EHRS Emergency Response

The Office of Environmental Health and Radiation Safety (EHRS) is trained and prepared to respond to emergencies involving biological, chemical and radioactive materials. EHRS is available 24/7 at 215-898-4453 and 215-573-6626 (Radiation issues only). EHRS supports the University of Pennsylvania Crisis Management team. In an emergency EHRS may coordinate with the following groups (as appropriate):

- Penn Departments: Police Department (UPPD), Facilities & Real Estate Services (FRES), Fire and Emergency Services (FES)
- Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania (HUP)
- HUP Occupational Medicine
- Student Health Services
- City of Philadelphia: Police Department (PPD), Fire Department (PFD), Hazardous Materials Response Team (HAZMAT), Licenses and Inspection (L&I), Department of Public Health
- University Communications

Emergency Response Procedures

Emergency events are divided into three levels to quickly determine the leadership and organizational structure and the response groups needed. The three levels are Level 1 (Spill), Level 2 (Incident), and Level 3 (Emergency). They are defined as follows:

- **Spill:** A minor spill or event that can easily be mitigated by EHRS technicians.
- **Incident:** A spill or event that requires a formal response following the EHRS command structure and the emergency procedures below.
- **Emergency:** A significant spill or event that is internally unmanageable and requires outside assistance. During an Emergency, EHRS will provide assistance as needed and described in the University’s Crisis Management Plan.

Incident Management Procedures

The following serves as a guideline when EHRS receives a call regarding a spill of chemical, biological, or radioactive materials.

1. The following information is collected preferably by a technical staff member:
   - Name of the person making the call.
   - Material involved
   - Quantity of material
   - Present condition of material
   - Is there a fire?
   - Are there injuries? If so, where are the injured people and are they going for medical treatment?
   - Building
   - Location of spill in the building
• Telephone number where someone familiar with the spill can be reached. (Outside the spill area- i.e., a safe location).
• Is the area evacuated? If not, all personnel should immediately evacuate the area but remain available to the Emergency Response Team (ERT) and University’s Emergency Coordinator (UEC) if necessary.

An email is sent by the technical staff person to the entire EHRS staff via list-serv. If needed, the UEC will be notified. An incident commander (IC) may be identified.

2. The ERT will assemble at the Tandem Building and gather the necessary equipment to contain and control the spill into the response truck and respond to the scene upon the direction of the UEC. If a member of the ERT is in the vicinity of the emergency he will respond directly to the scene and notify the office by radio or phone of his response and the status of the spill. This person will then notify the UEC of any special requirements.

3. Upon arrival at the scene of the “event”, the UEC will identify himself to the proper authority. This would include but is not limited to:
   • UPPD
   • PPD
   • The Principal Investigator
   • Laboratory Personnel
   • Facility Services

4. If the PFD is on the scene the IC will identify himself to the Officer in Charge (OIC) and assist the PFD in any way possible. This would include but is not limited to providing a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for the chemical involved, interpretation of the information from the SDS, providing personnel to assist the PFD in determining a plan to take corrective action, and providing monitoring equipment. The IC will also coordinate with other University offices and departments on scene to obtain the needed information regarding the physical layout of the building, ventilation systems in the building, and access to necessary areas.

Lock boxes containing vital building information are available on the exterior of all buildings that contain significant quantities of hazardous materials. Lock boxes contain the following: Building layouts, lists of common chemicals, room sign information, hydrant/standpipe information, bulk chemical storage areas, and emergency shut down procedures.

5. If no outside agency is on scene the IC will assume control of the scene and determine the proper procedure and resources necessary to take corrective action. It is up to the IC to determine if the incident is within the capabilities of the ERT or if additional help is required.