Environmental Health and Safety Annual Report
FY 2017

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Welcome

We are pleased to present the Office Environmental Health and Safety’s (OEHS) Annual Report for FY 2017, covering July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. This was a productive year for OEHS at the University of Massachusetts Boston thanks to the collective efforts of students, faculty, and staff.

OEHS is a resource if you have any safety or environmental concerns. We are dedicated to promoting best practices that support teaching and research.

In particular, we expanded our Management System to include not only environmental programs but also health and safety issues. This means we will continue to take a more organized approach to setting all our priorities and establishing specific goals. In November 2016, a university-wide policy was formally adopted confirming the university’s commitment to environmental health and safety. This policy also describes the EHS management system and clarifies roles and responsibilities.

This year OEHS expanded the chemical delivery and inventory system by providing researchers with web access to their inventory. Our customized online Learning Management System (LMS) has provided over 500 safety classes to hundreds of faculty and staff on many different safety topics.

OEHS works to maintain a healthy and safe campus for the entire university community. We promote the protection of our beautiful environment so that we can all fully enjoy our unique waterfront campus.

We would like to thank all the departments and individuals who have supported OEHS—especially the members of safety committees and the fire safety volunteers.

Let’s all be safe out there!

Peter Schneider
Director, OEHS
EHS Management Systems

*Developed EHS Management Systems and promoted best practices*

Over the past year we have continued to implement a formal EHS Management System, including training, an outside audit, and meetings of the chancellor’s EHS Steering Committee.

Continue to support the faculty-led Lab Safety, Biosafety, and Radiation Safety Committees to improve effectiveness through improved operating procedures.

Conducted face-to-face safety briefings for all new employees during orientation and distributed an EMS flyer to each employee.

FY 2017 goals and objectives were established for six specific areas:

- Soil management including air-quality monitoring
- Cooling water and fish studies
- Laboratory waste and chemical management
- Online safety training
- Environmental compliance
- Slip, trip, and fall protection

To learn more, check out the OEHS website: [www.ehs.umb.edu](http://www.ehs.umb.edu).
OEHS distributes and tracks laboratory chemicals for all departments. In FY 2016, OEHS accepted delivery of 1,600 packages and bar-coded and delivered 1,200 containers. This represents an increase of more than 60% over FY 2016.

Waste management continues to be an important service to both research and teaching labs. In FY 2017, OEHS made 250 waste pickups in labs and shipped waste off-site for proper disposal. We also shipped over 100 boxes and drums of biological waste and material off-site.

This year, we began to work with principal investigators to develop safe operating procedures and trained more than 20 laser users on campus.

The lab coat program has become very popular and grew dramatically this year. More than 470 researchers were provided with custom lab coats to promote safety and professional lab practice. This number is up from 240 researchers participating in 2016.

Inspecting and sampling are core activities of the program. In FY 2016, OEHS conducted dozens of comprehensive iPad lab inspections to support self-inspection activities. We conducted 400 fume hood inspections and 475 inspections of local waste areas and building wastewater systems.

We continue to conduct face-to-face training with 20 classroom lab safety classes for more than 200 individuals.
Environmental Protection

Protecting the environment and complying with all regulatory requirements

OEHS manages a wide variety of environmental programs, including waste management, pollution prevention, and storm water management. OEHS works with many environmental health and safety regulatory agencies particularly the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Mass. Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and the Mass. Water Resource Authority.

OEHS works closely with consultants conducting the air-quality monitoring program related to the management of soil containing trace amounts of asbestos. In the past year, nearly 100,000 tons of soil have been removed from campus as part of ongoing construction projects.

Environmental permits or approvals have been obtained for a number of projects, including the following:

- Fox Point Dock – Army Corps of Engineers approval, Jan. 2017
- Parking Garage – RAM approval, Feb. 2017

Ongoing compliance with our Consent Agreement with the EPA and MA DEP, met all deadlines and managed contractor activities including the multiyear fish study required by the EPA. Fish counts are taken daily, and the impact on aquatic life is being carefully monitored.
Fire Prevention and Life Safety

Continuing to Promote Fire Prevention and Life Safety

The fire prevention and life safety program continues to be very active. This year we issued twice as many hot works permits as last year. Fire Safety Building Assessments are conducted on a weekly basis, and all findings are promptly addressed.

Fire drills and building evacuations are a top priority. In FY 2016, OEHS planned and conducted 24 building fire drills. For each drill, we record the evacuation time and any barriers or issues that need attention. We coordinate the Fire Safety Volunteer Program, which has over 100 volunteers.

We also completed and/or updated Building Evacuation Plans including a new plan for the Campus Center. Each plan is developed in collaboration with building occupants and key departments on campus, including the Department of Public Safety and the Office of Emergency Management and Business Continuity. More than 1,000 fire extinguishers were inspected and 225 serviced or replaced.

Our hands-on laser portable fire extinguisher training continues to be popular, especially with students. In FY 2016, we conducted fire extinguisher training for 89 individuals on campus.

During the year, OEHS issues periodic safety alerts which are posted on our website and throughout campus, including on the shuttle buses and electronic billboards.

By the Numbers

OEHS issued more than 120 hot works permits; 39 fire safety building assessments were conducted, with 250 action items corrected.
Campus and Workplace Safety

Protect Workers and Promote Campus Safety

OEHS uses a customer-oriented approach in working with the campus community, especially regarding indoor air quality (IAQ) complaints. This year we responded to numerous complaints and conducted over two dozen investigations involving water intrusion, mold, asbestos, and IAQ concerns. In each case, we worked with the Facilities Department and the building occupants to identify and correct problems.

It is important that employees have a properly arranged workstation in order to minimize injuries and increase productivity. This year OEHS conducted 19 ergonomic assessments for employees (working with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion when appropriate) and made recommendations for new chairs, keyboards, or other ergonomic equipment.

Although there are very few asbestos abatement projects undertaken on campus, it is nonetheless an important health concern. OEHS managed and supported four asbestos abatement projects in FY 2016. Each project is carefully managed to protect the abatement workers and building occupants and meet all regulatory requirements.

OEHS investigates accidents and injuries to determine the root cause and identify preventive measures. Last year we investigated 12 incidents and tracked corrective actions. These investigations also help determine the focus of future safety-related programs.
Education and Training

Building online safety training programs

Promote the customized online courses (Lab Safety, Radiation Safety, and Laser Safety) developed specifically by and for higher education.

We currently provide access to fifteen safety-related online courses. In addition to lab-related courses we also have courses on fire safety, ergonomics, distracted driving, and more. Further information can be found on our website.

Emergency Response

OEHS is available 24/7 if you have a safety or environmental incident, including oil or gas spills, lab incidents, or injuries on campus.

Looking Ahead

Next year we have some exciting plans:

• Expand the online safety program university-wide offering more than a dozen courses to students, faculty, and staff, including lab safety, fire safety, and distracted drivers.
• Promote the use of the Incident Notification System that provides all key departments with prompt notice when an incident occurs on campus.
• Expand the Learning Management System (LMS) to cover more campus departments.
OEHS Staff and Resources

Staff

Peter Schneider, Director
Zehra Schneider Graham, Deputy Director
John Dembrowsky, Associate Director
Lalitha Adusumilli, Assistant Director
John Meyer, Hazardous Material Technician
Debra Gursha, Fire Safety Officer
Mohammad Gandhi, EHS Technician
Kathy Evelyn, Office Manager

OEHS Website

The OEHS website is a rich source of information on many topics and includes information on building evacuation plans, a Guide to Lab Drain Disposal, soil management references, Fire Safety Tip Sheets and Laboratory Safety Fact Sheets. We also have a section inviting comments and suggestions. Check it out at: www.ehs.umb.edu.