

SAFETY MATTERS

Creating a Culture of Safety

May 2024



Common Audit Findings

This month's reader request focuses on this common audit finding.

Safety Equipment:

“Smoke detector and Fire extinguisher service records ... were not accessible for review during the assessment.”

We know that every lab has different procedures when it comes to performing checks on fire extinguishers and smoke detectors.

Staff in some laboratories are responsible for performing a full range of checks, whereas staff in larger institutions are prohibited from even touching fire safety equipment.

Whatever the rules are in your institution, the GCLP guidelines must be followed.

The GCLP Guidelines state that:

Section 9. Personnel Safety, part b. Documentation

- The laboratory must document the testing and/or inspection of safety equipment...
- Documents recording the testing and/or inspection of safety equipment must be signed and dated by the personnel performing the task. Records of inspection must be readily available.



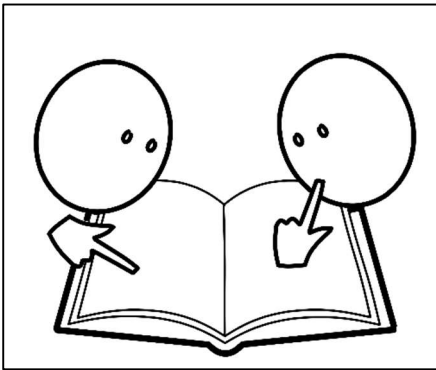
So even if someone else is responsible for performing the checks, the lab is responsible for ensuring function checks are **performed** and **documented**.

If someone is checking your equipment, be sure to get a **signed** and **dated** copy from those performing the checks each time they are completed. That documentation must be the lab records and must be available for review.



Smoke detector checks may be difficult, depending on if they are part of a larger, comprehensive fire prevention and suppression system (like in hospitals) or if they are standalone units (like some households).

Per GCLP, smoke detectors should be checked per the manufacturer guideline. This may be via a company for institutions, or sometimes standalone units are local users pushing the TEST button.



Whichever approach your lab takes, remember to document those checks.

**If it isn't documented,
it wasn't done.**

If you have a situation in your workplace that could prevent you from meeting the GCLP Guidelines, feel free to reach out to the HPTN LC staff for guidance at hptnlc-lab@jhmi.edu

QA/QC Specimen Management Focus

Reduction of Pre-Analytical Errors

Pre-analytical errors are often difficult to detect and can be more difficult to accurately quantify.

One recent report estimated that approximately 65% of all laboratory errors occur during this pre-testing phase¹.

To help reduce pre-analytical errors in the lab, remember:

Label all tubes and documents, even those for temporary processing or transfer items, with the full PTID or lab assigned unique sample ID as well as date and time of collection for complete traceability and fidelity.



¹ <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.plabm.2022.e00303> Getawa, Solomon, et al. "Blood specimen rejection rate in clinical laboratory: A systematic review and meta-analysis." *Practical Laboratory Medicine* 33 (2023): e00303.

Supply Needs and Reducing Long-Term Costs

Phlebotomy is a big part of any health system; a majority of samples and information come from this procedure. Blood collection device purchasing impacts not only patients and staff, but the bottom line as well. Click the link below to read this article from Greiner with topics to consider when looking for supplies and purchasing consumables for your phlebotomy needs so that you get a good mix of safety, utility, and cost.

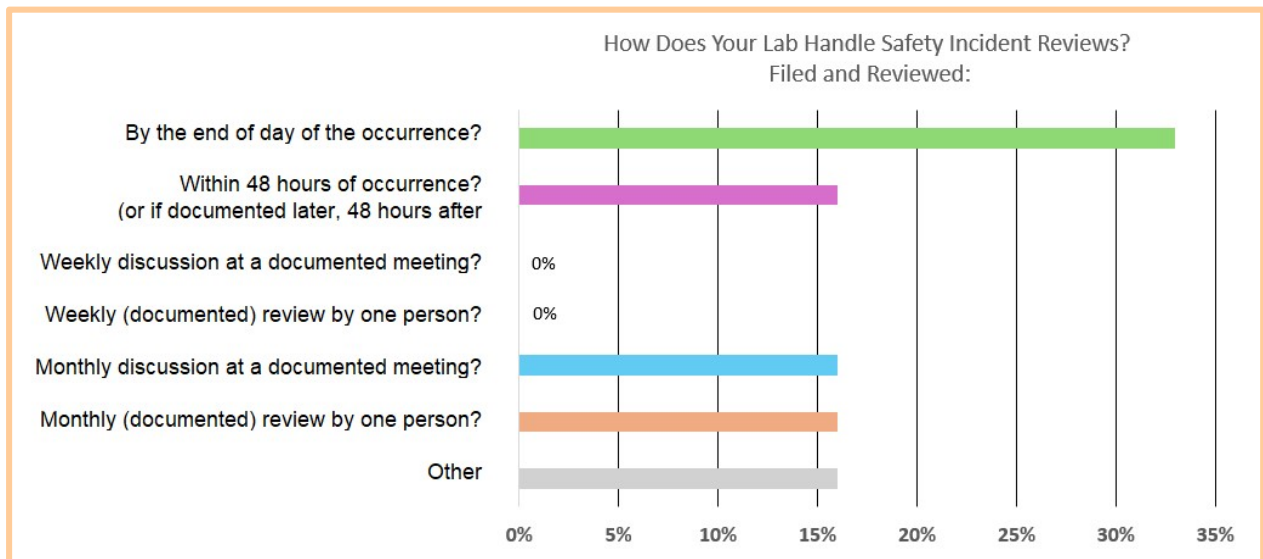
Greiner Bio-One Blog: “...*when considering a procurement strategy for blood collection devices, it is important not to focus solely on the actual pricing of the devices, as this may only lead to short-term gains and neglect other aspects and needs of stakeholders...*”

[Two Ways to Reduce Procurement Costs for Blood Collection](#)

Do you obtain supplies used for pre-analytics such as blood tubes, needles supplied in a kit not directly from the vendor? How do you verify the contents and expiry dates? Does this reduce your supply costs?

Reader Poll Results

Thanks to everyone for responding to the March and April question.
Here are our results:



“Other” responses were still reviews during lab meetings, but at different times than listed in the poll, like bi-weekly meetings, still under the monthly requirement.

This Month's Reader Poll

This month our poll is about Safety Training and Competency Assessments.

Respond here: [Monthly Reader Poll](#)

Volunteers Wanted



We are seeking volunteers for safety-focused lab interviews.

The LC would like to speak with lab staff and have a short 10 minute/ 5 question interview to learn more about our audience. Interviews or selected quotes may be published in this newsletter.

Please email hptnlc-lab@jhmi.edu with the subject line "Safety Interview" if interested.

Thanks to those who continue to send back messages about our content! We are happy to incorporate your topic suggestions into future safety bulletins.

Need more on a specific topic?

Ideas for upcoming subject matter?

Let us know your thoughts and give feedback at:

hptnlc-lab@jhmi.edu