

Sent: Fri, Jan 10, 2014 8:35 am

Subject: Lessons Learned: NYC methanol incident leads to monetary violations

Lessons Learned: Safety incidents are never as simple as 1 person doing something they shouldn't. Nothing will change and improve if the person involved is blamed and nothing else changes. The incident can usually be traced back to a system problem. Safety comes from improving the "Safety Culture" of the institution. (Read more here: <http://www.acs.org/content/acs/en/education/students/graduate/creating-safety-cultures-in-academic-institutions.html>)

An incident where someone is severely injured will bring in the local, state and federal investigators. Are you prepared for the inspection? Can your institution afford the monetary penalties and bad press from an inspection?

Do you know what the regulations are for testing and maintaining safety equipment? Do you know if its being done? Remember - this equipment is there to protect you and your students. If its not working, it won't be there when needed. And if you don't have the paperwork to show that it is tested annually, your facility is at risk of regulatory penalties.

Please share this email with other science teachers and your administrators!

8 VIOLATIONS FOR SCHOOL IN WAKE OF LAB FIRE

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/09/nyregion/8-violations-for-school-in-wake-of-lab-fire.html?hpw&rref=education&r=0>

Tags: us_NY, laboratory, follow-up, injury, flammables, methanol

Fire Department investigators have cited Beacon High School in Manhattan for eight violations, finding that dangerous chemicals were being stored unsafely and that safety equipment and practices were lacking in at least three rooms. One was the makeshift lab where two students were engulfed in flames last week when a chemistry demonstration went horribly awry.

The department gave the school, which is on the Upper West Side, 10 days to correct some of the violations of fire and building codes, and 30 days for others. But it did not issue a "cease and desist" order, which could have closed the teaching labs, James Long, a Fire Department spokesman, said on Wednesday.

The state Labor Department is also investigating the accident and its context, state officials said, because regulations require safety equipment like chemical fume hoods when teachers handle potentially explosive flammable liquids and toxic chemicals in the workplace. There was none in Room 317, a "science demo room," where Alonzo Yanes, 16, was badly burned when fumes from the methanol used by a teacher to burn different substances ignited. Alonzo remained in critical condition Wednesday in the burn unit of NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center. The other student suffered relatively minor burns.

The Fire Department violations, issued to the principal, Ruth Lacey, also focused on the chemical storage room, Room 331; the school was ordered to immediately reduce the supply of hazardous chemicals to the amounts allowed by law, including

no more than 15 gallons of flammable liquids and no more than five pounds of toxic substances. In a formal science laboratory, Room 321, the school was ordered to provide a safety shower and eye wash for decontamination, and to show that a chemical fume hood there was being tested annually for safe ventilation of dangerous fumes.

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