

ADDITIONS TO THE SAFETY PROCEDURES IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY AND BIOCHEMISTRY

February 8, 2009

Laboratory inspections

The labs currently undergo annual safety inspections. In addition, the UCLA Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) recently ordered a re-inspection of all labs in the department. The inspection checklist has been significantly expanded, and procedures have been instituted to ensure that faculty members respond to violations in a timely manner. The re-inspections of the labs in the Molecular Sciences Building are largely completed. *Compliance by faculty with the new procedures requiring timely response to the inspection findings has been outstanding.*

Safety training

1. Centrally administered safety training will be mandatory for all research personnel including faculty, graduate students, undergraduates, postdoctoral fellows, and laboratory staff. Basic safety training will be conducted by the Chemical Safety Officer and will be accomplished through training at orientation for graduate students and by monthly training sessions for other laboratory staff as they arrive in our department.
2. Research specific safety training will be accomplished using a number of forums including seminars, in laboratory safety training, in house videos, commercial videos, and online multimedia.
3. All new lab personnel will be required to complete a laboratory safety orientation specific for their laboratory with their faculty mentor prior to beginning research in the lab. Laboratory keys will only be issued once this training has been completed.
4. In consultation with us, EHS developed a "Research Laboratory Hazard Assessment Tool for Personal Protective Equipment Use". Faculty mentors will use this tool to make sure that all members of their labs are familiar with the different classes of hazards present in their labs and with the proper use of personal protective equipment (lab coats, safety glasses, gloves, etc.) to protect against these hazards
5. Procedures are being formulated for the regular retraining of staff at regular intervals. This will include mandatory safety training conducted by the faculty mentors in their research groups at least annually.

Safety equipment and its use

1. The existing policy of requiring lab coats to be worn when handling hazardous chemicals has been changed to require lab coats at all times, when working in the lab. Exceptions will be made only if use of the lab coat will endanger safety. An exception has already been made for laser labs. The standard lab coats will now be flame resistant and the Departmental Storeroom will stock the new flame resistant lab coats. To encourage compliance, provisions will be made for a lab coat cleaning service.
2. In addition to the fire resistant lab coats, the storeroom will now stock chemical resistant lab aprons for work with strong corrosives, shoe covers as part of the spill cleanup supplies, and face shields. All safety equipment offered by the storeroom will be sold at cost.
3. The departmental policy of providing prescription safety glasses will be better advertised.
4. Optional respirator training for graduate students was previously offered in the department once a year, and in EHS weekly. More sessions will be held in our department or we will organize regular trips to EHS for this training.
5. Fire extinguisher training has been offered once a year for many years, but will be expanded to several sessions a year to accommodate the various times that researchers arrive.

Teaching laboratories

All experiments in the graduate and undergraduate instructional laboratories are undergoing a safety review.

Safety information and handouts

1. The Departmental Emergency Information sheet is being expanded to be more comprehensive and informative.
2. A number of "Safe Operating Procedures" handouts are being developed by the Safety Committee and UCLA EHS. Examples include "Use of Gases", "Use of pyrophoric liquids" and "Use of pyrophoric solids".
3. The Departmental Safety web site will be updated to include training materials, general safety information, training schedules, and more.