Roles and Responsibilities of Departmental Safety Officers

Each department at Baylor University that is involved with chemical usage must have a departmental safety officer (DSO). The DSO serves as a resource for ensuring safe practices in the department’s labs and other chemical usage areas, as well as serves as a role model for safety. The DSO is generally appointed by the Department Chair.

Responsibilities of a DSO include:

- Serve on the Laboratory Safety Committee, and serve as a liaison between their department and the EH&S department.
- Assist in ensuring that EH&S laboratory inspection corrective actions are addressed by the Principal Investigators. DSOs are encouraged to seek assistance from their Department Chair if a PI fails to make these corrective actions within a timely manner.
- Know the proper steps for reporting incidents.
- Be familiar with emergency procedure information (what to do, where to go, etc.).
- Be familiar with hazardous waste requirements and storage.
- Assist in the purchase of safety supplies for the department; for example, first aid kit restocking supplies, spill kit restocking supplies, etc.
- Perform check-out inspections of graduate students and post-docs.
- Serve as a resource to the departmental personnel. Know where to direct personnel for additional assistance.
- Assist in the investigation of incidents.
- DSOs are expected to be a role model for safety. This includes adhering to all PPE and other safety requirements and setting a good example for the other personnel in their departments.
- Mentor next DSO for 2 months before leaving position.
Transferring the DSO Position and Duties

If you are transferring the DSO position to a different faculty/staff member or are taking the DSO position on, you must complete the following steps.

Steps you need to take when LEAVING the DSO position:
1. Make sure your Department Chair is aware and has appointed a person to take over the DSO position.
2. Mentor the next DSO for two months before leaving the DSO position completely.

Steps you need to take when BEGINNING the DSO position:
1. Be mentored by the previous DSO for a minimum of two months before taking on the DSO position fully.
2. Email Karalyn_Humphrey@baylor.edu with the following:
   - Name of previous DSO.
   - Name of new DSO, email address, phone number, office building and number.

It is essential to have good communication with your department when changing DSO positions. Your departmental personnel needs to be aware of the transition. It is also essential you have a full understanding of the DSO responsibilities and duties so that you can communicate to your department what they are expected to do in terms of training, PPE, hazardous waste, etc.

Resources for a DSO

The best resource for a DSO is going to be the webpage for the EH&S Department, located at: www.baylor.edu/ehs.

For personal assistance with questions or concerns, contact Karen Humphrey at 254-710-2002 or Karalyn_Humphrey@baylor.edu.