Occupational Safety and Health

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Governmental Oversight

- Federal
  - Occupational Safety and Health Act
  - Administered by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration
- State
  - States are permitted to develop their own plans if they are at least as onerous as OSHA's plans
  - 22 US states and territories have their own plans

OSHA’s Goals

- Prevent and minimize safety and health-related injuries in the workplace
- Provide a nationwide workplace safety and health standard for employers
Common Obligations

- Develop and maintain appropriate policies and procedures designed to maximize workplace safety
- Report and record adverse event incidents
- Identify and maintain a log of hazardous substances
- Provide employee education and training regarding workplace hazards and policies

Areas Common to Veterinary Practices

- Zoonotic disease control
- Bloodborne pathogen standard
- Hazardous communication plan
- Ethylene oxide
- Glutaraldehyde
- Ionizing radiation
- Formaldehyde
- Laser
- Latex allergies
Zoonotic Disease Control

- Require proper hand hygiene
- Employees must wear Personal Protective Equipment
- Implement effective animal-related injury prevention

Zoonotic Disease Control

- Maximize employee protection during medical and surgical procedures
- Implement environmental infection controls
- Monitor and promote employee health
- Create a written Infection Control Plan

Bloodborne Pathogen Standard

- Applies to exposure to (i) human blood products and (ii) animal blood products infected with HIV or Hepatitis B
- AVMA recommends veterinary practices meet the Bloodborne Pathogen Standard requirements
Bloodborne Pathogen Standard Requirements

- Written exposure control plan
- Hepatitis B vaccination for exposed employees
- Medical follow up for exposure incidents
- Use of labels and color-coded containers
- Maintain proper records
  - Training records
  - Medical records
  - Sharps evaluation criteria and sharps injury log
  - Hepatitis B vaccination declination
- Proper containment policies and procedures

Hazard Communication Plan

- Applies to both physical hazards and hazardous chemicals
- Requires written Hazard Communication Plan
- Requires preparation and maintenance of hazards list along with associated Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)
- Requires development and maintenance of a spill control policy

Common Hazards in Veterinary Practices

- Disinfectants
- Housecleaning supplies
- Corrosive agents
- Euthanizing agents
- Anesthetic gases
- Compressed gases
- Mercury
- Formaldehyde and formalin solutions
- Prescription drugs
**Ethylene Oxide**

- Used for gas sterilization
- Short-term exposure can cause respiratory-related symptoms, headache, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea
- Long-term exposure may cause cancer, reproductive effects, genetic changes, and damage to the nervous system
- Requires personal monitoring, area monitoring and leak detection

**Ethylene Oxide Exposure Plan**

- Control employee exposure
- Written compliance program
- Personal air monitoring as well as information and training programs
- Establish regulated areas where necessary
- Establish a medical surveillance program
- Place warning labels on containers
- Employee rotation is an impermissible way to reduce exposure
- Use appropriate personal protective equipment

**Glutaraldehyde**

- Used for cold sterilization
- Present in Cidex®, Aldesen®, Hospex®, Sporicidin®, Omnicide®, Matricide®, Wavicide®, etc.
- Short-term effects include eye irritation, chemical burns, respiratory symptoms, nausea, headaches, drowsiness, nosebleeds, and dizziness
- Long-term effects include allergy-like symptoms, including asthma and skin rashes
Minimizing Glutaraldehyde Exposure

- Ensure proper ventilation
- Use only what you need
- Use appropriate disinfectant stations
- Use appropriate personal protection equipment
- Provide eye wash stations
- Clean up spills immediately

Minimizing Glutaraldehyde Exposure

- Do not eat, drink or smoke in areas where glutaraldehyde is stored
- Minimize dust production
- Use less toxic alternatives when available
- Automate glutaraldehyde transfer
- Follow hazard communication rules

Minimizing Ionizing Radiation Exposure

- Utilize dosimeters to measure radiation exposure
- Protect against exposure by using lead-lined barriers and lead-containing personal protection equipment
- Utilize separate storage areas for radioactive isotopes
- Maintain records of employee exposures
- Clearly mark radiation areas
Other Workplace Hazards Common to Veterinary Medicine

- Formaldehyde
- Lasers
- Latex allergies

Findings/Penalties

- Willful - $5,000 to $70,000 per violation
- Serious – Up to $7,000 per violation
- Other-Than-Serious – Up to $7,000 per violation
- De Minimis – No penalty
- Failure to Abate – Up to $7,000 per violation
- Repeat Offenses – Up to $70,000 per violation

Additional Resources

- www.osha.gov
- www.avma.org/services/vpre/hr.asp
- www.msd.com
- www.msdxchange.com/english/index.cfm
- www.oshamanual.com