HAZARD ALERT – OVENS UNDER FUME HOODS

This information is intended for all personnel working in University of Regina laboratories. On December 13, 2007 a fire occurred in a University of Regina laboratory in a drying oven located under the fume hood.

Factors associated with the fire:
- The fume hood drying oven was believed to be non-operational
- The oven was used for storage of hydrochloric acid, ethanol and combustible dry goods
- The oven switch was inadvertently turned on and the combustible items and ethanol ignited
- Over time chemical spills and debris accumulated in the spill tray beneath the heating element and may have provided an ignition source or fuel for the fire

Many fume hood owners are not aware that the cupboard below their fume hoods may be an oven.

- The ovens are controlled by an on/off switch as well as a thermostat switch
- When ovens are decommissioned, the switches and oven heating element are removed
- Any oven which still has on/off switches and thermostats should be assumed to be operational, and should never be used as a storage cabinet. Please contact Facilities Management to arrange to have the ovens decommissioned.

The Regina Fire Department recommends that the drying ovens be decommissioned. If the ovens remain operational regular cleaning of the spill trays is required to prevent accumulation of ignition sources and fuel for a fire.

For more information contact Health and Safety - phone 585-4776/5487 or 337-3184