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Revision Log

Frequently Asked Questions about Environmental Management Systems

Background: BNL's location in the heart of the L.I. Pine Barrens and in a deep ground water recharge area provides strong incentive to ensure proper control of the environmental aspects of all work done on site. BNL management has committed to an Environmental Management Program that meets the requirements of ISO 14001, an international standard for environmental management.

Question 1 - What does the term "Environmental Management System" mean?

The term "system" is used to describe the procedures, training, policies, and other program elements used by Light Sources Directorate to ensure that the environmental policies and requirements of the Laboratory are met in our activities. The intent of this system is to ensure that the Directorate does not impact the environment.

Question 2 - What is BNL's Environmental Policy?

The Environmental Safety, Security and Health Policy established by the Laboratory Director can be found at this web page. The policy makes a strong commitment to compliance with environmental regulations, pollution prevention, and continual improvement in our program.

Question 3 - What does the term "significant environmental aspect" mean?

“Significant environmental aspect” refers to activities associated with Laboratory operations that have the potential to create significant impact to the environment in or outside the Laboratory boundaries.

Examples of significant environmental aspects are:

- generation of chemical, radioactive, mixed, medical or industrial wastes
- emissions into the atmosphere
- liquid discharges
- storage of radioactive or chemical materials

Question 4 - What activities at the Light Sources Directorate involve a Significant Environmental Aspect?

There are eight work activities at the Directorate that potentially involve the generation of hazardous or industrial wastes, or have the potential for liquid discharges. These activities are:

- Cooling water system maintenance
- Machine shop operations
- Silicon crystal etching and cutting
- Photographic dark room operations
- Vacuum system maintenance
- Electrical/mechanical equipment maintenance
- Experimental Program
- Haz Store Shed - 90 Day Area
- General Facility Operations

Question 5 - How does the Directorate ensure that these Environmental Aspects are properly controlled?

All experiments are reviewed for environmental aspects through the Experiment Safety Approval Form process at the NSLS and the Project Safety Review Form process at NSLS-II. All personnel involved in a significant aspect receive specific training which emphasizes the operational controls to ensure safe work practices. In addition, the enhanced work planning program ensures additional reviews of on-going work as needed. A summary of operational controls and training for each of the work activities identified above can be found on the Light Sources Directorate EMS-OHSAS web page.

Question 6 - What response/actions would you take in the event of a spill?

If the spill is large or discharges directly to the environment (e.g. spill to a drain or to the soil), immediately call the Lab emergency number x2222 (or x911). Also notify NSLS ESH personnel and the Control Room (x2550). If the spill is small and does not pose a threat to the environment (e.g. spill to a concrete floor), call the Control Room and NSLS ESH personnel for advice and support in the clean-up. NSLS-II personnel should notify the NSLS-II ESH Coordinator.

Question 7 - How are you made aware of new environmental requirements that affect your daily work?

Light Sources Directorate ESH personnel monitor changes in the BNL environmental requirements. Supervisors will be advised of any changes that require modification of work practices or training.

Question 8 - Are there environmental objectives associated with your work? What is your role in achieving them?

Yes - NSLS and NSLS-II have an ongoing objective to ensure excellence in our environmental and waste management programs. To satisfy this objective, each worker should:

- Ensure that work complies with all environmental or hazardous waste regulations.
- Seek to reduce the amount of hazardous, industrial and radioactive waste generated by research and technical activities.

Proper planning, training and adherence to the requirements established for your work will ensure that these objectives are accomplished in our on-going work.

Question 9 - What are your environmental responsibilities?

- Comply with Laboratory policies, standards, procedures, and regulatory requirements.
- Maintain awareness of environmental impact of work, and apply pollution prevention and waste minimization techniques.
- Identify potential hazards, environmental concerns, and unsafe conditions or practices in work or at your work site, and implement or suggest controls to minimize risk.
- Cease work activity, and/or issue a Stop Work Order upon observing imminent danger, and report the danger immediately to your supervisor or ESH Coordinator.
- Respond to emergencies, alarms, or occurrences in an appropriate manner.

Question 10 - How would you report an environmental nonconformance?

Review the non-conformance with your supervisor and discuss it with the NSLS and NSLS-II ESH Staff.

Question 11 - Where can I find more information about the EMS program at the Light Sources Directorate?

Go to Light Sources Directorate EMS/OHSAS Documents and Links web page. You may also contact the BNL EMS Management Representative (George Goode), or any member of the Directorate EMS/OHSAS Committee.