Originating in the private sector, the concept of a prize for safety and health at work was introduced to the public sector in 2005. The full list, 25 organic substances and 9 families of inorganic substances, can be found at [http://sb-sst.epfl.ch/chemicals-hazards](http://sb-sst.epfl.ch/chemicals-hazards). This list has been established on the basis of legal duties related with the use of CMR substances (carcinogens, mutagens or reprotoxics) plus some very toxic substances frequently used.

No, this is not an Inquisition. Since the beginning of the process, no Laboratory Committee has refused the use of one of these compounds. This program is a partnership between researchers and SB-SST. Together, we evaluate the relevance of its use and determine preventive and protective measures to ensure that work respects your health and that of your colleagues. Experimental conditions are validated taking into account the hazardous properties of the substance and your potential exposure. Molecules can be volatile implying a strict work under fumehood or in glovebox. Its dangerousness could be related to dust requiring protection of the respiratory system as long as the compound is not in solution. Skin protection is not forgotten; the authorization report includes systematically advice on the glove selection. Depending on the substance, complementary actions can be requested, for example very toxic substances have to be stored in a locked cabinet in order to prevent their use by unauthorized persons.

This program also allows the removal of old chemicals not really in use and "which were already here when you arrived". Research evolves and your needs too. It is important to eliminate problematic compounds beyond their period of use.

As some of them are expensive, we created a library of heavy metal salts. Instead of buying a 100g flask for a 0.5g test, this collection is at your disposal at the BCH - chemical store. The list of substances is, as for the other chemicals, available using the intranet inventory. Furthermore, you can enrich this library by giving your own heavy metal salts; by this simple action, chemicals will be stored in a safe manner, you will still be able to access them and the whole FSB can take advantage.

The EPFL School of Basic Sciences (FSB) presented its annual awards for Health and Safety at Work on December 21. This is an opportunity to highlight personal initiatives related to safety for all.

During safety visits, you have probably noticed that SB-SST checks not only the accuracy of your chemical inventory but also if chemicals subject to authorization have been announced. The full list, 25 organic substances and 9 families of inorganic substances, can be found at [http://sb-sst.epfl.ch/chemicals-hazards](http://sb-sst.epfl.ch/chemicals-hazards). This list has been established on the basis of legal duties related with the use of CMR substances (carcinogens, mutagens or reprotoxics) plus some very toxic substances frequently used.

The objective of these awards is to encourage a more active awareness, to ensure higher safety levels in the laboratories.

Thierry Meyer emphasizes that he hopes to see a growing number of submission of candidates over the coming years. The main criteria are that they must be founded on personal initiatives, and also require approval by the respective professors. You’ve been alerted! The gold medal (1000 CHF) was awarded to Guido Haefeli, scientific official at the Laboratory for High Energy Physics, who modernized safety processes in the area of radiation protection at the Cebotron. Two bronze medals (500 CHF) were also awarded. The first of these went to Davinia Fernandez Gonzalez, PhD at the LCSO, for having developed an aluminum hemisphere that enables the heating of reagents without using an oil bath (which involves risks in terms of spitting and burns). The second bronze medal went to Georges Wagneriers, MER at ISIC, who organized and managed the disposal of laser tubes containing highly toxic beryllium oxide.

This year, the gold medal (1000 CHF) goes to Anne-Sophie Chauvin, MER at LPI, who succeeded in giving a new impetus to her laboratory to globally improve safety. The silver medal (500 CHF) was awarded to Theresia Rizzo, scientific official at the School of Basic Sciences – it’s an additional tool for ensuring safety, he adds. It’s usually the heads of the laboratories who nominate to the SB-SST award an individual or a team that has contributed to the development of safety within the FSB. The jury is composed of the Dean of the Faculty (T. Rizzo), the President of the Personnel Association of the Swiss Confederation (M. Fressineau), and two members of the SB-SST (J.-L. Marendaz and Th. Meyer). “We don’t have any preconceived ideas concerning the status of the candidates; we only judge the submissions on their originality, their relevance, and the level of initiative. Our main criteria is to reward those people for whom safety is not necessarily their main mission or preoccupation. Technicians or administrative personnel have just as much a chance as scientists of being selected”, states Thierry Meyer.

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