

UNBC LAB SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

DATE: February 24, 2025

Time: 1:00pm – 2:00pm Meeting hosted via MS Teams

Attendees:

Kaila Fadock – Committee Chair, Sr Lab Instructor (FSE)

Saphida Migabo – ESM (FOE)

Alina Constantin – Co-Chair, Sr. Lab Inst (FOHHS)

Sydney Cruch – Manager, Animal Care and Welfare

Oliver Iorhemen – Asst Prof EENG (FOSE)

Dorna Sobhani – NALS Representative

Scott McMillan – Manager of OH&S

Jordan Wilbey – Chemical Safety Officer / RSO

Mike Bell – Lab Operations & Infrastructure

Absent:

Hossein Kazemian – Assoc Prof GEES (NALS)

Maik Gehloff – Sr. Lab Instructor WIDC Lab (FSE)

Logan Cochran – NUGSS Rep

Jenny Graham-Smith – Undergraduate Student Rep

Angus Modum – Grad Rep

Thya Warren – Safety Officer

Harpreet Johnson – Recording Secretary

1. Meeting Called to order – 1:00pm

2. Territory Acknowledgement – Kaila

3. AGENDA

- Approved by Alina and Sydney

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 2025

- a) Push to March meeting as they were not located in our Teams.
- b) March we will approve minutes for January and February

5. SAFETY OFFICER REPORTS

a) Chemical Safety Report – Jordan

- Received a copy of the incident report from the Radar Lab. It is located into the team's folder.
- This incident was in November 2024. It took a while for the student to complete the paperwork.
- The student was working with an agarose gel. The running solution was a TBE solution that had an ethidium bromide in it. It was in a very low concentration, however there is still a risk.
- They rinsed with cold water and soap for 10 minutes, based on the description from SDS for ethidium bromide. The student contacted their physician and contacted toxicology department. There were no concerns from either.
- Their lab coat went up their wrist and it splashed on their wrist. In-between their gloves and lab coats.
- To prevent this in the future is to have lab coats that have the elastics around the wrists.

Kaila: accidents happen, and this was not a lack of safety training.

Saphida: Do we have a rule as to the length of the lab coats? Really short lab coats have been seen in the labs.

Jordan: Currently there isn't, but that is something that we should develop. Will check if there is any guidelines as far as any requirements.

Kaila: The UNBC ones are mid-thigh length. However, I know you can get short ones that are hip length. Should these be allowed to be used in a wet lab? The risk of something being hip length, especially in a wet lab, that would not be long enough from a chemistry point of view.

Alina: With bio-chem, there is something to do with the length of the sleeve and some sort of elastic on the wrist.

Mike: There are coats that are longer than mid-thigh, knee length but anything longer will start to be a trip hazard.

Scott: WorkSafe won't have specific requirements or recommendations on sleeve or leg length. They require us to do risk assessments and then base our standards on those assessments. We can set the requirements for each lab or individual labs. This would be a good committee to be involved in that work.

Alina: Sydney – do you know if there are any rules or regulations in the bio labs regarding the cuffs?

Sydney: Nothing that I am aware of.

Saphida: If we were to set our own regulations, it would be best if we had just one regulation to avoid confusion. For example, if a student is in the Bio-Medical program and they are allowed to wear a short lab coat and then go to another lab and are not allowed to wear the short lab coats. We need to be aware of the standards that we are setting and how it impacts people.

Mike: For the length, if you sat down and if the lab coat could cover up your knees, that is the length you need. If you are sitting and working and something was to spill, the lab coat should cover your legs/knees.

Kaila: The wording from our committee would be should we be encouraging to people who are running lab spaces, that students purchase or use these specific lab coats or if they are not the UNBC lab coats, they fit these specific characteristics. We do not want to run into situations where everyone is getting short jackets on top.

Jordan: Found our internal policy for protective clothing and shared it in the chat.

"The minimum protective clothing in all laboratories, when hazardous materials are used, will be a fastened lab coat, that is below the knee in length"

Kaila: That would be for employees, so for students we should follow the same regulations.

Saphida: When will this be communicated to everyone?

Kaila: Right now, in the middle of semester is not the greatest time. This is something that could be communicated at the end of August. We can remind faculty members before they come in for the fall semesters and they can remind their students.

Jordan: Peroxide Former Lab 4-405

- The incident report and the picture of the bottle is in the team's folder for everyone to review.
- A researcher came up to Jordan and said that there was an old bottle of tetrahydrofuran, which is a Peroxide Former. Peroxide formers overtime can form peroxide crystals, which are potentially explosive. That primarily occurs with contact to oxygen and UV light.
- This bottle is at least 10 years old based on the label that is on the bottle. There is no date or the full name of the chemical on the bottle.
- Jordan contacted the fire department and the RCMP to see if they would recommend having the bomb squad to look at it as Jordan did not want to touch it or have anyone else touch it. They didn't seem too concerned. Mike and Jordan tested it with a peroxide former test strip and there were no peroxides detected.
- In the meantime, we did tape the door shut and put notices on the freezer. Things did get escalated and had to close the lab for the weekend and not allow anyone to enter the space.
- **Mike:** There were no records of any previous peroxide testing, and we could not find a peroxide testing kit on campus, so it had to be ordered.
- **Kaila:** Doesn't Chemistry have some? We must test all our Peroxide Formers in our labs.
- **Jordan:** The ones we did have were expired for 5 years.
- This prompted the question for internal policies regarding Peroxide Formers – Jordan is reviewing. Scott, Mike and Jordan have a meeting with Rahim, Paula and Davina to discuss this.
- Jordan will take the drafted SOP that he is working on to that meeting.
- **Alina:** Is the bottle emptied out and neutralized?
- **Jordan:** If you detect peroxide in it, you can remove the peroxides but because there were none detected, it is organic waste now.
- **Alina:** Can you test to see what is in it?
- **Jordan:** There are tests that we could do if we really wanted to see what is in that bottle.
- **Mike:** We know that it is a sulfonate of some sort and to dispose of it as such.
- **Kaila:** One concern would be that this wasn't picked up in the last 10 years of the lab inspections. This should have been picked up as a Peroxide Former during one of the old inspections so then it would be put on the list to be checked yearly. Overall process of how this was handled, you went with a high degree of caution especially if there was crystallized peroxide. The concern would be to remind people with their labelling system, double checking with what is in their lab space as per the inspection yearly. Making sure that researchers are aware of what is there.

- When you meet with Rahim, Paula and Davina to go over this, the procedure that we do have for Peroxide Formers is already decently outlined as a regular schedule but make sure that all faculty members are aware of it. When they come to pick it up from Jordan after shipping, to provide them with the forms and policy to regulate this so they are aware that they bought something that needs additional checks.
- **Jordan:** The only thing found about internal policies and procedures is from 2011.
- **Kaila:** This will be a complete overhaul of that procedure then. Review the procedure for Peroxide Former testing at the next meeting.
- **Scott:** Do we need another reason to have researchers go through their labs with a fine-tooth comb in the summertime and empty out their chemicals and see what they have in the freezers? Or every 5 years they go through every inch of their labs.
- **Kaila:** Even just a reminder near the start of the summertime, that you are responsible for everything that is in your lab and make sure that your chemical inventory is up to date.
- **Alina:** If researchers order a peroxide formers from a website and it arrives at shipping, will you be aware of this?
- **Jordan:** Any hazardous chemicals that arrive on campus, go through Jordan. They will be picked up with Jordan. With Peroxide Formers, they have yellow tags and will tell whoever picks it up that they are responsible to test it.

b) Biological Safety Report – Mike

- Nothing to report.
- Over the last week and half the autoclave room in building 4 has been found open. The door not latched and found open by Security.
- Trying to figure out who has been in there, it is electronically logged so he can check the logs.
- The latest it has been that it is not students.
- They found that the lock itself is not working correctly, and they will be changing it out. There is a server motor in there and it is not correctly resetting itself.

6. BUSINESS ARISING -

a. Safety policies of students working outside of campus

- Scott: No updates right now. Maryam and Scott have been talking about this and other field activities. Hoping to put together a good policy and have this committee review it as well when it is ready. Thya will be managing this. Having an effective procedure for dealing with all of the different possibilities of research for work onsite and offsite, will be important to have structured.
- It is a complex thing as insurance changes depending on who is involved and where.
- It is in the works.

b. Terms of Reference review- Kaila

- Thank you for everyone who gave feedback!
- The Terms of Reference is in the Team's folder.
- The Terms of Reference is not a place to establish procedures for things. Procedures would be a separate document. The Terms of Reference is to outline our purpose, our scope, and our roles.
- Some of these do need some tweaking with titles being changed, some positions that do not exist anymore.
- First comment: Chemical, Biological materials is the main component of this committee any radiation materials would have to fit under Radiation Safety Committee. They should have their own Terms of Reference.
- Strategies to ensure ongoing and adequate surveillance, hazard identification, and risk evaluation of laboratory activities
 - i. History brought down for our role and our purpose. Procedures on this we would develop separately.
- To review and approve all procedures – is there information on this?
 - i. No, it is how we discuss things in our committee and give feedback.
- To monitor compliance:
 - i. We have a very heavy enlistment of our safety committee members.
- Reporting Structure:
 - i. We are a subcommittee under an umbrella. Vice President of Administration Finance is at the top. Then JOHSC. Then we are underneath JOHSC. We report to JOHSC. A

- monthly report is provided to JOHSC, and they evaluate if there is anything of concern.
- ii. Sydney: The way that Kaila worded it makes sense, but the wording under that section is not clear at all. It needs to be a bit clearer on who we report to and how frequently we report to them.
- Composition – a lot of changes need to be made here.
 - i. There are a lot of errors. The committee is on a voluntary basis. There is no official training on how to serve on this committee.
 - ii. Kaila will be making changes to the wording in this area and changing the number of representatives for each department as needed.
- Chair Duties:
 - i. Meeting materials – should there be a specific day that these should be available to everyone? Sometimes the material isn't available until the day before.
 - ii. Kaila to add a point in there to state "with an effort to make the majority of the materials a week before the meeting"
- Meeting:
 - i. Wording needs to be clarified in this section. As it stands, right now it is saying bimonthly, meaning we would only need to meet 6 months out of the year. It will clarify further.
- Quorum:
 - i. Right now, it is set at 5 members with voting privileges. There are 9 voting members. Stick with how it is now.
- Kaila will provide the Terms of Reference at the beginning of the next meeting to approve (without all the edits)
- Add when the Terms of Reference should be reviewed under the Purpose and Scope.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- a) Alina stepping down, new co-chair needed, FHHS Rep.
 - Alina will be stepping down as co-chair and will also be leaving the committee. Thank you so much Alina for your service and insights on this committee!!
 - We will need a new co-chair. The position of co-chair is to take over the meeting if the Chair is not available and be a representative for the chair if the chair is unable to make any meetings.
 - If you are interested, please email Kaila and let her know. The co-chair could be a nonvoting member as well.
 - We will also need a replacement for a FHHS Rep. Alina is working on that as there are a few new hires that may be interested.

8. ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION:

9. MEETING AJOURNED AT: 2:00pm

ACTION ITEMS

Item #	Description	Who	Action
1			
2.	Safety policies of students working in research facilities outside of campus	Scott	ongoing
3.			
4.			

NEXT MEETING DATE: MARCH 17, 2025

TIME: 1:00PM – 2:00PM – MS TEAMS - UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

UPCOMING MEETING DATES: