April 5, 2019

Jacob La France
District Manager Northern Nevada OSHA
4600 Kietzke Lane, Building F-153
Reno, NV 89502

Dear Mr. La France,

This letter is in reference to Referral No. 1440748, dated April 1, 2019, regarding a potential safety hazard at our worksite. We have investigated the matter and submit the following response, details of which may be found below. The alleged hazard was:

1. On 3/27/19, and employee was cutting centrifuge tubes with a box cutter when she cut her thumb causing temporary hospitalization. Corrected 3/28/2019

Response – The employee was attempting to modify a centrifuge tube using a box cutter so that it could hold an electrode she was working with. In the process of doing so, the blade slipped and cut her thumb and fingers, removing the pad of her thumb. As a result, she was taken to the hospital. This was not a standard procedure conducted in the lab and the employee did so without notifying her supervisor. She performed this procedure in an attempt to replicate a storage tube used by a partnering outside university.

To prevent further incidences like this from occurring, lab personnel will not modify tubes to store components, thus eliminating the hazard (this occurred 3/28/2019). Should an electrode component not fit in a certain tube; larger ones will be used such as those in Exhibit A. This has been the standard procedure within the lab, though the employee deviated from this procedure. The standard procedure was recommunicated with all personnel in the lab as of 4/1/2019. EH&S will continue to observe the safety practices of this laboratory through formal lab assessments, which we conduct regularly throughout the year. If it is later found that modification of the tubes becomes necessary, the supervisor is aware that a hazard assessment must be conducted to identify potential risks and ways to mitigate them.

The safety of our employees is our highest priority. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (775) 327-5040. For any future communication, our address is provided below. Additionally, a copy of the letter referenced and our response is publicly available on our website at www.unr.edu/ehs.

Best Regards,

[Signature]

On behalf of Dr. Stephanie A. Woolf
Director of Environmental Health and Safety

1664 North Virginia St. MS 0328, Reno, NV 89557
Exhibit A

Figure 1. Unmodified Tube for Electrode Storage – Used in Standard Procedure

Figure 2. Unmodified 50mL Tube for Larger Electrode Storage – Used in Standard Procedure

Figure 3. Modified 15mL Tube from Partner University – NOT STANDARD PROCEDURE