

Capsule

Ed Krisiunas

WNWN International, Burlington, Connecticut

What's new? What's hot? What's timely? If you don't have time to search the Internet for the latest developments that might impact your work environment, you just might find some of this information in the "Capsule" column. Please e-mail any comments or suggestions to ekrisiunas@aol.com or to Co-Editor Barbara Johnson at barbara_johnson@verizon.net or Co-Editor Karen B. Byers at karen_byers@dfci.harvard.edu.

Master Plan and Laboratory Safety Helps the CDC Keep Pace with Expanding Public Health Challenges

This writer first went to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta for an epidemiology course in 1988. My how things have changed! From its inception in 1946 to the present, the CDC has saved lives and improved the health and welfare of people around the world in countless ways. The 21st century brings fresh challenges to those who provide the nation's and the world's first line of defense against threats to public health. Consider that in the last 25 years, the CDC has participated in the discovery of more than 30 new infectious diseases and agents ranging from Ebola hemorrhagic fever to Legionnaire's disease. Visit the following link for more information.

www.cdc.gov/news/2007/06/campus_masterplan.html

MMWR July 20, 2007/56(28)—Notice to Readers: Revised International Health Regulations Effective for the United States

On July 18, 2007, the revised International Health Regulations (IHRs) entered into effect for the United States. IHRs are an international legal framework designed to help contain, or prevent serious risks to public health, while discouraging unnecessary or excessive restrictions on travel or trade. The revised IHRs: 1) describe the obligations of World Health Organization (WHO) member states to assess and manage serious health threats that have the potential to spread beyond their borders; and 2) provide guidance for meeting those obligations. www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5628a5.htm

NIOSH Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards

Over the years, many of us have used the NIOSH Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards (NPG). The orange

covered, spiral bound text was always easy to spot in my personal text library. The (NPG) is intended to be a source of general industrial hygiene information on several hundred chemicals/classes for workers, employers, and occupational health professionals. The NPG does not contain an analysis of all pertinent data; rather, it presents key information and data in abbreviated or tabular form, for chemicals or substance groupings (e.g., cyanides, fluorides or manganese compounds) that are found in the work environment. The information found in the NPG should help users recognize and control occupational chemical hazards. An electronic version is available at the following web site:

www.cdc.gov/niosh/npg/

Hospital eTool Laboratory Module

Useful training material is available at the OSHA web site. There are "eTool" modules for various industries, including healthcare. The eTool* for healthcare focuses on some of the hazards and controls found in the hospital setting, and describes standard requirements as well as recommended safe work practices for employee safety and health.

*eTools are stand-alone, interactive, web-based training tools on occupational safety and health topics. They are highly illustrated and utilize graphical menus as well as expert system modules. These modules enable users to answer questions and receive reliable advice on how OSHA regulations apply to their work site. As indicated in the disclaimer, eTools do not create new OSHA requirements. The laboratory module can be located at the following link:

www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/hospital/lab/lab.html

The Biosafety Clearing-House

The Biosafety Clearing-House (BCH) is an information exchange mechanism established by the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (<http://bch.biodiv.org/about/protocol.shtml>) to assist parties in implementing its provisions and to facilitate sharing of information on, and experience with, living modified organisms (LMOs). For more information visit the following link. The site is part of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). For additional information, visit the following link:

<http://bch.biodiv.org/default.aspx>