A Day in the Life of an EHS Intern:

BEN TIRLIA

This summer I completed a hoist survey of the campus labs, assessed lockout/tagout procedures, and used my phenomenal paint workshop skills to make “emergency egress route” signs ...you might see one. My biggest project, the hoist survey, provided a great opportunity to see some of the innovative things happening at MIT, while doing something needed for EHS. My confidence increased greatly while interacting with others about my field and the cutting edge research that MIT is conducting.

Throughout my time here I learned so much. I have now experienced firsthand how important it is to place safety considerations high on the list when dealing with construction and renovations of buildings, whether from a project management or academic point of view. All of the experience in the field and in the office will go further than any amount of time I could have spent in a classroom, which I do at Keene State. I am working on a bachelor’s degree in Safety and Occupational Health Applied Sciences.

I want to thank EHS for making my time here enjoyable and productive. I wish the best to all and hope to be back soon!

Ben Tirlia - Intern
Spotlight

WORKING ALONE POLICY

LOUIS DIBERARDINIS

Working alone while performing a hazardous operation was a contributing factor to the death of an undergraduate student at Yale in May, 2011.

This tragic accident prompted the MIT EHS Office to assess policies and procedures regarding working alone at MIT. We identified that there were several written policies and procedures throughout the Institute that addressed specific parts of this issue. With the help of the Institute EHS committees and input from across the Institute a comprehensive working alone policy was developed and adopted by the Institute’s EHS Council. It was subsequently endorsed by Academic Council in May, 2012.

The objective of the policy is to provide clarity and consistency around this issue without hindering research and to drive Faculty, students and staff to assess whether any given operation should be allowed to be performed alone.

In effect the policy says:

• Avoid working alone when hazards are present
• Conduct a hazard assessment prior to all work
• If the risk is not acceptable, don’t allow the work to be performed alone
• Do not allow undergraduates to work alone where hazards are present unless there is an assessment and signed written approval by the PI
• More restrictive policies by a DLC or Institute Committee take precedence

Guidance is provided to help clarify terms such as “hazardous”, “work alone”, “acceptable risk”. The intent is to develop a central repository of examples where working alone is not allowed.

The EHS Office, in collaboration with the Institute safety related committees, the Working Committee and EHS Coordinators are developing a strategy for communicating and implementing the new policy using a multi-pronged approach to include:

• A letter from Vice President for Research, Claude Canizares, to Deans and Assistant Deans sent September 17, directing them to distribute to all faculty and PIs
• Presentation to EHS Coordinators and Lead Contacts at the September meeting, soliciting input for implementation
• Article in Faculty newsletter
• Article in the Tech
• Internal DLC communications (i.e. DLC EHS Committee, EHS Rep meetings, newsletters, websites, meetings, bulletin boards, etc.)
• Revise section in UROP handbook
• Reach out to Graduate Students Association
• Revise each DLC’s Chemical Hygiene Plan

If you have questions or comments regarding the new MIT Working Alone Policy, please send them to environment@mit.edu

Working together to implement this policy will enhance safety for all at MIT.

Read the full MIT Working Alone Policy on the MIT EHS website.

Questions? Comments? We’d love to hear from you!
Please email environment@mit.edu