Learning by Accident

Learning by Accident is an ongoing Crucible *feature, in which real-life lab accidents or incidents are recounted and explained. The goal is to highlight the consequence of ignoring safety rules so that science educators will be further encouraged to become knowledgeable, and to take appropriate action, in areas of safety that effect their daily activities in the science classroom.* ***Submissions are encouraged****. If requested, anonymity will be guaranteed. Please send written descriptions to Ian Mackellar, STAO Safety Committee Chair, Box 191, MAITLAND, ON K0E 1P0*

Accident with Glass Tubing

«««« Submitted by a STAO Member, Region 4.

A student was trying to insert a piece of glass tubing into a rubber stopper in order to perform a laboratory activity. The student held one hand firmly and flatly against the opposite side of the stopper while twisting and pushing with the other hand. The tubing ended up going through the student's hand.

Comments from the STAO Safety Committee

Inserting glass tubing, and thermometers, into rubber stoppers, is a common cause of injury to both teachers and students. It is recommended that this task should be performed only by teachers using the following safe technique:

- Select the appropriate size one-hole stopper. Into the hole insert a cork borer of a slightly larger diameter so that it stretches the rubber. Glycerol is a good lubricant to use with the cork borer.
- Insert the glass tubing or thermometer into the cork borer. The glass should be held in a glove or cloth.
- Remove the cork borer.

Students should not be allowed to perform this procedure.

To remove glass tubing or a thermometer from a rubber stopper, reverse the above procedure. If the glass tubing or thermometer has been inserted for some time and has become fixed, it is probably best to sacrifice the stopper by cutting it to remove the tubing.

Refer to STAO publication *Stay Safe!* Section 7 for further information with respect the safe use of glassware.