

**Department of Environmental Health & Safety
Newsletter**

<http://www.wright.edu/admin/ehs/>

129 Allyn Hall

937-775-2215

Test Your Home For Radon

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) says that radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer and that all homeowners should test their home. As a service to the community, the Department of Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) is offering homeowners an opportunity to obtain long-term radon detectors at significant savings. Through a bulk discount, your cost per radon detector is only \$16.00, approximately half the price of a singular detector. This price covers the radon detector and analysis. You perform the test using the supplied instructions. When the test is completed, you send the detector and accompanying form directly to

the company. You may order any number of detectors. EHS will stop taking orders on January 27, 2006. The devices will be available for pickup about the fifteenth of February 2006.

Complete and submit the **RADON DETECTOR ORDER FORM** (newsletter insert) along with \$16.00 for each radon test device. Please pre-pay at the time of ordering.

EHS will inform you when the devices arrive through the faculty, staff, and announcement listservers or the local phone number you provide. You may pickup your order at 129 Allyn Hall.

EHS will provide you with the radon detector(s) and testing instructions.

You conduct the test and return the device. The detector needs to remain in place for 3 to 12 months. The results are sent directly to you.

If you have any questions on ordering, contact Helen Kay Dean at helen.dean@wright.edu, or call at 775-3680.

If you have technical questions or need assistance regarding the radon testing, contact Tom Mohaupt at tom.mohaupt@wright.edu, or call at 775-2169.

In the Past Quarter, Environmental Health & Safety...

- Recorded 11 occupational injury reports, 7 non-occupational injury reports, 5 needle-stick incidents, and responded to 3 hazardous material releases.
- Was instrumental in revising a Memorandum of Understanding between the Kettering Medical Center and WSU that fosters mutually beneficial research goals.
- Established an agreement with a facility that recycles electronic components, such as computers and monitors, that will result in a *savings of thousands of dollars annually* for the university (see related article, pg 3).
- Accompanied (Tom Dyer) the Greene County Combined Health District on a routine inspection of WSU's Infectious Waste program. A majority of the labs passed the quarterly inspection with flying colors. However, the county representative did find 3 *minor* violations of the Infectious Waste Management Standard. All violations were promptly corrected by lab personnel at the time of inspection.
- Wrote an operational safety paper (Tom Mohaupt and Kim Morris) for publication and presentation by Kim at the Health Physics Society meeting in Arizona in January 2006. The paper describes the use of WebCT as an innovative and practical training tool.
- Coordinated the shipment for disposal of 6400 pounds of chemical waste from the Hazardous Storage Facility.
- Conducted lab safety training, including bloodborne pathogens and radiation safety training.

Asbestos: Should I Panic?

Asbestos is a mineral found in certain types of rock formations. When mined and processed, it takes the form of very small fibers, which are usually invisible to the naked eye. These fibers may become potentially dangerous when disturbed (asbestos fibers are not harmful unless they are damaged and separated). Disturbed asbestos may release harmful fibers, which if inhaled can disrupt the normal functioning of the lungs. The fibers then can remain in the lungs for long periods of time, increasing the risk of disease. Some symptoms can occur even 20 years after exposure.

There are three specific diseases related directly to asbestos exposure: asbestosis, lung cancer and another form of cancer called mesothelioma. Today, the most common cases are found in janitors, maintenance personnel, construction workers, electrical work-

ers, insulators, plumbers, mechanics, telephone workers and fire fighters. People who live, work, or attend school in buildings containing asbestos products are also considered at risk for developing asbestos-associated illnesses.

Asbestos was used in the past for insulation and can be found in buildings built between 1930 and 1950. Asbestos was also used in shingles, floor tiles and textured paint.

If asbestos is found in your home:

- Don't panic! The best practice is to leave asbestos material untouched. There is no danger unless fibers are released and inhaled into the lungs.

- Check materials for damage regularly if you think it may contain asbestos. Look for wear and water damage.
- Have removal and major repair performed by professionally trained contractors.
- Refrain from using abrasive pads, brushes or power strippers on asbestos flooring.

Disturbed asbestos may release harmful fibers, which if inhaled can disrupt the normal functioning of the lungs.

Adapted from ADVANTAGE, National Safety Council, Fall 05

Home Heating Tips

During chilly winter months, we rely on heating equipment to keep us warm. No matter which heating source or brand we choose, it's important that the equipment used is safely installed, operated and maintained.

Supplemental heating appliances must be given special attention as nearly two out of three home-heating fires and five out of six associated deaths involve devices other than cen-

tral furnaces or water heaters, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Here are a few basic safety tips for using alternative heating sources:

- Select a heater that's safety tested and certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory.
- Choose a heater with an automatic shut-off safety feature and guard around the flame or heating element.

- Operate the unit at least 36 inches away from the walls and all combustible materials, including draperies, furniture, bedding, etc.
- If you have an electrical unit, make sure the cord is intact (not frayed or damaged) and is out of the walkways.
- NEVER leave your heater unattended. Turn it off before leaving the house.

Adapted from ADVANTAGE, National Safety Council, Winter, 04

Recycling Electronic Waste

Electronic waste, commonly referred to as e-waste, is the 21st century's newest culprit in pollution control. With the dawning of the technology age comes the predicament of handling all of the out-dated electronics that are no longer needed.

At the workplace, electronic equipment, especially the computer, help to make a business productive. The home is a place where electronic technology has also made great advancements. Computers, televisions, video game systems, stereos and cell phones have become standard household items. Many homes now have more than one television and computer.

In 2002, the EPA estimated that 57 million units (computers and televisions) were sold in the United States. 20 to 24 million retired units are 'stored' when replaced with newer technology, with each household

averaging 2 to 3 units. Businesses tend to "stow away" old electronics as well because like the private sector, many do not know what to do with the old equipment.

The private sector can rid their household of retired e-waste by placing the unwanted components in the trash if so desired. There are no government regulations that mandate how individuals rid themselves of e-waste. The EPA does regulate the way a business handles their retired e-waste. A business has options on how they choose to handle e-waste. The easiest way is recycling all components. The EPA does not regulate electronic components as hazardous waste if a company can certify that the e-waste has been sent to a recycler. Another option is that a company can apply for a permit and handle the e-waste as hazardous waste. This method is costly and compliance issues must

be carefully followed.

Wright State recycles all the e-waste that is produced when electronic equipment is replaced. An electronic recycling company comes to campus on a monthly basis to pick up whatever equipment has been accumulated. Since 2002, **WSU has recycled approximately 30 tons of electronic components.**

Practically all parts of most electronics can be recycled. Most communities sponsor an electronic recycling event for homeowners where you can take all of your unwanted electronic equipment to be recycled. Contact your local waste handler or your region's solid waste district office for your community's electronic recycling date. Please take advantage of this wonderful service and **do your part in keeping toxic waste out of your environment.**

-Kim Morris

Orphan Chemicals, FREE, (To a Good Home)

As a generator of hazardous waste, Wright State University is required to implement a "waste minimization program" to encourage reuse, recycling and overall reduction of hazardous waste generated by the university. The EPA has long supported efforts by industry and academia to reduce, replace, recycle or eliminate hazardous waste streams generated from business operations, manufacturing, and research and development.

Hazardous waste, by its nature, poses a risk to human health and the health of the environment. Reducing or eliminating hazardous chemicals and therefore hazardous waste generated in the lab is the best way to protect students, teaching assistants, researchers and professors from possible harmful chemical exposures. It also protects the environment from potential harm from dumping, spilling,

mismanagement or other means that might cause environmental contamination from improper handling, storage, transportation or disposal of this material.

EHS has worked with several labs to find less toxic, more environmentally friendly alternatives to hazardous chemicals that had been previously used. We have also encouraged recycling of hazardous wastes, such as lead-acid batteries and mercury containing fluorescent bulbs wherever feasible across campus. These efforts by EHS have gone a long way in reducing disposal costs, preventing lost work days, and lessening environmental impact in our community.

The "**Orphan Chemical Program**" is another way that WSU and EHS have achieved waste minimization on campus. When EHS picks up chemicals from labs on campus, we

evaluate them for potential reuse. Chemicals that seem to be in "good shape" and in a reusable condition are incorporated into the Orphan Chemical database that is managed by EHS. We then offer these chemicals to faculty and staff for teaching or research at no cost. The Orphan Chemicals are offered on a first-come-first-serve basis. EHS makes no guaranty of the product purity or reliability, but many of the chemicals have never been opened or were hardly used.

Please visit the EHS web page at <http://www.wright.edu/admin/ehs> and click on "**Free Chemicals**". Some restrictions apply. Use of this service will help WSU meet its waste minimization requirements, save money and lessen the environmental impact of the university.

-C. Tom Dyer

Wright State University

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We're on the Web!

<http://www.wright.edu/admin/ehs/>

Meet the Staff

Pictured:

Left to right, standing: Tom Mohaupt, Kim Morris, Terri Thompson, Helen Kay Dean, Greg Merkle, Ron Hamilton

Left to right, sitting: Tom Dyer, Steve Farrell, Joe Whitlock



Steve Farrell	Director	X 3118	Administration, Occupational Safety & Health, Environmental Compliance
Joe Whitlock	Manager, Occupational Safety & Health	X 4131	Occupational Safety & Health Program Management, Administration, and Training
Helen Kay Dean	Health & Safety Technical Services Coordinator	X 3680	Occupational Health Program Liaison, Administrative, Budgeting, Departmental Web Page, Departmental Newsletter, Purchasing
C. Tom Dyer	Environmental Compliance Specialist	X 3788	Hazardous & Infectious Waste, Free Chemical Program, Drinking Water Analysis, Environmental Compliance
Ron Hamilton	Industrial Hygienist	X 3810	OSHA Support Services, Asbestos, Contractor Safety & Health
Greg Merkle	Sr. Industrial Hygienist	x2217	Biosafety Officer, OSHA Laboratories, Fire / Life Safety
Tom Mohaupt	Radiation Safety Officer	X 2169	Radiation Safety, Laser Safety, EMP program
Kimberly Morris	Radiation Safety Technician	X 2623	Radiation Surveys and Testing, Laboratory Compliance
Terri Thompson	Sr. Industrial Hygienist	X 2797	Chemical Hygiene Officer, OSHA Laboratories, HAZ-WOPER training

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