

Ames Blue Alert – Oil Spill Due to Unsecured Pump

September 12, 2006

Lessons Learned Summary

A graduate assistant was moving a vacuum pump from a maintenance repair shop on a small (2' x 1') flat bed cart with a spill pan between the pump and cart when the pump slid off the cart and toppled over releasing approximately 200 ml of oil onto the floor. The spill was cleaned-up with no release to the environment (air, soil or water).

Discussion

Small flat bed carts are typically used to move vacuum pumps within laboratories and when performing oil changes on the pumps.

Resolution: Pulling a small flat bed cart is not appropriate for transporting pumps to the maintenance shop or between buildings. A push cart with a handle and a molded lip will allow better control. Also, using two people to transport pumps should be evaluated. There are several door ways to and from the maintenance shop and having a second person to open doors will reduce the likelihood of a spill occurring by allowing the individual pushing the cart to focus on keeping the pump and cart secure and steady.

NOTE: *As a reminder, if a spill occurs it must be contained and cleaned-up immediately to avoid personnel injury and release to the environment. If you cannot safely clean-up a spill, yourself, please contact ESH&A (4-2153) or Plant Protection (4-5511) for assistance.*

If you have any questions call (4-7923) or e-mail me at Kayser@ameslab.gov.

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