

Looking Back and Moving Forward: 20 Years of Worker Education and Training

NIEHS National Trainers' Exchange – March 2007

POST CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS WORKSHOP SESSION SUMMARY NIEHS NATIONAL TRAINERS' EXCHANGE MARCH 2007

1. Session Title and Presenter's Contact Information:

"Clandestine Meth Lab Cleanup"

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2. Workshop Summary:

The manufacture of Methamphetamine is a growing problem in many areas of the country. Meth can be manufactured from readily available ingredients in a kitchen, a motel room a shed or even out of the back of a car. For each pound of Meth manufactured five to seven pounds of hazardous waste is generated. Homes where meth has been "cooked" can be highly contaminated and must be thoroughly decontaminated prior to occupancy. This workshop introduces a 24-hour training program for meth lab cleanup workers. This program is designed to follow the 40-hour hazardous waste worker course.

Using a mock meth lab, the workshop introduces the course using a small group exercise designed to discover the hazards associated with meth lab cleanups. After the small groups record and discuss the hazards each group is assigned hazards they identified to develop strategies to control the hazard while the clean up proceeds. After these activities the three day-outline for the course is examined. Finally, how to conduct the hands on activities in the work practices section including duct cleaning, rug removal and gross debris removal is discussed. A copy of the Meth Lab Cleanup Participant's Guide and Instructor's Guide is available through the Clearinghouse.

3. Methods:

The basic exercises are conducted as small group activities, that draw upon the expertise of the participants allowing them to identify the hazards present in the mock meth lab. The instructor must be knowledgeable about the general subject, versed in the specifics of meth lab cleanups, and experienced in leading group discussions. Each small group must have a scribe to record the key points of the group discussion on flip

chart paper and each groups work will be hung around the room using blue painters tape. Maximum class size should be consistent with the NIEHS Minimum Criteria specifications regarding student to instructor ratio for interactive training". This also allows for maximum student participation in class discussion. The evaluation method is conducted throughout the small group activities as the instructor must move between groups to determine that all are participating. Each hands on activity has an evaluation sheet that must be filled out by the instructor monitoring that activity.

4. Main Points:

Key Points

The instructor should ask leading questions to make sure that all of the hazards present in the mock lab are identified if they have not been observed by one of the small groups. Likewise, in the hazard control exercise, the instructor should make sure that all control mechanisms are identified. It is important to push the students to search out the answers in the Participants' Guide rather than provide the answers for the student.

The hands-on activities in this clean up course are extensive and important to preparing the students for safely cleaning up meth labs. The Instructor's Guide provides drawings of props necessary to conduct each of the work practices activities. For this workshop we built a model of the duct cleaning prop. Not discussed in the workshop was the hands-on activities for monitoring or the final meth lab cleanup simulation.

Responses from Participants

Participants asked how to market this course to a new audience. This discussion talked about identifying contractors who specialized in meth lab clean-ups. We found that one source for this information was the local Drug Enforcement Agency or Police Department..

Other participants asked if the course could be modified to be used as an 8-hour refresher for hazardous waste workers. The consensus was that it could be modified.

Many questions were asked to specifically deal with various aspects of clean up including the presence and types of booby traps.

5. References:

The Meth Lab Cleanup Participants' Guide and Instructor's Guide is available for download at the Clearinghouse. For the workshop we utilized passed out four chapters from the Participants' Guide (Meth Lab Basics; Hazard Recognition; Hazard Control; and Work Practices).