

Medical Evaluations for Museum and Collections Care Professionals

(Getting the most out of your healthcare evaluations)

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Please Note:

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Outline

- Health & Safety Hazards in collections work?
- Assessing the hazards in your workplace
- Healthcare professionals
- Information for your healthcare professional
- What you can do now

Health and Safety Hazards in collections work?

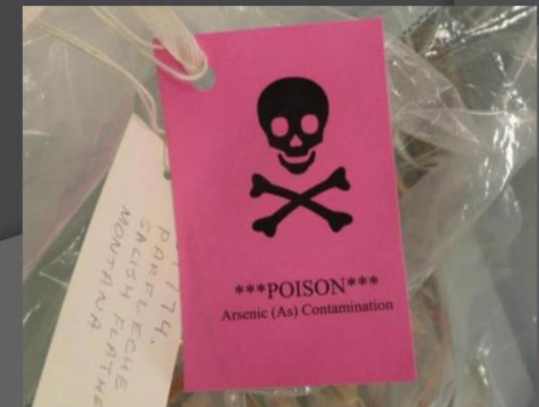
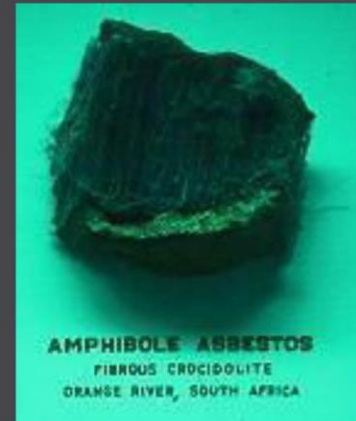


Physical Hazards

- Ex: noise, cold, tools, old buildings, construction, ladders, fieldwork, etc.

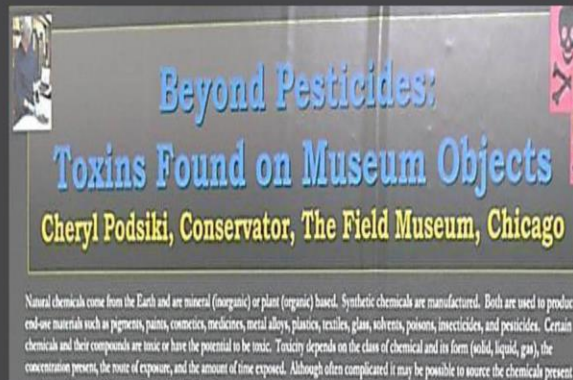
Toxic Materials

- Inherent: asbestos, toxic plants, heavy metal pigments
- Acquired: pesticides, preservatives



H&S Hazards in collections work?

- Health and Safety information available?
- Re: hazardous conditions and materials **= GOOD**
 - Well known hazards from industry, + some unique aspects



- Re: rates of injuries/ illnesses in Collections **= BAD**

H&S Hazards in collections work?

- Special Issues in Collections Work

Work in small groups

Health and Safety training = often limited

Capital for safety equipment = often limited

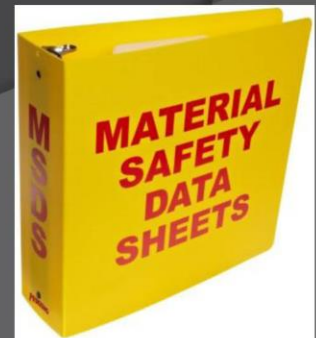
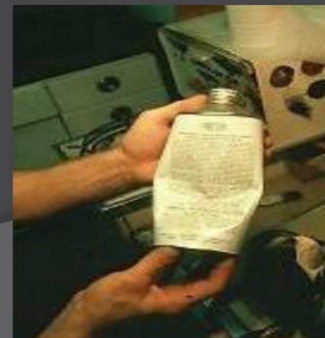
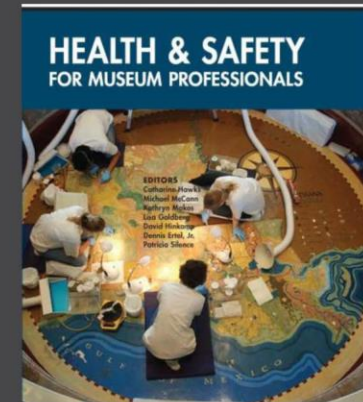
“The Show Must Go On” syndrome

- Minimizing symptoms and safety measures to get the job done

Assessing hazards in your workplace

Information sources

- Person doing work
 - Best source for job activities
- H&S references for similar work
 - Museum articles, other workplaces
- Identification of hazardous materials
 - Labels
 - Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)



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Healthcare professionals

- No specialty for Collections professionals
- Healthcare professionals;
 - **Often unprepared** for work-related health concerns
 - **Training:** generally little work-related health training
 - You must educate your healthcare providers
 - Re:
 - Work
 - Exposures
 - Concerns

Healthcare professionals

– Specialists

- **Occupational/Environmental Medicine** (OEM)
 - Work-related injuries and diseases
 - 3000 Board Certified OEM in U.S. (30,000 Cardiologists)

-Resources for OEM specialists

- Association of Occupational Environmental Clinics (AOEC)
- American College of Occupational Environmental Medicine (ACOEM)

Information for your healthcare professional

– Work duties

- Ex: “Prepare cultural objects for storage”
- Cleaning, repairing, supporting objects



– Materials used or encountered

- Ex: glues, solvents, arsenic, pigments nearby formaldehyde work



– Unique aspects of work

- Ex: very close work with materials,
- eat/drink at workstation,
- many hours in storage area



Concerns to Discuss with your Healthcare Professional

- Acute episodes
 - Ex: asthma, rash, dizziness while working with _____
- Personal Health Issues
 - Pregnancy
 - Underlying conditions. Ex. asthma, HIV, seizures,
- Chronic exposures
 - Ex: long periods of work with possible hazard
- Health problem
 - Is it associated with work exposures?

Healthcare Evaluation Outcome

- Recommendations

- Further investigation

- Monitoring of exposures

- Monitoring of patient

- Ex: blood, urine, x-rays, breathing tests, questionnaire
- Ex: regular monitoring, when work changes,
- Problems with this approach



What you can do now

- Identify your work hazards
 - E.g. physical hazards, fumes, dusts
- Investigate possible hazards and effects
 - E.g. silica dusts, ergonomic probs, pesticides
- Learn how to protect yourself
 - Eliminate, substitute, control, limit exposure,
 - Protect your skin/ eyes, respiratory system, mouth
 - Do not eat/ drink/ touch face at workstation



The End!