

Date, April 13, 2000

From Dan Kayser kayser@ameslab.gov

Subject- Ames Blue Alert- Fire due to discarded laboratory chemical containers.

Title- Ames Blue Alert- Fire at Ames Resource & Recovery Plant due to discarded laboratory chemical containers.

Date 3/31/00 Identifier- Ames Laboratory/ISU

Lessons Learned Statement- Empty pyrophoric chemical containers should not be disposed of in the sanitary waste stream. Laboratory workers should have the appropriate training for handling waste materials and know not to throw empty pyrophoric containers in the trash. Even residues of pyrophoric chemicals can cause problems.

Discussion of Activities- A small fire was reported at the City of Ames Resource & Recovery Plant on Friday March 31, 2000. After the fire was extinguished the Fire Department and City of Ames employees noticed chemical containers and sharps in the trash where the fire started. ISU and Ames Laboratory ESH&A personnel were called in to investigate. Approximately 50 cubic yards of rubbish had to be sorted. Forty-eight chemical containers were found. Over half of the containers found were moisture reactive chemical containers and although the containers were mostly empty once the containers broke during processing the residues reacted to start the small fire.

Recommended Actions- Group Leaders/Supervisors are to make sure individuals under their supervision are properly trained in waste handling procedures.

- Ames Laboratory employees should contact ESH&A for assistance when cleaning out laboratory spaces. Unwanted chemicals may be re-issued for use.
- Dispose of empty pyrophoric containers through Ames Laboratory ESH&A Group.
- If you have any questions about the disposal of chemical waste, please contact Dan Kayser, Environmental Specialist, G40 TASF, 294-7923 Phone/515-294-2155 Fax