CHEMICAL SAFETY

Responsibilities

The Chemical Safety Division of the Environmental Health and Safety Office is responsible for:

- Maintain the Chemical Safety Handbook for the use of chemicals at the Health Science Center with the advice and guidance of the Chemical Safety Committee;
- Providing technical assistance to laboratory supervisors and workers concerning appropriate storage, handling and disposal of hazardous chemicals;
- Providing general and specialized laboratory safety and hazardous waste generator’s training upon request;
- Conducting exposure assessments and laboratory audits upon request and on a routine basis;
- Perform injury/accident investigations related to potential chemical exposures;
- Making routine, as well as, special health and risk assessments to support the Safety Committees;
- Providing technical assistance concerning personal protective equipment and laboratory safety equipment;
- Facilitating access to manufacturer’s Safety Data Sheets (SDS) and other laboratory and chemical safety literature; and,
- Remaining current on rules and regulations concerning chemical safety.
Faculty and Staff Responsibilities

Faculty and staff in charge of supervising laboratories have the following responsibilities for implementing a model chemical hygiene plan:

- Inform and train employees concerning chemical safety as required by the plan;
- Attend all required training classes to stay in compliance with relevant rules and regulations;
- Retain training records and all documentation;
- Implement and enforce rules and standards concerning health and safety for laboratories under supervisor's jurisdiction;
- Ensure compliance of laboratory workers with the *Chemical Safety Handbook* and other guidelines, policies and regulations;
- Ensure the availability and enforce the use of appropriate personal protective equipment, SDSs, and relevant reference materials;
- Ensure the safe use of hazardous chemicals by himself/herself and those under his or her direction;
- Remain cognizant of hazardous chemicals stored and used in laboratories and their associated hazards;
- Dispose of chemicals no longer needed by contacting the Environmental Protection Division within the Environmental Health and Safety Office;
- Conduct internal inspections of laboratories for health and safety concerns; and,
- Request assistance from the Environmental Health and Safety Office, when safety requirements are not fully understood.
- Report all chemical spills and exposures as soon as possible to Environmental Health and Safety.
Employee and Student Responsibilities

Laboratory employee and student responsibilities regarding implementation of a model chemical hygiene plan are as follows:

- Follow all health and safety standards and rules;
- Attend all required training classes to stay in compliance with relevant rules and regulations;
- Immediately report all hazardous conditions to the supervisor;
- Wear or use appropriate protective equipment;
- Report any job-related injuries or illnesses to the supervisor and seek treatment immediately;
- Refrain from the operation of any equipment or instrumentation without proper instruction, training and authorization;
- Ask questions if the safe use of hazardous chemicals or operating procedures are unclear;
- Remain aware of the hazards of the chemical in the laboratory and how to handle these agents safely; and,
- Request information and training when unsure how to handle a hazardous chemical or procedure.

Policies and Procedures

The Chemical Safety Handbook is the Health Science Center’s policy regarding chemical safety. The Handbook is located at http://research.uthscsa.edu/safety/chemicalhandbook.shtml (chemical).