Welcome Note

Dear Readers,

During the coming year, EHSRM will be working on several ambitious programs. Among these programs are the improvement of the recycling of waste through the partnership with Averda and the introduction of Reverse Vending Machines, partnership with Holcim to co-process the University’s hazardous chemical wastes in their cement kilns, improvement of the environmental and safety cultures through intensifying trainings to all AUB community, appointment of safety liaison officers in buildings, organizing environmental and safety seminars, calculating AUB carbon footprint and working on reducing it through recommending applicable solutions for the short and long term.

EHSRM is starting 2013 with the resignation of Dr. Raja Abdallah, one of the main pillars who started the department 17 years ago. Dr. Abdallah will be continuing his career in HSE outside the country. EHSRM team wishes him good luck in his new endeavor.

Farouk Merhebi - EHSRM Director

Article of the Month

AUB Emergency Response Team

Prior to year 2000, the University had neither organized way nor trained staff to respond to emergencies. Moreover, it was alarming to realize that, taking into consideration the area traffic patterns, the city emergency response personnel can take a minimum of 15 minutes to reach the university. Therefore, the University decided to have its own Emergency Response Team (ERT) with a role to deal with all the emergencies pending the arrival of the Beirut Fire Brigade, the Civil Defense, the Red Cross and the other authorities.

The University ERT was established in mid year 2000. The team reports directly to the EHSRM director and comprises individuals from various departments on Campus and the Medical Center. The team members receive training from a variety of professionals on first aids, firefighting, and responding to hazardous materials emergencies.

Currently, the EHSRM members’ are the core of the ERT which is composed of 29 members from various departments joining on a voluntary basis. The team members are available around the clock to respond to alarms and emergencies. The team is equipped with modern state-of-the-art Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) with the air compressor needed for its maintenance. An array of personal protective equipments (PPEs), and firefighting clothing and equipments is at hand. Supplies to detect, measure, contain and collect releases and spills of hazardous materials are provided as well.

In responding to internal emergencies, the ERT works closely with staff from many departments including the AUB Protection Office, the Physical Plant Department and the Plant Engineering Department. Moreover, major disaster drills are sometimes scheduled to practice proper coordination of emergency response with local agencies in Beirut and Lebanon.

The team is able to provide first and basic response to fires and other emergencies. It has efficiently responded to, and dealt with, many emergencies that took place on Campus and at the Medical Center. Within the last three years, the ERT responded to 389 emergencies spread over a wide spectrum of potentially life threatening incidents such as fires, chemical spills, radioactive spills, and floods; 58% of these responses occurred during daytime working hours, and the remaining happened outside working hours (ERT responses and the types of incidents are detailed in the statistics section).

EHSRM’s members of the team offer training sessions to other emergency response agencies in areas related to hazardous materials response and emergency management.

Think Safe

1. To properly follow the RACE procedure in responding to a fire emergency, you should: “Raise” your voice to “Announce” the fire, “Count” the injuries, and then “Escape” as fast as you can:
   a) True b) False

2. Fire is a chemical reaction that requires the presence of three elements to be initiated and sustained (fuel, air, and heat). The control of fire is done by the removal of any of these elements or by stopping the chemical reaction that takes place after the initiation of fire:
   a) True b) False

3. Dry powder fire extinguisher cools the heat source, and thus, extinguishes the fire:
   a) True b) False

Answers are on page 2

Safety Tip

For emergencies, always keep important numbers in a visible place:

- Red Cross: 140
- Beirut Fire Brigade: 175
- Civil Defense: 125
- In Case of Fire (AUB): 5555
- AUB Protection Office: 2400
EHSRM in Action

Latest Activities

The Environmental and Safety Unit of EHSRM and Veolia have finished the packing of 291 drums of hazardous chemical wastes. Currently, the Unit and Veolia are in the process of securing the permits and licenses from the Ministry of Environment for the export of these wastes to Europe for their final proper disposal according to Basel Convention regulations.

The Health Physics Services Unit along with the Chief of Staff Office established online radiation safety orientation session for attending physicians at AUBMC. The unit has also initiated the meetings of the newly appointed Radiation Safety Committee in which the University Radiation Safety Officer serves as secretary.

The Life and Fire Safety Unit tested and commissioned the fire detection and alarm system in the West Wing of Building 23 and the elevator of FS2, and completed the 2011/2012 AUBMC Annual Life and Fire Safety report.

The Occupational Safety Unit assisted in the planning and execution of the yearly Infant Abduction drill at AUBMC, and attended a joint MOPH and WHO two day training in Emergency Response for Chemical, Biological, and Nuclear events.

The Risk Management Unit reviewed the incidents reports for the reporting year 11-12 and issued the AUBMC Annual Incidents Report. Provided insurance requirements for 6 projects/contracts, assisted students to insure safety requirements for 7 trips off campus, and provided 71 certificates during the past two months.

The Sanitation and Biosafety Unit commissioned/recertified biosafety cabinets located at the Animal Care Facility and the Pharmacy Department, reviewed and commented on food sale activities and inspected food sale stands at the AUB campus, and responded to sanitation requests at AUBMC.

In the spotlight

EHSRM’s Senior Risk Manager

Aline Assaf Bassil
BA in Business Administration in 1996.
MA in Money & Banking in 2000.

Mrs. Bassil joined the Internal Audit Office at AUB in January 1997. After more than five years of successful work, she moved to the position of Risk Manager at EHSRM in March 2002, and then she was promoted to the position of Senior Risk Manager in February 2011. Her work covers both the Campus and the Medical Center with the main scope to maintain the University insurance portfolio, including worker’s compensation and property and liability claims management. She is largely involved in incidents reporting, investigation and follow up, and in assessing training needs. She attends to public and student events, and accreditation and research studies requirements to reduce various types of risks. She is also involved in developing and reviewing policies, procedures, and contracts.

STATISTICS

Answers to “Think Safe”

1. False. You should: “Remain calm & Rescue” persons who are in immediate danger; “Alert” others by activating the fire alarm or by calling the fire department; “Contain” the fire by closing all doors to prevent the spread of smoke and fire; “Evacuate” the location, and “Extinguish” the fire (only if trained to do so).

In Healthcare centers extinguishing the fire supersedes evacuating the building when applying the “RACE” procedure. Building occupants will have to try to fight fires in place and should evacuate the building only if they have to do so and after evacuating all patients on the floor.

2. True. A fire cannot be ignited and sustained without the availability of: “fuel” which might be any combustible or flammable solid, liquid or gaseous material that burns; “air” needed for its oxygen content necessary for the combustion; and “heat” which is required for the initial ignition.

3. False. Dry chemical extinguishers extinguish fires by interrupting the chain of chemical reactions that takes place after the initiation of fire.