

Memo

Date: December 16, 2004

To: Distribution

From: M. J. Zarcone, Physics Department's Safety and Training Office

Subject: Summary of Recommendations from the Physics Department's Breakout Sessions during Safety Week

The Physics Department developed its program for safety week from very fruitful discussions with the Group Safety Coordinators (GSCs) held in conjunction with a 'Thank You' luncheon we have with the GSCs annually. Concerns presented by this worker based safety group (administration personnel, technicians, engineers, and scientists) were rolled into three areas of discussion and facilitators were chosen (an administrative assistant, a technician, a theoretical and 3 experimental scientists) during the weekly Departmental Management Meeting. The facilitators were charged with developing the topic being discussed, leading the session, then reporting back to the Chair the output and a list of specific recommendations generated by the attendees.

The sessions were as follows:

- ESRs and Work Planning Compliance
- * Cross Departmental Work
- Personal Safety and Morale

The Department held an 'All Hands Meeting' the day after the breakout sessions were concluded to rollup some of the output from those meetings and to have a general discussion of safety at the laboratory, department, and the individual level. Speakers included Director Chaudhari, DOE's Associate Director of Nuclear Physics, Dennis Kovar, ALD for High Energy and Nuclear Physics, Tom Kirk, ALD for Basic Energy Science, Doon Gibbs, Physics Department Chair, Sam Aronson, and the Physics Department's ES&H Coordinator, Mike Zarcone.

Attendance records showed that although each member of the Department was required to attend only one session, many attended more than one and some attended all three. The attendance at the 'All Hands' Meeting was so great that a closed circuit TV needed to be set up to accommodate the large turnout. Furthermore, all the facilitators agreed that there was excellent participation amongst the attendees of each session and in their opinion, everyone was genuinely concerned and supportive of the efforts.

The Physics Department's management has reviewed the summaries from each of the three breakout sessions and has compiled the original lists of recommendations or areas of concern.

The list is broken into three groups: 1) those items that the Physics Department will work on internally, 2) items of discussion that involve the Physics department, the NSLS, and/or the CA Department and 3) items that need to be passed upward for Laboratory Directorate consideration and solutions. Some of the items need attention internally as well as at the laboratory level in which case they are listed in both groups. The bullets reflect the session the items came from.

Physics Department

These items that are internal have been discussed at the weekly management meeting and plans have been developed for solutions and implementation. The plans follow the bulleted items and are in italics.

- Experiment Safety Reviews (ESRs) should be on a server accessible from behind the BNL firewall so that everybody can view the ESR, understand the training requirements, and see who is authorized to work on the experiment.

*The ESRs have been placed on the ES&H web pages of the Physics Department and are available within the BNL firewall. **Completed 12/3/04***

- The PI should meet with the users of their ESR on a regular basis to discuss safety issues and any possible changes to the scope of the work being performed.

*As a requirement for approval for the annual review of their ESRs, the PI will be required to have a safety meeting with those people who are listed on the ESR. This meeting will need to be documented and the documentation will be kept with the signed reviews. **This policy will be disseminated to all PIs in January and will become part of the notice from the ESRC to the PIs when calling for an update of their ESRs.***

- Supervisors should be notified when an employee or guest's film badge is missing.

*The RCD technician will forward a list of lost badges to the Safety & Training Office when he notifies the individuals that a Radiation Exposure Investigation (REI) is beginning. The Safety & Training Office will notify the supervisors of the individuals and track the REIs to completion. **This policy will go into effect immediately.***

- Safety problems associated with older equipment were raised. Old equipment should be evaluated using current standards under the ESR and taken out of service if they do not conform. There is no grandfathering of the use of old equipment.

*ES&H Coordinators and the Building Manager will be more attentive to this when performing Tier I Inspections. In addition, the Physics Department will sponsor a month next year when groups will be challenged to rid their laboratories and storage spaces of old or unused equipment. **The Safety & Training Office and the Building manager in conjunction with the Chair's Office will promote this in the spring of 2005.***

- Insufficient information and feedback to employees on incidents.

*The Department will make available a section of its ES&H web page to the status of on-going incident investigations and the final reports of those within the last year. **The Safety & Training Office will institute this by mid-January 2005.***

- Perceived disconnection between management and employees. We need to establish a stronger partnership. Attitude changes on both sides need to take place.

*The Physics Department will discuss a program of how it will solicit and when it will devote a portion of Department All Hands Meetings to discuss issues deemed to be of interest to a large segment of its population at the next Department Meeting. **The Department Chair and the Safety & Training Office will work together to address this issue before the next Department Meeting. Suggestions will be asked for and the Chair will determine how this will be implemented.***

- Fear and uncertainty of over-reaction creates an unhealthy environment in which to work. It is a fear that incidents will not be reported due to improper retaliation.

*The Department needs to impress upon its members the importance of reporting incidents that if not reported could result in someone being injured or jeopardized in some way. The Department will express its policies to its members. The ES&H Committee has a policy that it does not recommend disciplinary actions in the course of investigating accidents/incidents in the Department. In the situation where a serious or willful action or non-compliance occurs the Department Chair is tasked with ensuring that the action or non-compliance does not occur again. The Department Chair has the sole responsibility to determine how to implement this and whether or not disciplinary action is warranted. Any additional policies related to this will be made known. **The Department Chair will address this issue with the Department either at a meeting or by email to the Department. Completion date will be by the end of January 2005.***

Physics, NSLS, and/or C-AD

The Department Safety & Training Office will set up a meeting with safety representatives of the NSLS and CA Departments to address the following issues.

- * The implementation of Work planning into the everyday tasks carried out at the Lab differs from Department to Department.
- While employees may, and generally do, understand how their tasks get reviewed and incorporated into a Work Planning scheme in areas and Departments where they often work (e.g. in Physics Dept. Labs, RHIC Facilities, of the Light Source), they do not necessarily know how to "Plug in" to the Work Planning Scheme in areas or Departments where they only occasionally perform tasks.

A specific suggestion regarding this point could be that it is incorporated in general Employee training that to ensure that all tasks are performed under the auspices of Work Planning, that when people go to work at any area of the Lab that there is clear guidance who they should contact before they start their work.

- * To the extent that is reasonable, Training should be uniform across the Laboratory.

There were two examples of this that were discussed. One was department specific required Training for working in Machine shops. Some people argued that this should be uniform across departments, so that if one was trained in Physics, one could also use the Shops at the Light Source. Others argued that this particular Training should be department and Shop specific. The second example was Lead Handling Training.

All agreed that Lab-wide Training should be applicable in all departments, with no additional department specific Training requirements.

The Safety & Training Office will set up this meeting in January 2005 and report the results to the Chair. The meeting should include the facilitators of the breakout session on Cross Departmental work. Any solutions that result will be communicated to the Department.

Laboratory

These items are to be forwarded to the ALD for ESH&Q for discussion and possible solution.

- Safety and training: more of the training courses should be accessible from outside the lab (i.e., on a server outside the firewall). Alternatively, registered guests should have a method for accessing training courses. Language and comprehension may be a contributing factor to safety violations, as well as inadequate supervision.
- Supervisors should be notified when an employee or guest's film badge is missing.
- Safety incidents at the lab should be available to BNL employees on the web, but not posted on a public web server.
- Reporting of incidents – human factors dictate that accidents will happen. The perception that all accidents are due to procedural violations rather than unforeseeable events may negatively impact the reporting of incidents.
- There should be a graded approach to reporting safety incidents. Treating minor and major incidents with the same severity causes over reaction and is detrimental to the working environment.
- Environmental issues relating to safety were raised, in particular snow removal and the general condition of the roads and sidewalks at BNL. It was strongly felt that the laboratory should improve and maintain these facilities better to avoid these kinds of accidents.
- Insufficient information and feedback to employees on incidents.
- Night Shuttle Services needed after 5:00 pm to go between housing area and main campus. Can the Fire Department help out here? Shuttle drivers need hands free headsets.
- Install Bike Lanes on the Main Entrance road.
- Implement optional Safety Courses:
 - Defensive Driving
 - Self-Defense Courses
- X2238 (control room for police dept.) in Safeguards and Security is an unreliable phone number (no one answers). This came up several times during our discussions.

- Improper maintenance leads to unsafe working conditions. Better maintenance on the existing lights on site. Implement a web site on the BNL Home Page to report maintenance issues with guaranteed feedback.
- Contractor violations should be treated independently from BNL staffers.
- Perceived disconnection between management and employees. We need to establish a stronger partnership. Attitude changes on both sides need to take place.
- Fear and uncertainty of over-reaction creates an unhealthy environment in which to work. It is a fear that incidents will not be reported due to improper retaliation.
- Employees feel there is too much negativity in communications coming from the Directorate.
- * Lab ESS&H Rules and Policies should be carefully crafted so that they are seen to be beneficial (i.e. increase Safety and environmental protection). If employees or guests perceive that rules and policies don't "add value", or are misguided, it can led to people discounting the value of all the policies, and perhaps reducing their efforts to abide by the policies.
- * A corollary to the point above was that any punishment applied concerning ESS&H policies must be carefully considered.
- * To the extent that is reasonable, Training should be uniform across the Laboratory.

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The Department Chair will follow up on these issues with Laboratory Management and report the progress to the Department.