Safety Training Responsibility

In most cases, the supervisor is responsible for safety training. Whether in the laboratory or out in the field, students, staff and employees must receive the appropriate safety training. Right to Know is a training program that is required to be taken by all University employees. Online safety training courses in many subjects can be found on the EH&S website.

Proper Lab Attire

If you work in a lab with chemicals you are required to wear the proper PPE. Lab coats and safety glasses are required when working at a bench near chemicals. Gloves are also required when handling chemicals.

Lab Door Information

Your laboratory door is an important part of your lab. It should be closed to keep your lab protected from contaminants and prevent odors from escaping into the hallway. Your door should have the appropriate warning signs as well as updated information regarding emergency contacts and chemical inventories. Do not block lab door window panes with paper, lab coats or other items. The unobstructed window provides additional safety and security for the lab. Refer to “Closing the Door on Lab Safety Hazards.”

Chemical Waste

Chemical information must be spelled out clearly on the waste label and the container properly sealed. Do not pour any chemicals down the drain. Contact EH&S for waste pick up information.

Proper Chemical Storage

Chemicals should not be stored in a ventilation hood but should be stored in a chemical storage cabinet according to their hazard classification. Ventilation hoods should be reserved for people to conduct work under to protect them from chemical vapors. Excessive material stored in a ventilation hood restricts the flow of air.

Facts and Figures

18 inches - clearance from sprinkler head and storage of boxes.
36 inches - area needed around electrical switches and fire extinguishers.
20 feet - distance between flammable and oxidizing gases in storage.

SAFETY STARTS WITH YOU!

- Keep your lab clean.
- Maintain access to emergency showers, eyewash stations and extinguishers.
- Keep one ear open if listening to music and wear the proper PPE.
- Review all SDSs before working.
Closing the Door on Lab Safety Hazards

Most of us think of lab doors as simply workplace entrances and exits. They are also very important to LIFE SAFETY and HAZARD CONTROL. There is a natural tendency to prop open lab doors when walking frequently between rooms. This practice may be more convenient, but is also compromises the safety of the laboratory and surrounding areas.

Consider this:

- **Closed lab doors help contain chemical vapors and odors within the workplace and facilitates their efficient removal by the ventilation system!** Most labs are designed to be at negative pressure – air flows from the corridor into the lab and is exhausted outside. This design is based on the lab door being closed. With the door open, the air balance between the lab and the corridor is easily defeated, this allows hazardous (or at least malodorous) chemical vapors to concentrate in the lab and escape into the hallways.

- **By keeping doors open the fire safety of the corridors are negated.** Certain exit access corridors are separated from other parts of the building by walls having a 1-hour fire resistance rating. Laboratory doors that open into a corridor must have a minimum 20-minute fire protection rating. A propped open door compromises the protection that these special walls provide to workers escaping the building in a fire.

- **It is very important not to obstruct lab doors as they are your route to safety in an emergency!** Since doors obviously serve as an exit from the lab space, it is important not to place obstructions near them so personnel can quickly exit in an emergency. Even in modular labs where there may be more than one door, a good policy is to ensure that at least two exits are readily accessible and not blocked.

- **Don’t block lab door window panes with paper, lab coats, or other items. The window provides for your safety and security.** The ability of emergency and security personnel to see into the laboratory is necessary to identify, notify, and assist individuals during emergency evacuations and to assist security personnel in locating people in need of emergency assistance, especially after normal working hours. For labs with locked doors in accordance with radiation safety, select agent, and other requirements, it is even more critical that the door windows not be blocked. Passersby who suspect a problem in a locked lab, even though they would not be able to enter, could see into the lab area and summon help if required.

Remember that when it comes to laboratory safety, keeping a CLOSED DOOR generally means keeping an open mind to SAFETY.