

## **Title- Blue Alert- Solvent Purification Units**

Lessons Learned: Solvent Purification Units Recent events at two universities have drawn attention to safety issues related to solvent purification units commonly used by organic chemists. The improper use of "solvent stills" at the University of California-Irvine and University of Minnesota resulted in significant fires that caused injuries to laboratory personnel and extensive damage to facilities. These recent events have focused attention on newer distillation units that operate at ambient temperatures and use moisture-scavenging activated alumina and oxygen-scavenging copper catalyst. Please pass this information on to your employees and colleagues that may find this of interest.

If you perform solvent purification activities in your laboratory, please make sure your Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are current and personnel are trained. Further, we would like to ensure that if you do perform solvent purification, it is done with all necessary safety precautions in place. So that we can assist you in a safety review of this activity, please contact ISU EH&S at 294-5359 or ESH&A at 294-2153 (for Ames Lab) if you perform solvent purification.

For more information on the accidents referenced above and safety information on solvent purification systems see:

<http://www.gloveboxes.com/solvent-purification-article.htm>

[http://www.dehs.umn.edu/whatshot/thf\\_distill.html](http://www.dehs.umn.edu/whatshot/thf_distill.html)

If you have questions, please call ISU Environmental, Health & Safety (294-5359) or Ames Laboratory Environment, Safety, Health & Assurance (294-2153).