

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Associate Deans for Research, Teaching and Clinical Laboratories
FROM: Erica Weintraub Austin and Ron Mittelhammer, Interim Co-Provosts
Christopher Keane, Vice President for Research
Olivia Owyong Yang, Vice President, Finance and Administration
DATE: January 19, 2016
SUBJECT: 2016 Safety Committees and Safety Commitment for Research, Teaching and Clinical Laboratories

WSU is committed to the safety of our researchers, instructors and students and to the continuity of research and education. The Co-Provosts, Vice President for Research and Vice President for Finance and Administration request the support and commitment of the Deans and Associate Deans to laboratory safety. The Office of Research Assurances (ORA) and Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) reviewed laboratory incidents in 2014 and 2015. The following five (5) safety focus areas were identified that could contribute significantly to improving laboratory safety:

1. Store chemical wastes in appropriate, properly labeled containers;
2. Evaluate procedures for handling glassware and sharps;
3. Replace mercury containing devices;
4. Remove unnecessary equipment and containers from fume hoods; and,
5. Maintain access to emergency equipment.

The ORA and Office of EH&S are available to provide training and technical assistance to departments, safety committees, instructors and principal investigators. Safety committees can assist by providing recommendations for improvement in the focus areas, and distributing information, as WSU policy and State rules require that each department's employees have access to a safety committee.

Effective safety committees are an important component of the WSU laboratory safety program. We are requesting colleges inform us of their safety committee members by February 12, 2016. Please send your lists of safety committee members to Dwight Hagihara (hagihara@wsu.edu) and Mike Kluzik (mkluzik@wsu.edu).

We also request you distribute the attached laboratory safety commitment to those responsible for laboratories within your college and ask them to post it in a prominent location within their laboratories by March 11, 2016. Posting this document demonstrates the laboratory's commitment to successful implementation of the five focus areas by the year's end, December 31, 2016. EH&S, ORA and safety committee membership will evaluate improvement in the focus areas while performing regular work in research, teaching, and clinical laboratories.

Please contact us with any questions, and thank you for supporting WSU laboratory safety.

cc: Chancellors
Vice Chancellors for Research
Vice Chancellors for Finance and Operations
Bill Gardner, Associate Vice President and Executive Director of Public Safety
Dwight Hagihara, Executive Director, Environmental Health and Safety
Mike Kluzik, Director, Office of Research Assurances

2016 WSU Laboratory Safety Commitment

College/Department: _____

Principal Investigator (PI): _____

Research Lab Location [Building/Room Number(s)]: _____

1. Store chemical waste in appropriate, properly labeled containers.

Increasingly, chemical wastes that generate gasses have contributed to waste container explosions (e.g. Nital- Nitric Acid and Alcohol etchants). Please store wastes generating gasses in containers with vented lids. It may be necessary to leave the lid cracked until the material is no longer generating gas, with the container placed in secondary containment. EH&S will work with you to provide appropriate containers.

All waste containers must be labeled with the full, written chemical name (no abbreviations), the percent waste chemical composition(s) and primary hazard (e.g. corrosive or flammable), and have the words Dangerous Waste. EH&S will provide adhesive labels for your containers.

PI Commitment (Initials): _____

2. Evaluate procedures for handling glassware, needles, scalpels, microtomes, and other sharp objects.

Cuts or punctures from broken glassware, needles, scalpels, microtomes and other sharp objects are the most common research lab injury. Please identify potential sharps hazards and provide cut and puncture resistant gloves or contact ORA or EHS to identify additional options to prevent injury from sharps and broken glass.

PI Commitment (Initials): _____

3. Replace mercury containing devices.

Mercury spills are the most frequent chemical release contaminating WSU research labs. Mercury spill cleanups interrupt research. Mercury spill cleanup and waste disposal is expensive. While some research may require the use of mercury, we encourage substituting other types of equipment and materials whenever possible. Please contact EHS to exchange mercury thermometers for alcohol thermometers and to explore the replacement of mercury monometers.

PI Commitment (Initials): _____

4. Remove unnecessary equipment and containers from fume hoods to minimize negative impacts on air flow.

Storing unnecessary equipment and containers in fume hoods affects the air flow, potentially resulting in employee exposure to hazardous air contaminants. Please limit the equipment and chemicals in fume hoods to those necessary to support work. Remove and appropriately store equipment or chemicals not actively involved in work. Please do not store materials in fume hoods within 6 inches of the sash opening. Please close the sash when not actively manipulating materials within the hood.

PI Commitment (Initials): _____

5. Maintain access to emergency equipment (e.g. eyewashes, emergency showers, fire sprinklers, fire extinguishers).

Please do not store materials where they prevent access or proper function of emergency equipment. Eighteen (18) inches clearance is required below fire sprinklers (minimum). Please contact EH&S for assistance evaluating the need for new/additional emergency wash facilities.

PI Commitment (Initials): _____