

Dear Principal Investigator,

A new FDNY Fire Code goes into effect in New York City on July 1, 2009. Two of the new Code's provisions directly impact FDNY permitted laboratories as follows:

- (1) oxygen sensors are required for certain areas using cryogenics; and
- (2) black-out and laser curtains are required to be inherently fire-resistant.

1. Oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>) Sensors

The new Fire Code requires installation of O<sub>2</sub> sensors in areas **where more than 60 gallons of cryogenics** are stored, in use (e.g., hooked up to a freezer), or being dispensed (includes cryogenic tanks and *Dewars*). In order to comply with this new regulation, Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) has surveyed laboratory floors and is working with the University's approved gas vendors to verify these areas. In areas where more than 60 gallons are identified, EH&S is asking the lab to assess whether the way cryogenics are managed can be modified to minimize the number of required O<sub>2</sub> sensor installations. The following are suggested:

- Increase cryogenic delivery frequency,
- Store cryogenics in one area (one sensor), OR
- Distribute cryogenic storage among multiple laboratory rooms.

EH&S has paid for a number of O<sub>2</sub> sensors to implement this new regulation. The University is partnering with *TechAir* to install and maintain the O<sub>2</sub> sensor devices. Laboratories that require a device will be invoiced for the monthly maintenance of approximately \$20.00, which includes calibrating the device semi-annually and replacing the internal sensor annually. This charge will be added to your invoice for the cryogenic gasses.

2. Black-out and Laser Curtains

Any black-out or laser curtain in an FDNY permitted laboratory must be treated for fire protection. The curtain must be "inherently fire resistant" or treated yearly with a fire retardant solution. Either process is costly. EH&S is looking to replace existing curtains with "inherently fire resistant" curtains as they will not require yearly maintenance. EH&S has compiled a list of the locations that may require these replacement curtains. We ask that all Principal Investigators and lab managers survey their lab to determine whether a black-out or laser curtain is required or whether your current curtain fit the criteria for being "inherently fire resistant". Please note that some laser curtains may also require a laser rating.

- This rule pertains only to FDNY permitted labs,
- If the black-out curtain is no longer required, it should be taken down, and
- Only FDNY permitted laboratories needing inherently fire resistant black-out or laser curtains will receive replacement curtains.

Please be advised that installation of O<sub>2</sub> sensors and black out curtains will begin over the summer. For any questions about the new FDNY Code, please contact EH&S:

- Medical Center - Ed Moran [esm2136@columbia.edu](mailto:esm2136@columbia.edu) or 212.305-6780
- Morningside - Jerry Meehan [jm2143@columbia.edu](mailto:jm2143@columbia.edu) or 212.854-8749

Sincerely,

Kathleen Crowley,  
Associate VP Environmental Health & Safety

cc: David Hirsh, EVPR  
Departmental Administrators