

Environmental Health and Safety

Laboratory Safety Newsletter

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Did You Know?

All compressed gases are to have the name of the laboratory PI on the cylinder and only one gas cylinder back up is allowed in the lab?



Accurate Chemical Inventories

A chemical inventory is an important component of your laboratory chemicals management program. An accurate inventory serves as a database of all chemicals present or used in research and teaching labs. They are necessary to show regulatory officials that people conducting research are limiting the quantities of chemicals that are flammable, toxic, corrosive, etc. in nature. This in turn reduces the risk of fire or other emergency situations. In addition, knowing the chemicals present in your lab will assist you in training your students on the hazards associated with these materials.

A routinely updated (once per semester) chemical inventory will:

- Identify and prioritize hazardous chemicals for substitution (ex. restricted chemicals, significant human/environmental health impacts);
- Track chemical usage quantities in your lab;
- Identify any unknown or unused chemicals that can be disposed of;
- Serve as a list of chemicals approval for purchase;
- Reduce overstocking or expiration of chemicals;
- Assist in deciding what materials are needed for emergency response, spill containment, and the type of first-aid equipment that should be available in your lab.

When conducting the chemical inventory for your lab, please record the name of the chemical, quantity, and hazard class of all chemicals, powders and gases. Also, please make sure the date is on the chemical inventory posted on your lab door.

Laboratory Emergency Plans are required for each laboratory and are to be posted on the laboratory door for use by emergency personnel in the event there is a fire or other emergency. Provide emergency contact numbers for those who know what experimental process is occurring in the laboratory and how to respond. Keep the emergency plans with your chemical inventory. If you have a gas alarm system please ensure the system is calibrated and on at all times.

Keeping Your Lab in Order

The key to lab safety is to have a clean and orderly lab. It is very important to ensure every chemical (including water) and powder is properly labeled. Even the waste byproduct from an experimental process must be labeled.

It is also important to store chemicals in their proper location. Flammable chemicals are stored in flammable cabinets and acids and bases are separated and stored in their respective cabinets.

Fire extinguishers, emergency showers, eyewash stations, and emergency switches are to have 36 inches of clearance at all times.



Help Keep Everyone Safe