

Health & Safety Committee

Health & Safety Committee: Creating Partnerships to Help You!

Creating a safe work environment requires collaboration between conservators and their co-workers, clients, managers, institutions, and local and federal organizations. In this spirit, the Health & Safety (H&S) Committee continues to form important partnerships and collaborations to help you create the safest workspace possible.

HEALTH & SAFETY AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

In Montreal, the committee is teaming up with National Heritage Responders (formerly AIC-CERT), McGill University Public Safety Staff, and Redpath Museum to present the lunchtime lecture “Protect Yourself - Save your Collections: Health and Safety in Emergency Response” on May 16, noon-2 pm. Health and safety issues to be discussed range from the initial preparations for your emergency response plan to acting as a second responder at a disaster/emergency scene, and to recovering cultural property.

Last year’s lecture was sold out, so register today! [www.conservation-us.org/add-ticketed-events]. Attendees at any of the H&S meeting events will be entered in a drawing to win one of several copies of *Health and Safety for Museum Professionals*, the joint AIC/SPNHC text covering health and safety concerns, precautions, and remedies for all areas of museum work.

Don’t forget to stop by our booth in the exhibit hall to find out more about these and other exciting collaborations, and discover more opportunities to win!

RESPIRATOR FIT TESTING NEAR YOU!

Also in Montreal, we will be working with Canadian and American safety professionals at our annual Respiratory Protection Workshop to provide both a lecture and fit tests that meet both U.S. and Canadian requirements. Meeting with your healthcare professional is required before you can be fitted, so make an appointment to see them now. Information about all of our respirator programs, including downloadable forms you will need to get a 2016 Montreal fit test, will be available on the AIC website at www.conservation-us.org/fittest.

We realize that not everyone can make it to the Annual Meeting to be fit tested. Therefore, following a successful partnership with the Washington Conservation Guild to offer Respirator Awareness and Fit testing programs in the D.C. area, the H&S Committee is working to expand this program to areas near you. If you or your organization is interested in starting a regional fit testing program, contact the committee at HealthandSafety@conservation-us.org.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE AMERICAN INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE ASSOCIATION

The H&S Committee is also looking forward to finalizing a partnership with the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA). What are industrial hygienists and why do we want them on our team? According to the AIHA, “Industrial hygienists are scientists and engineers committed to protecting the health and safety of people in the workplace and the community... They

play a vital part in ensuring that federal, state, and local laws and regulations are followed in the work environment.” Having a relationship with an industrial hygienist in your area means they can assist you in investigating and examining your workplace for hazards and potential dangers, make recommendations on improving safety, conduct scientific research to provide data on possible harmful conditions, develop techniques to anticipate and control potentially dangerous situations, and train and educate you about job-related risks. Find out more about the AIHA on their website [www.AIHA.org].

HAZARDOUS COLLECTIONS MATERIALS WEBINAR

Members of the committee are also working with the Connecting to Collections Care (C2C Care) [www.connectingtocollections.org/] advisory team to expand health and safety information on the website to reach a broader audience of collections caretakers. We will be presenting the webinar “Arsenic and Old Lace: Controlling Hazardous Collection Materials” on May 3, 2016, from 1:30-3:00 p.m. as part of the C2C Care monthly webinar series. The presentation will help attendees identify hazardous collection items, the safety risks they pose to staff and visitors, and how to control those risks in practical ways. Throughout the webinar, there will be time for in-depth question and answer sessions using case studies provided by both presenters and attendees. If you have questions or case studies you would like us to discuss, you are invited to submit them before April 15, 2016 to HealthandSafety@conservation-us.org.

HISTORIC HOUSE HAZARDS ONLINE RESOURCES

Together with the Collections Care Network (CCN) of the AIC, the H&S Committee is working to create an online resource to provide historic house caretakers with easy and efficient access to information on the identification and management of hazardous collections and materials in their institutions. Historic house hazards include not only collection items, but also the buildings themselves and the job tasks performed within them. The first step of matching safety professionals with historic houses to undergo exploratory surveys is currently underway.

A COMMITTEE THAT IS HERE TO HELP!

And finally, our most important collaboration is working with you! The Health & Safety Committee is dedicated to helping conservators and other collections professionals work safely. We have established a network of allied environmental, safety, and health professionals (including occupational physicians, industrial hygienists and safety managers) who are here to help you answer questions, interpret data, and provide advice about the (often unusual and complex) health and safety issues conservators face in their daily routines.

If you have questions or concerns about health and safety in your work or would like to participate in any of these programs, contact the committee at HealthandSafety@conservation-us.org.

Additional information, brochures, and articles are available on our website [www.conservation-us.org/healthandsafety] and wiki [www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Health_&_Safety].