

Quick Tab 4 - Lab safety

Things can quickly go wrong while working in a laboratory if the proper precautions are not taken. It's important to review the lab and the contents in the lab periodically.

Emergency procedures — Call 911 in an emergency

- Review evacuation plans.
- Clean up small spills only if you're trained to do so. If not, call EHSRM for assistance.
- If a chemical is splashed in the eyes, flush eyes for 10–15 minutes and seek medical attention.
- Report all lab accidents to EHSRM and your department head immediately.

Housekeeping

- Lab benches and walkways should be kept free of clutter and floors should be kept dry.
- Do not store chemicals or wastes in fume hoods.
- Do not exceed allowable quantities of chemicals. Contact EHSRM if you have questions.
- Do not block access to emergency equipment and electrical panels.
- Inspect all equipment before use and tag if it needs repair. Clean equipment regularly.
- Compressed gas cylinders must be secured, and incompatible gases must not be stored together.
- Secure tanks with two chains or straps.
- Contact EHSRM for information concerning proper disposal of chemicals.
- Return equipment, chemicals and personal protective equipment to designated locations.
- Keep fire sprinklers clear. Storage must be a minimum of 18 inches below sprinkler heads.
- Keep incompatible chemicals separated. Follow the hazard color-coding system.
- Eyewash and safety shower must be flushed weekly and documented.
- Keep your chemical inventory up to date on the OnSite Chemical Inventory site.

Before you start work in the lab, review the following procedures and equipment.

- No food or drink is allowed in the lab.
- Wash your hands often and before leaving the lab for a break.
- Keep long hair tied back and do not wear dangling jewelry.
- Before leaving, ensure gas supplies and water faucets are off.
- Wear personal protective equipment while in the lab, but do not wear it outside the lab.
- Check chemical labels twice to ensure accuracy; know your hazard classifications.
- Do not smell, taste or look directly down into chemicals; view test tubes from the side.
- Do not mix waste streams. Dangerous reactions can occur, or it may be more expensive to dispose of the waste.
- Do not leave experiments unattended.
- Do not work alone in the lab. Work with a partner on hazardous experiments.
- Vent into a fume hood any apparatus that may discharge toxic chemicals.
- Know the location of the fire alarm, the emergency eyewash/safety shower, first-aid kit and safety data sheets.
- Contact EHSRM for assistance with cleaning up or disposing of hazardous materials, training, questions about chemical safety, or to report an unsafe condition.

Department activity

Designate a time to walk through labs and address any issues.

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