Environment, Health and Safety
Hazard Alert

Title: Back Injury caused by Improper Lifting
Audience: Laboratory PIs and Personnel

Incident Summary:
An employee removed a heavy rotor from an ultracentrifuge and placed it on the storage shelf above the equipment. To reach the shelf, the employee had to lift the heavy rotor to shoulder height and reach out to an arm’s length away. As the employee completed this task, radiating pain was felt in their low back.

Investigation Findings:
• The employee was following the procedure for storing the rotor
• The rotor was stored in a place that does not allow for use of proper lifting techniques
• Online ergonomics training was not listed as mandatory training on the Hazard Assessment and Control Form (HACF)

Actions Taken:
• The heavy rotor was relocated to a place that allows for safe lifting
• The procedure was updated and includes storage locations for all rotors
• The HACF was updated to document that online ergonomics training is required for all personnel in this lab

Key Takeaways:
• Consider ergonomics and safe lifting when placing materials/equipment and document on HACF
• Ensure completion of online ergonomics training based on hazards on HACF
• Heavy items must always be stored at a location that enables safe lifting

Resources:
• Ergonomics training