

HOTLINE

The Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory is a United States Department of Energy Facility

Safely, Safely, Safely — PPPL's Mantra

Maureen Abbott tests the works of a green eyewash station along the first-floor L-wing corridor and looks at the station's tag. It indicates the station was last tested in November of 2004.

Jack Anderson enters an office and opens a power panel, looking for open knockouts, a safety concern. He then heads down a corridor and spots boxes of coils stored against a hallway wall. Anderson asks staff in the area how long the boxes will be there.

Others nose through an office recently vacated by an employee who retired. They also survey the Stockroom, pulling out drawers and looking at ceiling tiles. Eventually the group meanders to a small workspace, stumbling upon two physicists collaborating on a project.

Taking in the cluttered surroundings, PPPL Deputy Director Rich Hawryluk asks, "Who is responsible for cleaning up the room? What's the plan?" The room's messy remnants belonged to the new retiree, and now the two physicists use the area as a small lab.

Hawryluk, along with Abbott, the nurse at PPPL's Occupational Medicine Office (OMO), and Anderson, the Lab's Environment, Safety & Health (ES&H) & Infrastructure Support Head, often are among the members of PPPL's safety walkthrough team. Twice each month the team, generally including about 10 to 15 people, tours an area of PPPL to evaluate its safety.

The walkthroughs are a mainstay of the Lab and reflect the way it does business. "We've been doing these for many years. The earliest safety walkthrough I could find was done on January 10, 1984," said ES&H Head Jerry Levine, who coordinates them. "It involved A and B sites, including the Matterhorn Building and New Guggenheim."

PPPL policy mandates that Lab management "conduct periodic walkthroughs of all areas of PPPL to evaluate safety conditions and management processes in those areas." The reviews include observations of ongoing work practices and procedures, as well as a review of previous safety violations in the area and their resolution. All areas of the Lab are reviewed at least every two years; areas with significant hazards, such as experimental areas, are



PPPL Senior Industrial Hygienist Bill Slavin (left) and Lab ES&H Head Jerry Levine look at a deteriorating electrical cord. Evaluating the condition of electrical supplies and cords is one of the safety walkthrough activities.

reviewed at least once a year. Among the evaluation areas are many rooms with storage contents — old equipment that has been moved to other areas and stored.

Following a walkthrough, Levine gives the area a safety score (from "poor" to "excellent"), writes up the findings, and assigns action items to appropriate staff, setting a 60-day deadline for remediation unless the violation needs immediate attention. Cathy Saville, of the ES&H Division, tracks the action items.

The walkthrough team includes senior managers; Department of Energy representatives; the facility manager for the area being reviewed; line staff from the area; a representative from the OMO; and Maintenance and Operations, ES&H, and Environmental Services staff.

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Safely

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Abbott said being on the team serves a dual purpose. She spots some problems — she’s always on the lookout for frayed wires and unsupported tanks — while familiarizing herself with the site and potential hazards. “I learn more about PPPL on each walkthrough and am able to see the employees’ work environment,” said Abbott.

Team members use their special expertise in the evaluations, but, notes Electrical Engineering Head Al von Halle, “Everyone on the team looks at everything.” Von Halle added that he pays particular attention to electrical, as well as lockout-tagout areas.

Twice each month, the team goes through a small area of the Lab evaluating the safety of the spaces as they look at fire doors, emergency equipment, walkways, sanitation, shelves and cabinets, general office equipment, electrical equipment, and compressed gas cylinders. Are the lighted exit signs functioning? Are all refrigerators marked “food only” or “chemicals only” and do they contain appropriate contents? Are shelves overloaded? Are power cords frayed? Are there trip hazards or electrical issues?

Photo by Bill Slavin



Above is an area encountered during a routine safety walkthrough at PPPL. It shows a messy area in need of better housekeeping methods.

“The primary purpose is to bring senior managers out to the work sites to see the areas and note what changes may be needed to improve safety. The walkthroughs also give staff from those areas a chance to talk to managers,” said Levine, who has been involved in the walkthroughs since 1997. “The biggest problem we encounter in the walkthroughs is housekeeping.”

About 24 safety walkthroughs are conducted each year at PPPL. In addition, all facility managers are asked to walk through their areas at least quarterly and report any safety issues. The Department of Energy’s Princeton Site Office (PSO) also conducts about 40 surveillances of areas annually. “This is good because other sets of eyes are looking at the areas,” said Levine. He said the PSO surveys an area and sends a report via e-mail to Levine, who coordinates the assignment of action items.

The safety walkthroughs are just one action that shows the Laboratory’s commitment to safety. Another is coming up Friday, February 18.

Annual Safety Forum

PPPL is holding its annual Safety Forum Friday from 8:30 a.m. to noon in the MBG Auditorium. Dr. Sheila Widnall, Professor of Aeronautics and Astronautics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is scheduled to give a talk entitled, “Lessons Learned from the Columbia Investigation and How They Apply to the R&D Environment.” Other forum activities include a status report of the PPPL safety program, a review of staff feedback regarding lessons learned from the SLAC accident, and handouts. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

Now for the walkthrough results of the first floor Lab Building and Lab Wing, which took place February 9: Generally Good. “An exception to the ‘Good’ rating was the presence of multiple cases of seriously deteriorated power cords in this area. More attention must be paid to the condition of electrical tools and equipment, and these items need to be promptly replaced when their power cords exhibit damage. Also, housekeeping is a significant issue in some rooms,” wrote Levine in his summary. Action items followed, along with the persons responsible for carrying them through. Among them was a call to have the eyewash station tested. ●

Safety First!

Hotline

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What's Happening?

PPPL Blood Drive Slated

A Blood Drive is scheduled at PPPL on Wednesday, March 16, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The drive is sponsored by the American Red Cross and PPPL. An American Red Cross Van will be parked in front of the LSB in the circular driveway. To make an appointment to donate blood, please call ext. 3200. The blood supply is critically low. For more information about donating blood, please visit the American Red Cross web site at: <http://www.pleasegiveblood.org/>



DOE's Johnson Retires

Photo by Sallie Meade



Milton Johnson (left), former Department of Energy (DOE) Princeton Area Office Manager, recently retired as Chief Operating Officer for the DOE Office of Science. At his retirement party in December, held in Washington, D.C., many PPPL and DOE staff wished him well, including DOE Office of Science Director Ray Orbach (right).

PPPL's Ritter Named Foundation Officer



PPPL Science Education Program Administrator Chris Ritter has been named an officer of the newly established Trenton Public Education Foundation, Inc. The Greater Trenton Community launched the foundation in an effort to provide extra funding for scholarships and enlightened programming for Trenton Public School children, as well as to seek opportunities to promote the school district's outstanding students, teachers, and administrators. Ritter serves as Secretary on the Foundation.

PPPL's Gilton Welcomes Family Addition



Kris Gilton, Lead Technician at PPPL's Neutral Beam Heating Division, and his wife, Stacey, welcomed son, Stephen, on December 24. Congratulations, Kris and Stacey!

DACW

Director's Advisory Committee on Women

Breakfast Colloquium

All PPPL Women Invited!

Wednesday, February 23

L.S.B. BUILDING – Commons

Strategies for Successfully Combining Work and Family

Dean Maria Klawe

School of Engineering and Applied Science, Princeton University

8:45 A.M.

Continental Breakfast

9:00 A.M.

Welcome, Introduction of New Hires, & Science Education News

9:30 A.M.

Talk by Dean Klawe