LDEO LAB SAFETY GRAM

1/21/2014 Last week a graduate student was exposed to nitric acid. The exact cause of the exposure has not been determined, though it appears that the student may have either leaned against a surface that had a small amount of nitric acid left behind from a previous activity in the lab, or that the acid leaked from the container during a cleaning procedure. The student received a minor "dime-size" chemical burn on their torso as the lab coat absorbed most of the acid.

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Working with chemicals alone, at night, or otherwise in isolation, places individuals at special risk and should be avoided whenever possible.
- The PI is responsible for ensuring that employees and students perform only those tasks for which they are qualified by training and experience. (NOTE: Undergraduates should never be in a lab containing hazardous chemicals without proper supervision.)
- Proper personal protective equipment (PPE) needs to be worn in the lab. (This minimally includes a lab coat, long pants/skirt, closed toe shoes, safety glasses and gloves when handling chemicals.)
- Review lab procedures to minimize potential exposure to hazardous chemicals (e.g.—substituting a less hazardous cleaning chemical or process.).
- Work specific trainings should be given by the PI or lab manager prior to beginning a new protocol.
- Be sure to check your work area before and after your work is complete and thoroughly clean up any chemical drips/spills.
- Know the location of emergency equipment in the lab (including eye wash, emergency shower, chemical spill kits, fire extinguisher, fire pull station).
- If you are exposed to a hazardous chemical you should rinse the affected area with water for 15 minutes. NOTE: Depending on the exposure, it may be more practical to use the regular bath room showers.
- Contact the Lamont Safety Office as soon as possible if you have had a chemical exposure. (ext 8822 or 8860). NOTE: Contact numbers are on Campus Emergency Instructions posted in lab.)

LDEO SAFETY OFFICE
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