



Safety in the Workplace Committee Annual Report 2008-2009

Consistent with the work of previous years', the Safety in the Workplace Committee met six times during the 2008-2009 academic year. Assisting the Committee's work was a number of subcommittees who also met to prepare issues and recommendations for full Committee review. Additionally as part of its standing work, the Committee reviewed a number of quarterly, biannual and annual department and program reports to identify trends, potential safety issues and emerging challenges and opportunities.

A summary of the Committees' work this year is as follows:

I. Workplace Accident Reduction:

Several initiatives were undertaken this year as it relates to furthering the cause of reducing the number of workplace accidents with lost time that occur. First, the Committee established accident reduction improvement goals that will guide our ability to assess the effectiveness of our initiatives. The overall reduction goal was established at 15% reduction. To achieve this goal, two additional department specific goals were established-a 50% reduction in the departments of Dining Services and Facilities Services. Given the nature of the work within those two departments, they are considered our most high risk areas, and have historically had the most accidents with lost time among their employees.

To support the achievement of these goals, the Committee created and implemented a new safety awareness program for employees in most at risk jobs. Each included department is now tracking the # of days that they remain accident (with lost time) free. Rewards are earned for all employees within the department when 120 accident free days are reached by the group at large.

The Committee will evaluate the success of these two initiatives at its Sept'09 meeting.

Additionally, the Committee developed and implemented a new supplemental accident investigation form that requires the supervisor in each department to complete a basic root cause analysis for each workplace accident. Supervisors are expected to submit completed forms to their respective Directors who will ensure their accurate completion and address incomplete or missing forms as a performance issue- to establish the importance of this activity in avoiding repeat accidents resulting in lost days.

And finally, a work force strategies consultant employed by our Workers Compensation Trust insurer, met one on one with a number of employees who have had multiple accidents with lost time within a five year period. The interviews were designed to identify ways to assist employees in remaining safe within their work areas and to identify, from their point of view, challenges that might be contributing to multiple workplace accidents. A list of their suggestions and concerns was developed and reviewed by the committee, and shared with the appropriate department directors and managers for action as applicable.

II. Hazard Communication and Hazardous Waste Management Training:

The Committee clarified the guidelines for hazard communication and hazardous waste management training after some confusion emerged relative to the OSHA standard requirement.

It was decided that the best practice for this type of training for non academic departments would be an initial training within the first six months of employment and annually thereafter. This policy was

established for the non academic areas of the campus and will be accomplished by department directors using an online tool developed for this purpose. A 'Train the Trainer' session was developed and presented in January 09, and the program implemented shortly after.

III. Chemical Inventory Automation:

A comprehensive report on the status of this project was requested as a result of questions and concerns expressed by committee members on the pace of progress and a lack of understanding of what the obstacles were.

It was clarified that limitations of the system that differed from our original understanding required some modification to meet the College's varied needs. The original intent to use bar coding in all department inventories was judged to be unnecessary due to the static nature of all inventories except chemistry. This revised strategy did take some time to develop as it was a custom use of the software.

Since 2005 inception:

6500 chemicals have been entered into the system

54 Users have been added

2500 chemicals have been purged

Inventories are updated each fall, allowing the College to share its current inventory with local emergency response authorities, and meet its reporting requirements in a timely way.

The committee felt comfortable following receipt of the comprehensive report and acknowledged the hard work of all involved.

IV. Policy/Procedure Development/Update:

Consistent with previous year's work, the Committee reviewed, updated and developed a number of policy and procedures summarized below:

Respiratory Protection Program-Voluntary Respirator Use

A small subgroup met several times to draft a policy to address voluntary respirator use after identifying a great degree of confusion among some faculty and staff as to what circumstances require protection, what kind of protection is required, and how to properly advise students. Using the OSHA guidelines as a framework, a draft policy was developed, and is expected to be implemented in September 09.

Delivery of Radioactive Materials to Campus

A concern about the safety of deliveries of radioactive materials to the post office and central receiving was addressed by the Committee. It was felt that a direct delivery process would be safer for all involved. With the assistance of the radiation safety officer, and the academic safety officer, a new process for delivery was implemented.

Space Heater/Extension Cord Policies

The Committee worked with the Director of Facilities Services to craft a campus wide policy for the use of space heaters and extension cords. Several drafts were reviewed, and a final version recommended, but not concluded. It is anticipated that this policy will be finalized in fall'09.

V. Departmental Reporting

The Committee also reviewed the following departmental reports:

Dining Services:

Dining Services reported very favorable trending in accident reduction, discussed a focus on safety awareness training, reviewed the results of a recent student survey, and reviewed the departmental goals for the academic year.

Facilities Services:

Facilities Services reported on their educational calendar, and reviewed the topics that would be covered. Additionally shared was a summary of the departmental safety committee meetings, and issues and topics addressed.

Campus Safety:

An in depth report summarizing campus safety crime statistics for the past three years was reviewed in detail by the committee. No new trends were identified, with overall statistics remaining mainly flat within a three year period. The Director also noted that a new initiative by the Saratoga Springs Fire Department will include a fee assessed for false alarms. Given that many false alarms for the Campus occur in the residence halls, a small campus group was gathered to discuss actions that can be taken to reduce the number of false alarms that occur during the academic year. Sensors in the Northwoods apartments will be evaluated for sensitivity as it appears that they are currently calibrated to be very sensitive, even being triggered by shower steam. Other actions are being considered by Facilities Services, Residential Life and Campus Safety Staff.

VI. Program Reporting

The Committee also reviewed the following program reports:

Workers' Compensation/Workplace Accidents

The Committee reviewed a three year summary of the campus workplace accidents by department, number of days of lost time, number of modified duty days. It was noted that modified duty should be encouraged when at all possible. No particular new trends were identified, but a focus on back injuries, knife injuries and slips and falls should continue.

Hazardous Waste Management Annual Report

The reviewed report outlined the costs associated with Hazardous waste removal, asbestos abatement, indoor air quality testing, medical waste removal, battery and light bulb recycling, and computer/electronics recycling which totaled for 2008 approximately \$750,000. It was noted that Facilities Services would like to improve the amount of battery recycling done on campus, and is looking for opportunities to do so.

Radiation Safety Annual Report

The Radiation Safety Officer for the campus reported on three significant developments:

- An amendment to Skidmore's license removing the Pu-Be neutron source from our authorized inventory of radioactive materials was issued by NYS. The source was returned to the custody of the US Dept of Energy in March 2008.
- No violations of Part 16 of NYS Sanitation Code were found during the biennial inspection by NYS of Skidmore's ionizing radiation-producing equipment.
- Shipments of radioactive materials are now delivered directly to the Office of Radiation Safety for monitoring and recording before being delivered to the end user by the RSO.

Chemical Hygiene Annual Report

The Academic Safety Officer reported that all chemical hygiene plans are updated every November, and all are up to date, and on file in her office for review.

Annual Fire Safety Inspection

Skidmore received 80 violations this year down slightly from last year's report. All but four were being addressed. The remaining four violations will require extensions as they will be addressed through capital projects.

Lighting Benchmarking Study

The Committee was given a summary report of a lighting benchmark study commissioned by the Director, Facilities Services. The overall assessment was that the campus was lit fairly well, with a few areas that could be improved. Facilities project staff is working on solutions to increasing lighting in the Palamountain parking lot, and Northwoods walkway area. Solutions may include additional signage, and/or additional speed bumps.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Kaczmarek, Chair, Safety in the Workplace Committee

08-09 Committee Membership

Paul Davis	Art Dept/ Dean of Faculty Office Rep
Bonnie Rolon	Dining Service Representative
Dan Rodecker/Don McCoy	Facilities Services Representative/ HazWaste Disposal
Dennis Conway	Campus Safety Representative
Terri Mariani	Human Resources/ Support Staff Representative
Alena Llorens-Myers	Human Resources Representative
Marlene Williams	Post Office/ Local 200D Representative
Pam Houle, RN	Health Services Representative
Christine Kopec	Management & Business/Faculty Representative
Elizabeth Putnam	Social Sciences Librarian/Faculty Representative
Loretta Greenholtz	Academic Safety Officer
Carol Schnitzer	Purchasing Services/Chemical Inventory Project
Kim Bombard	Committee Recording Secretary