

STANDARD DEVIATIONS: Making Room for Safety

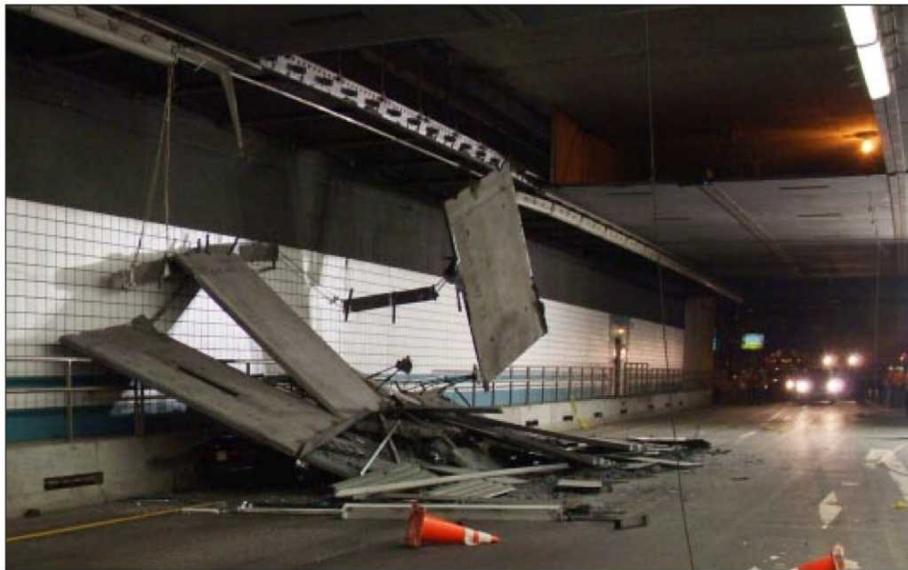
Greetings,

Have you ever looked around at your lab and wondered “who came up with this?” Or, “what were they thinking?!?” Part of the way we maintain a safe workplace is in using our engineering controls to manage risk.

This might entail the location of hoods, or sinks, or clean and dirty areas. It behooves us to evaluate the layout of our labs to identify ways we can keep risk confined. I’d argue that risk of lab acquired infection is a powerful tool in making a case for improving your workspace to make it safer for your staff.

Of course, it could be worse:

Big Dig (Boston, MA). The original, \$2.6B plan to bury Boston’s elevated Interstate 93, also known as the Big Dig, ballooned to **\$15B**, seawater leaked into tunnels and a ceiling panel collapsed onto a car and killed a passenger.



MOSE Project (Venice, Italy). St Mark's Square, the centerpiece of Venice, floods about 60 times a year. The city's chosen solution to the problem, an unfinished scheme of 78 storm gates known as MOSE, is likely to cause damage to the ecological health of the surrounding lagoon and, in the long run, could have no effect on Venice's preservation.



The Millennium Dome (London, England). They built it And nobody came. Built to celebrate the third millennium, the dome was meant to vitalize and rejuvenate a derelict area of London, at a cost of nearly a billion bucks. It failed to attract the volume of visitors needed to recoup costs and went broke. Now it's a concert venue (O2 Arena).



Salesforce Transit Center (San Francisco, CA). Touted as “the safest building in the world”, the transit center was abruptly ordered closed on September 25, 2018 following the discovery of a “major crack” in a steel beam supporting the rooftop park. The following day, a second, parallel beam was also found to be cracked, causing the transit center and Fremont Street to remain closed. Without the revenue from the 100,000 expected rail passengers, the bus-only terminal is expected to lose as much as \$20 million annually.



Sometimes it seems we have no say in how our labs are designed or constructed. That's not good engineering. The safety of staff should always dictate the decisions, and input from laboratory staff should carry significant weight in the process.

Have a great week and be safe,

Bryan

