Policy Title: Safety Procedures

Policy It is the practice of this Agency to:

1) implement plans and communicate procedures to protect employees and visitors from biological, chemical, electrical, fire and physical hazards, and to safely use X-rays;

2) provide protection through designed barriers, safe work practices, safety equipment and devices, and personal protective apparel;

3) perform routine maintenance and regular inspections to control hazards;

4) post signs and documents, and maintain reporting mechanisms, so employees know how to work with hazardous materials and how to respond in case of emergency.

Procedure

1. Plans and procedures, and avenues of communication

a) Biological hazards

(1) The office’s Infection Control Plan informs employees about the hazards of working with biologic material, assesses each employee’s risk of exposure to biohazards, reinforces the use of Universal Precautions, and identifies work practices and personal protective apparel designed to control exposure to hazards.

(2) Annual In-office training presented to all staff addresses the transmission of blood-borne disease agents, Universal Precautions, engineered barrier protection and safe work practices, and personal protective apparel.

(3) Safety procedures, especially use of personal protective apparel, are posted on the morgue refrigerator door and door to the morgue. Procedures instruct use of PPE by anyone performing dissection or recovery of cadaveric tissue, anyone handling bodies or taking fingerprints or collecting evidence, and observers.

(4) An electronic folder containing safety-related documents (including this policy) is stored on the office intranet at this address:

[\\Ctocme-05\public](file:///\\Ctocme-05\public).

b) Chemical hazards

(1) The office’s Chemical Hygiene Plan informs employees about the inherent dangers of working with chemicals, provides instructions for their safe handling, and identifies methods to minimize exposure to chemical hazards.

(2) The procedures for handling and decanting formalin, and for disposing of formalin-fixed tissue, are stored in the Safety folder on the office intranet.

(3) Safety Data Sheets (SDS) are stored in a bright yellow binder attached to the wall in the location where the chemical is used. The RM Bradley Safety Data Sheets are retained in the third floor RM Bradley Office bookcase. The Charter Oak Maintenance, LLC Safety Data Sheets are stored in the third floor janitorial closet.

c) Physical hazards, especially related to repetitive motion injury (RMI)

(1) The agency recognizes RMI is a workplace hazard defined as any physical disorder resulting from or aggravated by the cumulative application of biomechanical stress to the musculoskeletal system.

(2) The Chief Medical Examiner, working with UCHC Employee Health or other healthcare providers, will make every effort to reduce the risk of RMI by providing affected employees with appropriately-designed equipment, devices or furniture. The UCHC website has online training and tips for prevention of RMI. <http://ors.uchc.edu/ergonomics/index.html>​

(3) The agency complies with all state and federal laws (such as the Americans with Disabilities Act) related to RMI in the workplace.

d) Electrical inspections, including GFI tests, and hazard management are done through a sub-contractor named RM Bradley, supervised by the State of CT Department of Public Works.

e) Fire prevention schemes, which is accomplished by a system of alarms and smoke detectors and fire extinguishers managed by the UCHC Fire Department.

f) Lifting techniques to prevent injury include standard practices and special equipment.

(1) Standard practice: two Forensic Technicians go to every scene to lift and retrieve a body.

(2) Remains of obese persons to be recovered from a Hospital Morgue, also require two Forensic Technicians.

(3) Equipment: MOPEC model DC100, an autopsy cart equipped with a hydraulic lift, is used to remove bodies from vehicle and move bodies onto autopsy table.

g) Radiation safety exposure procedures are written in the Radiation Safety Plan.

h) The safety procedure for staff (Investigators and Technicians) working out of the office at scenes is written as a separate procedure.

2. Protections and hazard control

a) Engineered designs to control biological and chemical hazards include:

(1) Safety showers and eye wash stations are built in the morgue and in the Toxicology Lab, and first aid kits are stored in the main work areas;

(2) Sharps containers are attached to the walls near every autopsy table;

(3) Exhaust hood with splash guard used if there is a need to dump formalin-fixed tissue in the morgue;

(4) Separate explosion-proof cabinets in the Labs to store acids and bases.

(5) X-ray room design features

• The two doors to the X-Ray room are lined with lead to prevent radiation from seeping into the hallways and the autopsy room.

• The controls for operating the X-ray equipment are behind a glass shield and are no less than six feet away from the tube (column) head.

• A sign that reads “X-Ray In Use” lights up whenever the exposure button on the control panel is pressed.

(6) Area for completing paperwork is segregated from the dissecting surfaces.

b) Work practices that reduce exposure to hazards or manage risks include:

(1) Disposable tyvex© suits, gloves, masks and blades are used in the morgue;

(2) A system to dispose of biological waste, including containers marked as such;

(3) Offer of vaccination to Hepatitis B virus for staff exposed to blood/body fluids;

(4) Annual PPD tests for staff who are potentially exposed to M. tuberculosis.

c) Safety equipment and devices used to protect staff from biological, chemical and physical hazards include:

(1) laminar flow hoods to handle specimens and chemicals in the Toxicology Lab

(2) MOPEC model DC100 autopsy carts, equipped with hydraulic lifts to raise and lower the table, are used to lift and transport heavy bodies in the morgue.

d) Personal Protective Apparel include:

(1) Disposable jumpsuits, head covering (bonnet or cap), sleeve protectors, plastic apron, face shield, footwear covers, and disposable latex gloves.

(2) employee provided waterproof boots are worn by staff in the autopsy suite.

(3) N-95 mask.

3. Routine maintenance and inspections

a) Daily disinfection of tables and countertops—see separate procedure in this manual.

b) Routine maintenance inspection performed by RM Bradley Facilities Management

(1) Checklist of daily activities—see section A-10 of this manual.

(2) Checklist of annual Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter test.

c) Quarterly In-office Safety Inspection to monitor compliance with procedures to

control biological, chemical, electrical, fire and physical hazards;

d) Semi-annual fire drills to practice evacuation procedures and identify system malfunctions;

e) employee dosimeter badge for monitoring exposure to radiation—refer to Radiation Safety Plan.

4. Communication methods and report mechanisms

a) Fire Hazard signs and alarms

(1) Emergency evacuation routes are posted on each floor.

(2) Audible and visible alarms provide direction to exit.

(3) Procedure for responding to a power outage is posted on each floor.

b) Chemical Hazard signs

(1) “Flammable” sign posted on the chemical storage room

(2) “Acid” and “Base” sign posted on appropriate storage-area door in the Laboratory

(3) “DANGER—Formaldehyde” sign posted on the doors to the autopsy suite, first floor storage room, histology lab and the door to the tissue donor room on the first floor.

c) Biological Hazard sign, which lists the Personal Protective Apparel to be worn when autopsies are performed, is posted on the autopsy suite door and door to the cooler.

d) Safety showers and eye-wash stations are marked with appropriate signs.

e) Safety-related announcements and documents are posted on bulletin boards.

f) Procedure to report a workplace injury is posted and distributed to all staff.

g) Annual In-office training, which addresses other safety topics as well as infectious agents and Universal Precautions;

h) Safety Committee which meets regularly to review reports and correspondences, and serves as an avenue for staff to address safety issues to management.

Reference *NAME Policies and Procedures* A4a. **Safety**