HAZARD ALERT

Subject: Laboratory Chemical Spill
Incident Date: May 10, 2017

Incident Summary
A worker decided to dispose of chemical waste that was stored in an acid cabinet located centrally in the lab. The worker decided to transfer some of the chemical waste into polycarbonate bottles on the open bench and placed the bottles directly on the floor underneath electrical breaker panels before leaving for the day. A second worker entering the area noticed a strong smell in the area and advised a student working near the chemical waste bottles to leave the area.

The student later returned to the area and noticed a yellow liquid leaking from where the chemical waste bottles were located. Campus Security were contacted who immediately advised everyone to evacuate the area. Hazmat was called, responded and cleaned up the spill.

Injuries and Equipment Damage
The yellow liquid leaking caused the chemical waste bottles to stick to the floor tiling hindering the cleanup of the chemical spill. Floor tiles and coving under the electrical panel needed to be removed and by a specialized disposal company and disposed of a Contaminated Materials by Hazmat. There was no injury to the worker.

Immediate and root cause(s):
1. Incompatible plastic bottles were used to dispose of chemical waste.
2. Chemical waste involving inhalation hazards was not prepared and stored in available fume hood.
3. Electrical breaker panels were obstructed by chemical waste bottles.
4. Safe work practices/instructions/training including Hazard Assessment and Control Form, Safety Data Sheets, Hazardous Materials Disposal Manual and training were not enforced or followed.

Corrective Actions:
1. Ensure workers review Safety Data Sheets to ensure that compatible bottles are used for storage and/or disposal for all chemicals.
2. Use secondary containment to prevent the spread of chemicals when there is a risk of leakage or damage to a container.
3. Ensure workers use all controls including fume hoods for chemicals as identified on their Hazard Assessment and Control Form.
4. Ensure electrical breaker panels are not obstructed at any time.
5. Ensure all workers review and follow all safe work practices/instructions/training including what is documented in Hazard Assessment and Control Forms, Safety Data Sheets, Hazardous Materials Disposal Manual and training.

References:
- Lab Safety Program – Chemical Storage Guidelines
- Formal Workplace Inspections – Laboratory Inspection Checklist with References