

Management of Hazardous Waste from the University of Illinois at Chicago Medical Center

Presenter(s)

Gregory Gehrig, Environmental Compliance Specialist, University of Illinois at Chicago
Cindy Klein-Banai, Assistant Director for Chemical Safety, University of Illinois at Chicago

Abstract Text

Hazardous waste, as defined by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and regulated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), is generated from several areas at the University of Illinois (UIC) Medical Center. These waste streams include spent xylene and formalin from pathology laboratories, mercury from broken and discarded instrumentation, research laboratory cleanouts, and spent pharmaceutical waste. This presentation covers the UIC Medical Center hazardous waste program, focusing on recent efforts to capture pharmaceutical wastes that are also hazardous wastes. It discusses issues of concern with pharmaceutical wastes that are also hazardous wastes, including their application in the hospital environment. It explains how the UIC Medical Center, in conjunction with the UIC Environmental Health and Safety Office (EHSO), was able to implement an effective and compliant policy to manage the subject wastes.

Presenter Bio(s)

Gregory Gehrig, Environmental Compliance Specialist, University of Illinois at Chicago

Greg received a bachelor of science in chemical engineering from the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 1995, which included one year of study abroad at the Institute of Technology and Superior Studies in Monterrey, Mexico. After graduation, Greg pursued a career as an environmental engineer and consultant. His work experience prior to UIC includes environmental compliance, emergency response and the investigation and remediation of site impacted with hazardous materials. As a consultant, Greg worked for a wide variety of clients, including local and federal government, transportation, refining, and food processing.

Greg is currently responsible for environmental compliance issues at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) and works in UIC's Environmental Health and Safety Office (EHSO). Greg has been employed at UIC since May 2006, and oversees hazardous waste collection, asbestos management, air permitting and reporting, and other environmental programs. Greg is also a member of UIC's emergency response team (ERT), which responds to a variety of emergencies on campus, including hazardous materials incidents. Greg is currently pursuing a Masters of Business Administration from UIC's Liautaud School of Business.

Cynthia Klein-Banai, Assistant Director for Chemical Safety, University of Illinois at Chicago

Cynthia has been Assistant Director in the Environmental Health and Safety Office at University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) for over seven years. In this position she has oversight for the laboratory safety program, hazardous waste management, chemical safety training, environmental compliance, and other duties as assigned. For four years prior to coming to UIC she worked as a contractor performing environmental site assessments. Her university career started at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Division of Environmental Health and Safety where she spent two of her six years there working on a study on pollution prevention in laboratories.

Concurrent to full-time employment, Cynthia is pursuing a Ph.D. in Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences at UIC and this presentation is an outcome of a class project. She is also very excited to be taking an active part in working on sustainability at UIC.