

# RADIATION SAFETY NEWSLETTER

UK EH&S, Radiation Safety Office

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## RSO Column

**New Radiation Safety Staff Member** – Please give a big welcome to William (Bill) Garner, Radiation Health Technician I. Bill is our newest staff member, although he has many years of radiation safety experience through his Navy years. Bill has completed his lab survey training and will be seeing you in the field now.

## APPLAUSE to Eva Kaplan of the James Matthews Lab

– Ms. Kaplan has been cited for exceptional lab management practices and records-keeping by George Ellis, Radiation Safety Office. Thanks for the good work, help and cooperation, Eva.

*-Bob Wilson*



## Dentists Asked to Eliminate Lead-Lined Film Boxes

*ATLANTA (AP)*

Federal health officials are urging dentists' offices to get rid of lead-lined boxes commonly used to store X-ray film, saying they pose a danger to patients. The boxes can leave a lead powder that can be transferred to patients' mouths from hygienists' fingers and from the film itself, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has warned. Health inspectors in Wisconsin found the shoebox-size containers in 18 percent of dentists' offices they visited earlier this year. The boxes are lined with lead to cut the film's risk of exposure to radiation. Advances in technology have cut the risk, but the lead boxes are still fairly common in older dentists' offices.



## Correction

**Potential Health Hazards from Lead Shielding** – There was an error in the previous Newsletter article on lead shielding hazards. The article referenced an OSHA action level of 20 ug/m<sup>3</sup>. Our Occupational Safety Manager, David Hibbard, tells us that the OSHA permissible exposure limit is actually 50 ug/m<sup>3</sup>.

## Glove Etiquette

Suppose you saw your doctor walk out of the examining room still wearing his/her gloves. What would you think?

**Yuck !!!**

**Gloves** are a barrier protection against toxic chemicals, radioactive material and pathogens encountered in research and clinical settings and **must not be worn outside the lab.**

At the very least, wearing them outside the lab conveys the impression that the wearer is more concerned about her/his safety than yours. At the worst, the wearer is spreading hazards to unsuspecting colleagues. No one should hand-carry items that are contaminated on the outside into public spaces.

**Don't touch that elevator button or telephone with a gloved hand.**

Use secondary containers that are clean on the outside to transport materials, and keep a spare clean pair of gloves in your lab coat pocket. From the "Safety Net", *Dalhousie University EH&S Newsletter*, Fall 2001

**Radiation Badges** – We have completed switching radiation monitoring services to ICN. If you have any left-over badges from Landauer at all, body badges, ring badges, anything at all, please gather them together and return them to the Radiation Safety Office as soon as you can. Thanks.

## When Good Radionuclides Go Bad

It is important and in the best interests of the researcher to minimize the amount of radioactive material on hand in your laboratory at any given time. This is in keeping with the University's ALARA commitment. It is also a good reason for "weeding" out old inventory since "good radionuclides go bad". We know you are interested in using only the highest quality materials in your research. All radiochemicals deteriorate over time. Highlights from the 2001 Amersham Pharmacia Biotech catalog indicate:

- \* decomposition is accelerated by free radicals formed as a result of the energy released in radioactive decay;
- \* compounds of high molecular specific activity decompose faster;
- \* even slight deviations from optimal storage conditions may accelerate decomposition;
- \* carbohydrates & amino acids are excellent substrates for microbial growth, leading to contamination;
- \* slow freezing can accelerate the rate of self-radiolysis in aqueous solutions of tritiated compounds;
- \* exposure to bright light can increase decomposition.

From the "Safety Net", *Dalhousie University EH&S Newsletter*, Fall 2001

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## Licensed Operations Inspections



We had our state radiation safety inspections in August. As expected, key areas included:

**Security** – Keep labs and or radioactive material locked whenever unattended. Challenge any strangers as to their business in the building or lab.

**Food Items** – No food items permitted in labs. The new interpretation by the state agency is that no food items may be allowed in the labs. Any eating or drinking must be done in an area that is physically separated from the lab by walls and doors.



It is hard to believe the Christmas and New Year's Holiday Season is here already.

We all at your Radiation Safety Office wish everyone in the entire UK community a very

**"Merry Christmas"**

and

**"Happy New Year"**.



## Radiation Safety Staff

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