

MEMORANDUM

TO: Autoclave Users in Research and Teaching
FROM: Charlotte Waggoner, University Biosafety Officer
SUBJECT: Autoclave Use and Verification Program
DATE: April 14, 2008

Effective decontamination of potentially infectious materials, transgenic organisms, and other biohazardous wastes is required prior to disposal. Autoclaving is the preferred method and whenever possible must be used. To aid researchers in ensuring autoclave effectiveness when decontaminating waste, Virginia Tech's Environmental, Health and Safety Services (EHSS) has developed the [Autoclave Use and Verification Program](#) to provide guidance and establish requirements for the proper use, management, and performance verification of autoclaves.

The basic requirements of this program include:

- designating, for each autoclave, a Responsible Technician to coordinate the implementation and provide oversight of program compliance;
- ensuring all users are trained on the safe and appropriate use of autoclaves;
- ensuring performance verification is conducted on each autoclave prior to initial use, with each load using available autoclave printouts and/or chemical indicator test systems, and, at least monthly using a biological indicator test system; and
- maintaining specified documentation for autoclave use and performance verification.

To help researchers meet the requirements of this program, EHSS will:

- meet with laboratory personnel to assess the status of waste management and any existing autoclave performance verification procedures to determine each area's needs for implementation; and
- as budget permits, provide program start-up kits to include containers for waste collection within the lab, autoclave performance verification test kits, and appropriate autoclave bags.

A ½ day workshop, sponsored by the [Laboratory Employee Professional Development Network](#), will be presented April 25th, 8:30am – 1:00pm to communicate program requirements and expectations as well as provide training on the management and safe use of autoclaves. We encourage all autoclave users, designated Responsible Technicians, and other interested parties to attend.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 231-5864 or ren@vt.edu.

cc: Dr. Sherwood Wilson, Vice President for Administrative Services
Dr. Bob Walters, Vice President for Research
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