Section C.1
University of South Carolina Safety Program Guide
RECEIVING ROOM SAFETY

Introduction

Individuals working in shipping and receiving areas within science and departments face a variety of safety issues each day. Such concerns may include materials handling issues (e.g., safe lifting techniques, use of dockboards), safe handling of chemicals, and radioactive materials shipments. In addition, the U.S. Department of Transportation has special regulations regarding the shipping and receiving of hazardous materials.

In response to these concerns, Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) has developed procedures and training for shipping and receiving personnel.

Scope and Application

Individuals with responsibility for shipping and receiving all materials, including chemicals or biological materials, are included in this program. Individuals working in chemical stockrooms may be included in all or part of the program.

Program Description

Since each department or building has diverse operations, the needs of the affected people will vary. A receiving room training program and procedures that incorporate the appropriate topics should be developed with assistance from EHS.

Materials Handling

Mechanical handling devices and equipment should be used whenever possible to minimize manual handling. EHS may initially review the use of dock boards, fork lifts, and other lifting devices to ensure workers are using them properly. Improper operation of such equipment may result in serious injury. Shipping and receiving work may involve lifting of heavy and/or awkwardly shaped packages. If proper lifting techniques are not employed, painful injuries to the back, neck, shoulders or other areas may occur. See Safety Program B.2, Back Care Program, for additional information regarding safe lifting techniques. Training on safe lifting and materials handling should be included in the receiving room training program.

Safe Chemical Handling

Although shipping and receiving workers do not normally handle chemicals directly, a basic understanding of the hazards of the various chemical classes may be beneficial. There have been incidents where either a chemical container breaks inside the package during shipment or containers break during transportation within the building. Shipping
and receiving personnel are not responsible for chemical spill clean-up, but should know what precautions to take if a spill occurs.

Shipping and receiving personnel must receive Hazard Communication training (see Safety Program B.5, Hazard Communication), preferably customized to their needs. Such training includes:

- interpreting Material Safety Data Sheets and other chemical information
- understanding hazard warnings on packages, labels, and placards
- health hazards of chemicals
- safe handling of flammable liquids, compressed gas cylinders, and cryogenic liquids
- proper selection and use of personal protective equipment
- chemical spill response

In addition to these topics, safe transportation of chemicals should also be reviewed, including use of carts, secondary containers, and safety cans.

Department of Transportation Requirements

The U.S. Department of Transportation regulates the transportation of hazardous substances. There are several complex requirements involved in the receipt of chemicals. Some of the training requirements extend to individuals whose responsibilities include unloading or handling of hazardous materials. Such individuals must receive relevant training every two years, including successful completion of an exam to demonstrate adequate understanding of the issues.

Biological Materials

If biological materials are used in your department, shipping and receiving personnel may encounter biological or infectious waste. A discussion of the health and safety risks of these materials should be provided by EHS personnel as part of the receiving room training program.

Roles and Responsibilities

**Department**

- Meet with EHS to determine what training or other programs may apply to shipping and receiving personnel.
- Ensure personnel attend training.

**Supervisors**

- Report potential safety and health hazards to the department or EHS.
• Assist in developing procedures for safe handling of chemical or biological materials.
• Ensure workers attend training.

**EHS**

• Assist in developing and implementing the Receiving Room Training program.
• Assist in developing procedures for safe handling of chemical or biological materials.
• Audit departmental program periodically.

**Individual**

• Attend training.
• Report potential safety concerns to supervisor or EHS.
• Follow appropriate procedures.

**For More Information**

• Contact the USC Employee Safety Manager at 777-5269.
• See the following sections of the Safety Program Guide for additional references:
  - Safety Program B.5, Hazard Communication
  - Safety Program B.4, Personal Protective Equipment
  - Safety Program B.2, Back Care Program
  - Safety Program D.6, Chemical Waste Disposal Procedures
  - Safety Program E.2, Infectious Waste Disposal

• The following references are available through EHS:
  - Department of Transportation Requirements 49 CFR 172 Subpart H 1990 - Emergency Response Guidebook (for Hazardous Materials Incidents)