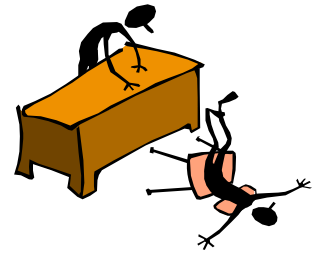




LESSONS TO LEARN BY



Lab Fire

What Happened?

A fire ignited in an unoccupied lab causing fire and smoke damage to numerous materials in the lab, including a styrofoam shipping container, equipment replacement parts, lab equipment, and building surfaces.



What were the Causes and Contributing Factors?

The fire originated near the floor by an incubator shaker unit which also had an autoclave located on top. Condensation from the lid of the autoclave dripped onto the incubator unit power cord connection causing an electrical failure (arcing) at the power cord connection which ignited the Styrofoam container.

What Corrective Action was Taken?

Building occupants detected a burning odor and smoke and immediately activated the building fire alarm system. They immediately evacuated the building, and the fire was extinguished using a portable fire extinguisher located in the lab.

How Can Incidents Like This be Prevented?

Be sure that electrical connections and appliances are not placed in areas where they can be exposed to water. Maintain good storage and housekeeping practices to reduce fire hazards.

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>

Emergency Evacuation Plan: <http://www.ehs.psu.edu/occhealth/fire.cfm>