During its General Assembly held on December 19th 2008, the School of Basic Sciences and the Service of Occupational Health and Safety (SB-SST) awarded the 2008 Safety awards. The jury composed by Michel Fressineau (president of the APC), Thomas Rizzo (dean of the FSB), Jean-Luc Marendaz and Thierry Meyer (SB-SST) rewarded the following collaborators:

« Gold Prize » (1’000.-) to the team Doris Meylan, Chantal Parisod, Stéphane Thonnay and Claude Vittoz (Section of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, SCGC), for the elimination of heating systems by heating mantle or oil bath and their replacement by sand bath as heat transfer fluids.

« Silver Prize » (500.-) to Pierre Wets (Section of Physics, SPH), for his remarkable management during the elimination process of a Radium-Beryllium radioactive source, formerly used for student demonstrations.

« Bronze Prize » (500.-) to the team Annelise Carrupt, Jacques Gremaud, Marie Jirousek, Giovanni Petrucci and Gladys Pache (Institute of Chemical Sciences and Engineering, ISIC) for the introduction of a system for the management of gas cylinders’ storage and life time.

As you noticed, nobody received the « Knight Prize » this year. This prize rewards somebody for an emergency intervention related to an incident concerning safety or health at work.

We congratulate the 2008 winners and all collaborators who actively participate daily to improve health and safety at the work place. Only the synergy of creativity and a spirit of individual responsibility promotes the development of a security culture.

Gas cylinder management at FSB
If you work in a laboratory, you may have noticed that chemicals are managed systematically from ordering to elimination and are tagged by laboratory and usually by cupboards. However, you have also noticed the lack of management for gases in this quality process. A gas is a chemical substance or a mixture, only different by its physical state. Important security elements already exist in most of our buildings:

- Cylinders are stored in dedicated cupboards
- Laboratories working with hazardous gases are equipped with detection and alarm systems, as well as with warning panels.
- Wherever it is possible, hydrogen cylinders are replaced or will be replaced by generators allowing to reduce considerably the risk (see Sefy 3)

With the help of the chemical shops for the BCH and CH buildings and the gas responsibilities for the CRPP, BSP and PH buildings, it is now possible to manage the gas cylinders systematically.

There is no break of habits for users of the chemical shops. The only novelty: the gas cylinder will now be tagged by the chemical shops. They will track gas expiration data recommended by the supplier. The user will have to eliminate the cylinder before this recommended date. This quality process helps to avoid two dangerous situations which occurred when over passing expiration date:

A cylinder containing a corrosive gas starts to leak (such an incident with gaseous HCL caused damage for a couple of dozens of thousands Swiss francs to the ventilated cupboard and in the ventilation system).

SST information

Monthly Cartoon

A supplier refused to take back a cylinder (the elimination of a cylinder containing a toxic gas can cost up to CHF 25'000.-)

Users located far from chemical shops (PH, BSP or CRPP) will order the gases via the local responsible. The kick off of this traceability process will become effective during the next months. The update of the stock inventory must be done twice a year (before the security visits).