

Take the Time to Walk Around Hazards in Your Work Environment

Message from Mike Wisherop, 9 February 2016

Have you ever been walking down the hall and your eye catches something that just doesn't look right? You might have said to yourself "someone could trip on that," or "that might fall and make a mess." The right thing to do is to address the issue. You may notice a hazard that can be quickly fixed and take care of it yourself or if it's a bigger concern, you brought it to the attention of your supervisor or area lead. But sometimes those hazards are hidden from view in cabinets or on high shelves and so the hazards go unnoticed.



Recently, there have been instances at Berkeley Lab where **hazards had gone unnoticed and resulted in incidents or inspection findings**. If you take the time to walk through your workspace, look through all storage areas and clean up unneeded material and equipment you will reduce hazards and non-compliance problems.

MSD leadership visits technical areas to better understand the work going on, as well as the concerns and needs of workers. During these leadership walk arounds safety, waste management or environmental observations are immediately brought to the attention of the PI, safety lead or manager present.

However, the person who knows the areas best is the one who works there day in and day out. **You!** You know the hazards and how to control them. You know the materials and equipment necessary to do the work and what is no longer needed. You have access to cabinets, drawers and other places where outdated or even expired material might be located.

Here are a few things to look for when walking your work area:

- Electrical hazards (exposed wiring, daisy-chained power strips)
- Fire hazards (combustible and flammable material outside of proper storage cabinets)
- Improperly stored chemicals and waste (expired, temperature sensitive, peroxide formers)
- Unguarded machine equipment (spinning shafts, exposed gears and belts)
- Slip and trip hazards (cords, pipes, clutter, spills, leaks on walking surfaces)
- Seismic hazards (equipment and materials that could fall, break, hit someone or block exit paths)

Thank you,

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