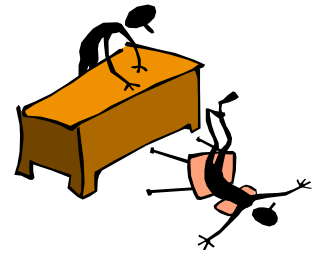




LESSONS TO LEARN BY



Laminar Flow Hood Fire

What happened?

A fire ignited in a laminar flow hood which caused the room's automatic sprinkler head to operate.

What were the Causes and Contributing Factors?

The interior surfaces of the hood were wiped down with ethanol as part of the cleaning process. Following the wipe down an open flame device (Bunsen burner) was placed in the hood and lit. Ethanol vapor within the hood ignited and the resulting flame activated the room sprinkler head.

What Corrective Action was taken?

Occupants immediately evacuated the building and the fire was extinguished.

How can incidents like this be prevented?

When cleaning hood surfaces with ethanol:

- Use only a small amount of ethanol to prevent the pooling of excess liquid.
- After cleaning allow sufficient time for total evaporation of the ethanol before introducing an open flame into the hood.
- When working in the hood keep the sash down.
- Know the location of the nearest portable fire extinguisher and how to operate it.

Please see the following Office of Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) Information Sheets for further information:

SY-09 Fire Extinguisher Provision: <http://guru.psu.edu/policies/SY09.html>