

Butler Guilty on 47 of 69 Charges

Thomas Butler, M.D., Professor of Internal Medicine and former Chief of the Infectious Diseases Division at the Texas Tech University School of Medicine, faces up to 240 years in prison and a huge fine after being convicted on 47 charges related to his handling of research involving plague bacteria (*Yersinia pestis*).

This case attracted national attention and created a major response from federal, state, and local law enforcement when Dr. Butler reported samples of *Y. Pestis* missing. He later admitted that the samples had probably been destroyed.



Although found not guilty on several of the most serious charges related to his reporting the plague samples missing, Dr. Butler's handling of research funds and improperly shipping hazardous materials led to the recent verdict. The December 19, 2003, issue of *Science* includes 9 pages of information on this case.

Are Your rDNA Protocols on File?

If you work with recombinant DNA and your protocols have not been submitted to EH&S, it's time to send us a copy. In cases where protocols must be approved by the Biological Safety Committee, EH&S will forward the information for approval. Recombinant DNA protocols will be kept on file in EH&S in the same manner as protocols for radioactive material use. See the Biological Safety Program at www.people.memphis.edu/~ehas/bioman2003.pdf for more information.

Sources of Assistance

Manager of EH&S 678-4672
Radiation Safety Officer 678-4672
Chemical Hygiene Officer 678-4672
Environmental Protection Specialist . . 678-2044
Laboratory Safety Specialist 678-2740
Fax 678-4673
Emergency (Fire, Police, Ambulance,
after hours Chemical/Radiological) . 678-4357
EH&S Home Page
. <http://www.people.memphis.edu/~ehas/>

Something New for Laser Users

If you work with a laser and have no formal training in laser safety, EH&S can now supply a CD-ROM based laser safety training package. The 1 hour "Laser Safety Orientation" provides the practical information that every laser user should know. Once you see the pictures of burned eyes and skin (you can look the other way if you like), you will want to exercise extra caution the next time you are around a Class IIIb or Class IV laser.

Call EH&S for more information on CD-ROM and Video training programs for your lab or shop.

New Biological Shipping Reference

In a recent press release, the American Society for Microbiology (ASM) announced release of a new publication "designed to help scientists understand and comply with the rules and regulations governing the shipment of biological and infectious substances." The 16 page *Cumitech 40: Packing and Shipping of Diagnostic Specimens and Infectious Substances* is available for \$19.95 and can be ordered from ASM Press at www.asmpress.org. We would like to thank Dr. Barbara Taller for bringing this publication to our attention.

Please remember that personnel directly involved in shipment of hazardous materials must be trained and certified prior to engaging in such activities. See University Policy UM 1296 at <http://policies.memphis.edu/UM1296.htm> for more information.

Are You Ready for a Crisis?

University Policy UM 1532 was recently implemented, providing a framework for crisis management. You may see the new policy at <http://policies.memphis.edu/UM1532.htm>. A University-wide Crisis Management Plan (CMP) is currently under development, and planning will eventually reach the department level to ensure that everyone is prepared. EH&S is involved in this process by participating in the Crisis Management Team Operations Group. Check out the current CMP at <http://bf.memphis.edu/crisis>.

Want to Reduce Waste Volume, Toxicity?

If your lab is looking for ways to reduce the volume and/or toxicity of hazardous waste generated in experimental processes, take a look at Margaret-Ann Armour's *Hazardous Laboratory Chemicals Disposal Guide, 3rd Edition* (CRC Press, 2003). You may be able to incorporate some of these techniques into your processes as the final step. Please be aware that some of these methods may not be legal in Tennessee; please contact EH&S for guidance. If you don't want to purchase the book, please feel free to drop by EH&S and look at our copy.

Don't Toss that Old Cell Phone!

Before you put that old cell phone in the trash, please remember that electronic devices such as this contain toxic materials like lead and cadmium. Dispose of cell phones as hazardous waste, recycle them, or donate them to an approved organization that can use them legitimately. More information is available at <http://www.people.memphis.edu/~ehas/Electron-DevWaste.PDF>

Want a Safety Poster?

EH&S has purchased several 11 x 17 inch eye safety posters designed by students at Lehigh University. If you would like one of these for your department or lab, please call Al Simpson at 4672. Go to <http://www.lehigh.edu/~inposter/occupational.htm> to check out the 3 eye safety posters.

Keeping Things Secure

Among the newest anti-terrorism regulations are U.S. Department of Transportation requirements for implementation of transportation security plans. If your department ships hazardous wastes, a transportation security plan has been implemented for the department, and your hazardous waste coordinator has attended training on transportation security.

While plans and training are important, we must all do our part to keep hazardous materials secure. Here are some suggestions:

- Close and lock doors when everyone leaves the lab (even if you'll be back in a few minutes)
- Be alert to strangers trying to enter the lab
- Keep radioactive material, biological materials, and especially dangerous chemicals in secure storage when not in use
- Report suspicious activity to University Police at 678-4357(HELP)

Do your part to keep hazardous materials secure.

Independent Lab Safety Training Available

Would you like to hear about lab safety from a nationally recognized expert? The Laboratory Safety Institute, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving lab safety, will present its 2 day Lab Safety Short Course in Memphis on February 10 and 11, 2004. The registration fee is \$495.00, but the price drops considerably if there are multiple participants from the University. More information is available at www.labsafety.org.

A Cure for Reflux and that Burning Sensation

Put away the antacid. If you are still purifying solvents by reflux over water-reactive agents using high temperatures, there are now safer methods in widespread use. Learn more about the system used at UC-Davis by reading the November/December 2003 issue of *Chemical Health & Safety* magazine, a publication of the ACS Division of Chemical Health and Safety.

New on the EH&S Web Page

Several new items have been added to the EH&S web page at <http://www.people.memphis.edu/~ehas/>. Some of these include:

- Memphis Sewer Use Ordinance - Go to "Chemical Safety," click on "Hazardous Waste," and scroll down to the link
- National Toxicology Program's *10th Report on Carcinogens*- Go to "Chemical Safety," and scroll down to the link
- Scott Specialty Gases' *Compressed Gases Design and Safety Handbook* - Go to "Laboratory Safety," and scroll down to the link
- Health and Safety Information on Household Products - Go to "Chemical Safety," and scroll down to the link
- Recombinant DNA Registration Form - Go to "Downloads," and scroll down to the link

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