What to do in an Emergency

"HELP! I've spilled my radioactive material!"

Special care should always be taken when working with radioactive material; however, accidents and spills sometimes happen. Do you know what to do in the event of a radioactive material spill?

- Remain calm and in control of the situation. Simple, common sense steps may be overlooked if you panic.

- Confine the spill by covering it with absorbent paper. If the material is in a dry form, it may be necessary to dampen the absorbent paper before placing it on the spill area.

- Notify individuals in the area of the spill. If the spill is large, or of a volatile material, the room should be evacuated and entry to the room limited.

- Notify the Radiation Safety Office. Based on the type and quantity of the material involved, further radiation safety instructions may be given.

- Monitor (e.g., geiger counter and/or "wipe" test) all persons, equipment, and areas involved in the spill. Except for $^3$H, a geiger counter can be used to determine gross levels of contamination, followed by "wipe" tests to assess removable contamination.

- Any contaminated individual or item should remain in the area of the spill. Individuals should be decontaminated immediately (i.e., remove contaminated lab coats, mildly wash contaminated hands, etc.). Also, remember how easily contamination can be spread. Be sure to monitor hands and shoes before leaving the immediate area of the spill - don't leave radioactive "tracks" throughout the laboratory.

- For more information on emergency procedures, please refer to section P of the Radiation Safety Procedures Manual.

~ Please file this training sheet in the Radionuclide Inventory and Survey Book. ~