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Collins Kalu, Metro's Principal Industrial Hygienist, known as the agency's 'chemical detective,' implements Corporate Safety's new Safety Review Standard Policy. *Photos by Gayle Anderson*

What's in your carpet?

Customer Relations is testing ground for Metro's Safety Review Standard Policy for projects involving hazardous materials.

(Sept. 8, 2009) Was there something in the air, or in the carpet, that had a couple of Customer Information Agents 'itching' for callers recently?

Leaving nothing to chance, Gail Harvey, Customer Relations director, ordered up a thorough deep cleaning from General Services.

She and her department got more than what they expected: a complete fumigation that required three departments to coordinate a temporary relocation of 30 Call Center stations for the weekend.

"John Flores and the Building Services staff were responsible for directing, coordinating and assembling the team and all the prep work along with several extra tasks requested by Telephone Information management," said Phyllis Meng, Facilities Maintenance Supervisor. "This project included thorough dusting, steam-cleaning the office carpet and the complete fumigation in early August. This entire project

Demonstrating a safety procedure to Customer Relations Director Gail Harvey, hygienist Collins Kalu extracts samples from Customer Information Call Center's desktops and carpet to test for possible irritants in the work place.

required a significant organized coordination by all involved."

The fumigation project proved to be a testing ground that enabled Collins Kalu, Principal Industrial Hygienist, to implement the new Safety Review Standard (SRS) policy. The policy requires that Metro control activities that may affect employees' safety and health and the environment including those of contractors and suppliers.

"The policy is a watchguard that provides for timely evaluation of projects or systems planned in order to identify potential safety, health and environmental hazards that could impact employees, the public, or the environments," said Kalu.

The big move

The fumigation meant that the entire Metro Information Call Center operation had to be relocated to the IT Training Room, the only area equipped to handle the operation.

"The IT and Telecom staff were there with us to ensure that we had no problems with the telephones or the computers and there were none. It was great," said Alonzo Williams, Communications Manager.

Harvey credits Joe Giba, Director, Operations and Service Delivery, and Elizabeth Bennett, Chief Information Officer, for directing Ray Schuck, Systems Maintenance Supervisor and Alex Biehl, Network Support Manager, to quickly construct the temporary call center.

Working during the weekend, a General Services crew, under the direction of Supervisor Jose Aguilar, met the tight deadlines to make certain the Call Center was ready for inspection bright and early on Monday morning so that the agents could return to their regular work stations by 6 a.m.

The last step of the project was the laboratory analysis performed by Corporate Safety, which determined that the clean-up was adequate and that no residual fumigation product remained in the work area.

Projects involving hazardous materials must get the SRS final clearance, in order to be signed off as completed.

"This fumigation project proved to be good benchmark test for Metro's new safety review standard procedures. It proved that the process can and does work when properly applied," said Kalu.

--from Gayle Anderson