

3.6 Housekeeping

- Maintaining a lab in a clean and orderly manner is critical to the safety of the working environment.
- Clutter leads to accidents and the easier start and spread of fires.
- Keep drawers and cabinet doors closed and electrical cords off the floor to avoid tripping hazards.
- Keep aisles clear of obstacles such as boxes, chemical containers, and other storage items that might be put there.
- Avoid slipping hazards by cleaning up spilled liquids promptly and by keeping the floor free of loose equipment such as stirring rods, glass beads, stoppers, and other such hazards.
- Never block or even partially block the path to an exit or to safety equipment, such as a safety shower or fire extinguishers.
- Use the required procedure for the proper disposal of chemical wastes and solvents.
- Supplies and laboratory equipment on shelves should have sufficient clearance so that, in case of a fire, the fire sprinkler heads are able to carry out their function.
- The work area should be kept clean and uncluttered, with hazardous materials and equipment properly stored.
- Clean the work area upon completion of a task and at the end of the day. The custodial staff is only expected to perform routine duties such as cleaning the floor and emptying the general trash.
- In preparation for any maintenance service such as, fume hood repair, plumbing, electrical etc. the laboratory staff must prepare the laboratory before the maintenance personnel arrive. Whenever possible remove hazards that maintenance personnel may encounter during their work activities. For example, infectious agents, radioactive materials or chemicals must be moved to a secure area prior to initiation of maintenance work. Additionally, the Principal Investigator or Laboratory Coordinator must escort Plant Operations personnel into the laboratory and inform them of the presence of any hazardous materials prior to the work being done.
- For the safety of the lab and maintenance personnel, the department of EHSRM recommends that maintenance personnel be supervised at all times while in the laboratory.

3.7 Eating, Drinking, and Smoking

Eating, drinking, smoking, gum chewing, applying cosmetics, and taking medicine in laboratories is strictly prohibited.

- Food, beverages, cups and other drinking and eating utensils should not be stored in areas where hazardous materials are handled or stored.
- Glassware used for laboratory operations should never be used to prepare or consume food or beverages.
- Laboratory refrigerators, ice chests, cold room, ovens, and so forth should not be used for food storage or preparation.
- Refrigerators used for the provision of food storage must be marked “For Food Storage Only.”
- Laboratory water sources and deionized water should not be used for drinking water.
- Laboratory materials should never be consumed or tasted.

3.8 Electrical

- Examine all electrical cords periodically for signs of wear and damage. If damaged electrical cords are discovered, unplug the equipment and send it off for repair.
- Properly ground all electrical equipment.
- If sparks are noticed while plugging or unplugging equipment or if the cord feels hot, do not use the equipment until it can be serviced by an electrician.
- Do not run electrical cords along the floor where they will be a tripping hazard and be subject to wear. If a cord must be run along the floor, protect it with a cord cover.
- Do not run electrical cords above the ceiling. The cord must be visible at all times to ensure it is in good condition.
- Do not plug too many items into a single outlet. Cords that enable you to plug more than one item in at a time should not be used. Multi-plug strips can be used if they are protected with a circuit breaker and if they are not overused.
- Do not use extension cords for permanent wiring. If you must use extension cords throughout the laboratory, then it is time to have additional outlets installed.