Video Contest Winners
Rap the Lab Coat

EMILY RANKEN

“The laboratory is a danger zone, so you need a lab coat for protection. And if you work in the laboratory lab coat-less, how can you call yourself a scientist?”

Mikael Minier, graduate student from the Chemistry Department and his team were awarded first prize ($1000) for their lab coat video entry with a catchy rap written by Mikael and a lively presentation about lab coats, including one contaminated with microbial monsters. Andy McTeague, also with the Chemistry Department, received second prize ($500) for a dryly humorous and informative entry with a segment on how to put on a lab coat for “anyone who has never put on a shirt.” To view these videos, go to: http://techtv.mit.edu/collections/lab_coats and learn more about lab coats for safe work in the laboratory. These videos can be used by EHS Coordinators and others for group safety training sessions. PIs or EHS Reps can show one of these videos for Lab Specific training!

Remember, lab coats are required for work with hazardous chemicals, biological agents at BL2 or greater, and radioactive isotopes. For more information on lab coat selection and use, or the preferred vendors and their laundry services, please visit: http://labcoats.mit.edu/.

Thank you to all entrants for your participation in the EHS Lab Coat Video contest. A big thank you to the judges: Brad Pentelute, Faculty–Chemistry Dept; Paul Chang, Faculty–Koch Institute; Pam Greenley, Associate Director, EHS Office; and Kevin Thai, Graduate Student–Koch Institute.

1 Chorus from rap written by Mikael Minier in the winning video.
Flash News: Laser Safety Program Updates

AMY LIM

Whether studying neurons or nanomaterials, delving into use of light for optical communication, or developing new surgical or medical treatments, the use and investigation of lasers as part of research at MIT has expanded significantly in the last few years.

To continue to assure laser safety and regulatory compliance with the new ANSI Z136.1 (American National Standard for Safe Use of Lasers) released February 2014, the Radiation Protection Program (RPP) has recently completed important updates to the Laser Safety Program. This program applies to all users of Class 3B and Class 4 lasers. Lasers in these classes are capable of causing eye damage with brief exposure to the beam.

While the pre-existing policies and guidelines of the laser safety program address most of the requirements, a few new items may impact your laboratory.

Two new items required are:
1. A written Laser Safety Procedure (LSP) for each Class 3B and Class 4 laser system in the laboratory.
2. Documented Laser Specific Training (EHS00375) which focuses on the LSPs for the lab.

To assist laser users with writing laser safety procedures, a template has been developed by RPP. For more information, please visit the EHS-Laser Safety web page.

In addition, during the next 6 months, RPP staff will be visiting each of the laser laboratories to assure an accurate inventory, to answer any questions about changes, and to help implement the required program components detailed in figure 1.

Working together, we can continue to assure laser safety is maintained for the many uses of Class 3B and Class 4 lasers at MIT.

Accident/Incident/Near Miss Summary Reports with Lessons Learned

EMILY RANKEN

What do a hood fire, chemical spill, odor investigation, and a drain trap have in common? They are all topics for Incident/Near Miss Summary Reports, a new feature on the EHS Office web page – http://ehs.mit.edu/site/

In a community of 22,000 people working or studying in laboratories, shops, or offices, or providing services to support and maintain an urban campus of 168 acres, things like accidents, incidents and near misses, such as unusual odors, happen. One component of an EHS Management System is to investigate these occurrences to determine the "root causes", with the goal in mind of taking preventive action and sharing information so others may learn.

To meet this goal, the EHS Office introduced the summary reports. Go to: http://ehs.mit.edu/site/ and scroll until you see a section on the right entitled: Incident/Near Miss Summary Reports. These are brief reports of some of the accidents, incidents and near misses at MIT along with lessons learned. The reports are written to eliminate identifying information regarding location and personnel involved.

If you have an accident, incident or near miss, please report it to your supervisor or PI, or contact EHS directly at 617-452-3477. If an injury or illness is involved, supervisors need to submit an injury report within 24 hours – http://ehs.mit.edu/site/content/occupational-injury-or-illness. All incidents should be investigated to determine the cause or causes and to identify any actions that may be needed to prevent recurrence and improve safety. The EHS Office is available to assist and can be contacted by phone for immediate assistance. Your help with reporting and subsequent follow-up investigation will improve safety and the environment for all, as we work to share lessons learned.
2014 marks the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilderness_Act) signed into law by President Johnson in September of 1964. Over 100 million acres have been preserved as wilderness under this act, and activism continues for preservation of new lands, as well as to counter continual threats to existing lands, including the threat of climate change. (http://wilderness.org/)

Earth Day, April 22, 2014 at MIT featured a week of activities exploring the human impact on the environment under the theme “Re:Think Consumption—a critical exploration of how we design, produce, consume and dispose of the “stuff” in our lives.” (http://sustainability.mit.edu/earthday) The challenges continue for humans on earth, i.e., how do we sustain ourselves and our environment on this beautiful planet. What will the next steps be?