Toolbox Safety Talk

Waste Anesthetic Gas (WAG)

Anesthetic gas and vapors that leak into the surrounding room during medical or research procedures are considered waste anesthetic gas (WAG). These gases may create health hazards at certain exposure levels. University faculty, staff and students should be aware of the potential risks of WAG and be advised to take appropriate precautions to reduce exposures. Please refer to the EHS Waste Anesthetic Gas Standard Operating Procedure for complete information.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- Associated health risks with exposure to anesthetic gases include; spontaneous abortions, decreased fertility and central nervous system effects.
- There are recommended exposure limits to WAG and Cornell EHS has an established WAG Program to monitor exposures and protect workers.
- Cornell EHS should be contacted to provide a review of safety procedures and may provide exposure monitoring services.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

- All areas where there is a potential exposure to anesthetic gases shall be posted with a warning sign.
- Anesthesia machines should be checked, calibrated and inspected to ensure all components of the anesthesia delivery systems are in proper working order.
- Areas that use anesthetic gas shall have proper ventilation to dilute gases that escape into the working environment.
- Proper care and handling of anesthetic agents including safe transport and storage (secondary containment) must be in place.
- Proper facemask placement, use of tracheal tubes, and properly inflated cuffs all control unwanted gas releases.
- Proper filling of vaporizers (the use of fill keys) in ways to minimize spillage should always be followed.
- Small volumes of liquid anesthetic agents evaporate readily at normal room temperatures, and may dissipate before any attempts to clean up or collect the liquid are initiated. However, when large spills occur, such as when one or more bottles of a liquid agent break, contact EHS immediately.

TRAINING

- All departments using anesthetic gas machines shall be responsible for scheduling annual safety training for their affected employees. Environmental Health and Safety can provide this training.

Contact EHS @ 255-8200 for any further questions, to request training, and to report spills.

Environmental Health & Safety
Facilities Safety & Health Section
395 Pine Tree Rd. Suite 210
Ithaca, NY 14850
607.255.8200

Please return sign-in sheet to Environmental Health & Safety for recordkeeping.
**Toolbox Safety Talk**

**Waste Anesthetic Gas (WAG)**

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**Date:** ________________  **Start Time:** ________________  **End Time:** ________________

**Location:** ________________________________________________________________

**Presenter Name:** __________________________________________________________

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