Dear Readers,

EHSRM completed the waste audit on campus which showed that, despite all efforts done, a large percentage of recyclable materials is still thrown away in the municipal waste bags and can be recovered. The audit report included recommendations to minimize waste and improve waste management including raising awareness, improving the recycling infrastructure, developing a university policy and organization structure for waste management, implementing green purchasing, events and IT, improving waste management in dining facilities, implementing composting on campus, developing waste exchange platforms and securing necessary funds for implementation.

During this period, EHSRM was heavily involved in ensuring the safety of students’ events, Outdoors, Commencement and faculties’ receptions. At the Commencement, EHSRM worked closely with PPD and Events’ teams especially with regard to seating layout, exits and the laser show. EHSRM was also deeply involved in the preparation for the operation of the Cyclotron facility at the Sawwaf building. The radiation safety team coordinated with IBA team to ensure that radiation exposure is maintained to safe levels during the setup, testing and commissioning stages.

EHSRM, in coordination with POLYECO finalized the packing of additional chemicals and exported around 7.8 tons of hazardous chemicals such as chlorine are added for the disinfection process. As WHO and EPA).

Swimming is an important physical activity for a healthy life. However, the water we swim in can be contaminated by microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses, parasites and blue-green algae, which can cause certain health problems including swimmers’ itch, gastroenteritis, ear infections.

At AUB, the quality of the Hostler pool water is monitored regularly and chemicals such as chlorine are added for the disinfection and prevention of water contamination with disease-causing microorganisms. Chlorine can break down sweat, dirt and grease from swimmers’ bodies but this can use up the chemicals leaving less available to kill germs. Therefore, it is important that all swimmers practice good hygiene before going into the pool in order to prevent germs on their bodies from contaminating the water.

Below are some tips you can follow to help ensure your health and safety and that of other swimmers:

- Don’t get in the water if you have or recently had diarrhea. Some pathogens, such as the parasite Cryptosporidium which causes diarrhea, can be resistant to chlorine and may be able to survive in water for several days.
- Don’t swim while sick or with open wounds.
- Don’t pee or poo in the water; take children out of the water for frequent restroom breaks.
- Shower before you get into the water and after swimming.

As for the beach water quality, EHSRM monitors the beach water every year prior to the beach opening and then weekly during the season to ensure that the water is safe for swimming. Microbiological analysis is usually done to check for the presence of fecal and total coliforms and enterococcus faecalis. A clearance letter is published on EHSRM’s website and at the beach entrance once results are received.

This year, EHSRM conducted a full scan of microbiological, physical, chemical and organic contamination for the AUB beach water. Samples were collected at different times during the day and from different locations representing all the opened sites. The results revealed that all the tested parameters fall within the acceptable limits for bathing water quality (based on national and international standards such as WHO and EPA).
AUB Water Quality

EHSRM periodically monitors the water quality on Campus. This chart shows the results and the variations of some parameters tested during the past year, till June 2016.

Although Campus water is free from bacteria, its high salt and dissolved solids’ content make it unacceptable for drinking. Accordingly AUB decided to stop the water fountains and is currently implementing a pilot Reverse Osmosis project to treat water supplied to water fountains in a number of buildings on Campus. If the solution proves to be satisfactory, it will be replicated to most campus buildings.

Answers to “Think Safe”

1. b. Bacterial contamination is to be confirmed by biological testing. It is the increase in dissolved solids that can affect the taste.

2. a. Red, brown or rusty color is generally indicative of iron in water. Iron can lead to stains in sinks, colored laundry and metallic taste or smell from drinking water and faucets. Coffee and tea might also become inky or black.

3. a. During the water shortage season, seawater intrusion to groundwater can lead to an increase in the levels of dissolved solids.

EBSPM in Action

The Environmental and Chemical Safety Unit conducted lab inspections in Biology; conducted training on chemical handling for nursing; on waste management of hazardous drugs for IRAIC pharmacists and on safety precautions associated with administration and handling of cytotoxic drugs for AUBMC & CMC nurses; conducted 7 training sessions for PEMC staff on PPEs, slips and falls, electrical and hand and power tools safety in addition to an occupational risk assessment in PEMC workshops; conducted construction safety inspections in DTS & West Hall; supervised the removal of asbestos containing vinyl tiles in DTS; hosted 2 interns from FHS; supervised the packing and loading of chemical waste; and conducted an assessment at AUB cafeterias to study the potential of waste reduction and recycling.

The Health Physics Services Unit offered radiation safety trainings to new fellows and residents, Physics students, DTS researchers, DRD residents, OR and EMU staff; hosted one intern from FHS; provided training on radiation protection in clinical care policy; introduced a new risk assessment guidelines for IRB studies; coordinated a RSC meeting; witnessed the installation of radio-monitoring equipment and testing of cyclotron and performed radiation surveys; supervised the safety of laser show in the Commencement; performed retroactive assessment of personnel doses and recommended changes; updated the Hazmat policy; reviewed the requirements for purchasing X-Ray machines for DRD and RTTP; supervised the relocation of radioactivity room in DTS; followed up on luteinum patient admission; and performed quality control for the dose calibrator in PET.

The Life and Fire Safety Unit took part in coordination and site meetings and performed several site inspections in the (ACC) project; reviewed the door and hardware schedule, room numbering, Fire Alarm, HVAC, fire fighting, CO system, and fire extinguishers’ shop drawings; reviewed the material submittals of the EHSRM chemical waste storage prefabs; inspected the installation of the sprinkler piping layout and the motorized smoke fire dampers on the 4th floor of the DTS renovation project; reviewed the L1 and L2 fire fighting shop drawings of the DTS project; reviewed several in-house renovation projects and conducted several site inspections at AUB and AUBMC; performed a Life safety Code review of the Masri Institute project and addressed the notes of the technical monitor related to the same project; reviewed several public events; took part in the 2016 Commencement; and conducted fire safety training session for Physics students.

The Occupational Safety Unit conducted the semi-annual life and fire safety round at AUBMC phase I and II, buildings 23 and building 56 and reported findings to Plant Engineering; surveyed and assessed the distribution of exit signs across AUBMC phase I, II and buildings 56 and 23 and updated architectural drawings with existing and required signs; conducted laboratory safety inspection for the Microbiology department; and conducted progress meetings with Plant Engineering for the corrective action taken to rectify observations listed during safety rounds.

The Risk Management Unit followed up on many inquiries related to injuries and incidents; offered training regarding sharps safety and incidents’ reporting for AUBMC and Campus staff; and, in coordination with the Occupational Safety Unit, met with several departments at AUBMC in preparation for an incident report automated form.

The Sanitation and Biosafety Unit coordinated with CSD department on evaluation and selection of equipment for ACC; commissioned and tested BSCs at AUBMC and Campus; conducted HAZMAT training sessions for AUBMC staff and medical lab students; conducted fit testing for nursing and research staff; prepared materials for PAPR training; offered training regarding food safety for outboards’ members; reviewed and commented on food serving events; reviewed and commented on biological research proposals’ submittal; arranged for the collection and testing of beach and domestic water samples; followed up on swimming pool water quality; and followed up on drinking water projects on Campus.

Meet the Emergency Response Team (ERT)

Jad Zahrar

Mr. Zahran was recruited as clinical assistant at AUBMC after completing his Public Administration studies at AUB. In 2014, he became library assistant at Jafet library and joined the ERT in the same year after getting motivated by a fire incident that he witnessed in Nicely building.

Jad recalls that moment which changed his perception towards fire safety: “I was in front of Jafet library when I saw heavy smoke rising from a nearby location on Campus. I took the initiative to grab the nearest fire extinguisher and rushed towards the source of smoke. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of ERT and other community members, the fire which turned to be in Nicely building was put off without injuries.”

Elie Atwe

Mr. Atwe joined AUB in 2001 as a Senior Electrician in the Physical Plant Department and was promoted to Senior Control Technician in 2015. He became a member of the ERT in 2010.

Amongst several incidents that he responded to, Elie recalls in particular the flood that happened in the Chemistry Department. It was heavily raining on that winter day and rain water infiltrated into the first and basement floors of the Chemistry building. The ERT members had to stay for three to four hours inside the building to be able to control the water infiltration and pump the water outside the building.

In the spotlight

Meet the Emergency Response Team (ERT)