbie Falconi and the discussion of using those service elevators for patient transport. It isn't good to have patients in the same place with animals especially the ones that are immune deficient. There may be some that are allegoric to animal dander. We may have to find another way for transporting them up instead of the service elevators. There probably needs to have signs at the elevators. I would suggest someone from the Health Sciences side work with Ron and Debbie from the hospital to come up with some other way to get the patients up from the basement.

**Ms. Weery:** I will take this issue back for discussion. We will just have to find another way for patients.

**Dr. Cockburn:** I don't think you would want to use the service elevators for patients anyway. There may be chemicals and other bad things transported on those elevators that would not be good for the patients.

**Ms. Weery:** I'm glad this discussion came up today before anymore planning gets done. There has to be another way for the patients.

**Mr. Smith:** If there isn't anymore to add, there is still an issue of the liquid and the PPE. I think we should check the elevators and make everyone aware they should be using the service elevators.

**Mr. Lemley:** This issue should be address at lab orientation training.

**Mr. Smith:** It has been suggested in the past that we as a committee come up with a list of equipment that new P.I.s bring to this institution. From recent past experience there has been equipment brought in and no storage room has been found until HSC Facilities renovated space. One such case, the boxes and equipment was stored in the main hallway for months. It was stacked in rows of threes all the way to the ceiling. Some of the equipment had biohazard stickers and radioactive signs on it. I have received the short list back from members of this committee but have been reluctant to go forward with it until I received advice from Beverly Kerr on it. I will read the question I ask her and her reply to those questions. (Smith read the questions and the answers from Ms. Kerr) It seems it just isn't a safety issue but may have other issues as well. Ms. Kerr suggested the list was too simple, because it had no place to list the equipment. She also suggested, any document would have to be approved by the department chairs and the administration, for they were the ones that hire these people. However we will discuss the safety issues such as what Dr. Cockburn wants to address.

**Dr. Cockburn:** There is a freezer of Dr. Mustafa that was transferred into the HSC. It doesn't work and is old and can't be fixed. It has a biohazard sticker on it. The department wants it decontaminated so it can be thrown into the dumpster. I contacted Mustafa's lab to see what had been in the freezer. They told me the freezer with the biohazard label had been in the lab when they arrived at their last destination. They did not know what biohazards had been in it. They just used it and brought it with them when they came here. When they plugged it into the wall it didn't work, our Maintenance Engineering people indicated it is old and they can't fix it. They just pushed it into the hallway. The freezer is setting in the hallway. It isn't in a place that can be easily and safely decontaminated with para-formaldehyde.

**Mr. Lemley:** Is Dr. Mustafa going to declare it clean?

**Dr. Cockburn:** I don't think so, because they don't know what was in it before they got it. This isn't the only problem we have had with this group. I think Nasser in Radiation Safety discover a liquid scintillation counter with a radioactive source they had brought with them. It sat in the hallway for a long period of time unprotected. We need some way to determine a head of time what is going to be brought into the facility. The NRC has tight restrictions of transferring sources from one institution to another. Biohazard Officers should not let equipment be transferred unless it has been decontaminated. We have no way of knowing at our facility if the equipment coming in could be carrying harmful pathogens. This is one reason our Laboratory Closeout Policy was established.

**Ms. Howton:** I would think that the transportation company that brought the stuff here with radiation or biohazard stickers would be liable if the DOT found out they were hauling hazardous or contaminated materials. I know there are DOT Regs. pertaining to shipping chemicals.

**Mr. Kerns:** Suggested the Committee should check the DOT Regs. I'm sure they have regulations for hazardous shipping that would cover moving this stuff.

**Dr. Cockburn:** Maybe the department should have to pay for the decontamination of this equipment and for disposal because they had to pay for the shipping to get it here.

**Mr. Kerns:** Let a note go back to the department stating they will have to pay for the decontamination of old and not working equipment that was transferred to WVU. It isn't WVU's equipment. I'm sure the DOT Standard and the National Lab Standard can be used to justify this.

**Ms. Graham-Sims:** Here is a case where all regulations should have been applied to assure us from not being Placed in a position where safety is compromised.

**Mr. Smith:** Equipment that has been purchased by grant funds can be transferred legally. It is setup between institutions and the granting institution. Some of the other stuff, I'm sure the other facility is glad to see it go because they won't have the expense of getting rid of it.

**Mr. Lemley:** When a new researcher moves into a lab or office there is going to be some stuff that will end up in the hall temporally. But it should be put into the lab as soon as possible.

**Ms. Dalton:** Would you set a time limit on how long it can be in the hallway?

**Mr. Kerns:** That depends on if it is blocking egress or Code.

**Ms. Graham-Sims:** I just want to remind everyone of our CHO training on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June for those that are interested in coming.

**Mr. Simpkins:** I'll be coming to the training because our CHO is off on maternity leave.

**Ms. Graham-Sims:** I don't have a schedule with me; I can send you a schedule.

**Mr. Smith:** I have a schedule here that you can have. If there are no other safety concerns, I would like to bring up a question that was ask to me concerning the disposal of electrophoresis gels that have diluted Ethidium Bromide also ones that are made of Acrylamide. Most of the gels that have less than 0.1% Ethidium Bromide will be blue in color and contain no radioactive isotopes can be disposed of in the normal trash. If they are pink or red in color the Ethidium Bromide is greater than 0.1% and must be sent out as hazardous waste. The Acrylamide gels have been polymerized and are no longer considered to be hazardous if they do not contain radioactive isotopes, infectious agents, toxic chemicals or heavy metals can be also disposed of by the regular trash.

Let me remind everyone there will not be anymore Committee Meetings until September. If however, safety concerns arise then get in touch and we will try to resolve the problems.

**Meeting Adjourned  
at 2: 20 PM.**