Managing Environmental Risks

Approximately 13,900 tons of asbestos contaminated soil, 9,700 tons of petroleum contaminated soil and 30 tons of solvent contaminated soil have been removed for appropriate disposal from the “brownfield site” at the new Center of Excellence on East Water Street. Investigating, remediating and disposing of contaminated soil is only one part of managing the environmental risks associated with the ongoing development of the new Center of Excellence site.

During the last two years, the Environmental Health Office (EHO) has collaborated with the Office of Campus Planning, Design and Construction, the contracted Design Team and the regional New York State Department of Environmental Conservation on a range of environmental issues relating to the development of this site.

Since site excavation activities have commenced, EHO personnel have assisted in the following:

- On-site environmental compliance guidance, recommendations and related oversight regarding construction related issues
- Contaminant identification and disposal
- Implementation of the NYS DEC approved Soil Management Plan
- Act as liaison with the local NYS DEC officials in coordinating, investigating and remediating newly identified soil contaminates

According to Jim McCumber, Director, Environmental Health Office, “the Center of Excellence development site is a fine example of sound environmental practices implemented through policies and programs that foster stewardship through revitalization and provide opportunity for environmental sustainability”. Many such environmental policies have been developed and implemented to assist the University in identifying and managing environmental risks and related liabilities.

Environmental Risk Programs

Some of the other University programs designed to manage environmental risks include the following:

- Air Emission Compliance
- Asbestos Management
- Bulk Petroleum Storage
- Hazardous Waste Management
- Storm Water Management
- And others that can be found on EHO’s website.

http://bfasweb.syr.edu/env_hlth/
On August 16, 2007, the Safety Department partnered with the Office of Residence Life to hold the first Fire Safety Academy for approximately 160 residence advisors (RAs) and residence hall directors (RHDs). According to John Rossiter, Safety Manager, “The goal was to learn about fire safety through an interactive and hands-on experience”.

To achieve the intended goal, the RAs and RHDs were divided into four groups that rotated through four different training modules. The training modules consisted of navigating through a smoke filled hallway in Day Hall, observing a sprinkler head extinguishing a fire, training in fire extinguishers, and participating in classroom discussion on University policy and procedures on emergency response and fire safety. The Academy culminated with the four groups together observing a mock residence hall room live burn demonstration.

The Academy provided participants with a better understanding of the dangers posed by fire, including how fast a fire can spread in a short amount of time, how much smoke and heat a fire can generate, how important it is to evacuate a building quickly following the discovery of fire, and how effective sprinklers are in controlling a fire.

The Safety Department and Office of Residence Life thank the following agencies and departments for making the first Fire Safety Academy a success:
- New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC)
- City of Syracuse Fire Department
- Housing Fixit Zone
- Syracuse University Ambulance (SUA)

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Employee Spotlight

- Please welcome Risk Management’s newest staff member Justin Besaw who joined us in August 2007 as the Workers’ Compensation Assistant. His responsibilities include reviewing medical bills and processing payments, authorizing medical treatment, responding to employee and medical provider questions and assisting/supporting the Workers’ Compensation Claims Specialist. Justin and his wife Toni have three children. Toni is also employed with the University.


- David Pajak and Pamela Heintz, Director of Mary Ann Shaw Center for Public and Community Service, participated in the Arthur J. Gallagher Higher Education Practice Think Tank January 28-29, 2008 in Itasca, IL on “Internship, Practicum, Experiential and Service Learning: Opportunities, Rewards, and Risks”.

- In March 2008, Jim McCumber and Becky Ponza will be attending a two day Radiological Dispersal Device Emergency Preparedness Training offered by the NYS Department of Health. Local and national experts will engage attendees on basic concepts and local response planning related to Radiological Dispersal Devices (RDD) and other radiological events.