

January 17, 2017

Environmental Health and Safety

MEMORANDUM

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To: Deans, Department Heads, and Directors

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Subject: 2017 Laboratory Safety Commitment and Target Areas for Teaching and Research Labs

The University of Idaho is committed to providing a safe environment for students, faculty, and staff. The University seeks to engage all laboratories in a culture of safety effort aimed at implementing best practice lab safety measures. The Vice President of Infrastructure and the Vice President of Research and Economic Development request support of this effort from all Deans, Department Heads, and Directors. The Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) and the Office of Research Assurances (ORA) have identified five target areas for laboratory safety that can be improved campus-wide:

1. Chemical waste storage
2. Proper usage of personal protective equipment
3. Sharps and biohazard handling and disposal
4. Maintain access to emergency equipment
5. Proper fume hood use

The Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU) formed a task force in 2015 that addressed how to implement an effective lab safety program within Universities due to recent lab accidents that lead to severe injuries. As a result of this, the University of Idaho has agreed to renew its commitment to a culture of safety. In addition, an Institutional Laboratory Safety Committee will be created to address implementation of laboratory policies campus-wide, including for example, a laboratory signage program.

As the University of Idaho strives to become a Carnegie Foundation R1 university by 2025, the university community must implement and maintain strong and effective lab safety practices. The laboratory safety commitment will be a transformational approach to safety campus-wide. It will also be an effective tool for cultivating an institution that values safe work practices in the lab.

Training is an integral part of an effective safety program. ORA and EHS are available to provide training and technical assistance to departments, unit safety committees, and principal investigators, upon request.

We request that you distribute the attached laboratory safety commitment to those responsible for laboratories within your college or department and ask them to post it in a prominent location within their laboratories by July 2017. Posting this document demonstrates the laboratory's commitment to safety in addition to the successful implementation of the five target areas by the year's end, December 31, 2017. EHS will conduct lab walkthroughs beginning in October 2017 to assess how labs are addressing the five target areas. Results of the lab walkthroughs will be distributed to departments and PIs within a month of the inspections

2017 University of Idaho Laboratory Safety Commitment and Target Areas for Research and Teaching Labs

College/Department: _____

Principal Investigator: _____

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

1. Chemical waste storage

Please store chemical waste in appropriate, properly labeled containers. Containers must have tight-fitting (screw-cap) lids and be closed except when adding waste. Please use containers that are in good condition with no evidence of leaks, cracks, defects or surface contamination. Please ensure containers are labeled with words that identify contents as soon as any waste is added to the container. When applicable, an accumulation log for each container that lists the contents and quantities added must be readily available for inspection.

PI Commitment (Initials): _____

2. Proper usage of personal protective equipment (PPE)

Lab coats, eyewear, gloves, and proper footwear are PPE that is often required in labs based on the hazards of the chemicals and/or processes being performed in the labs. Please evaluate safety data sheets (SDSs) for chemicals as well as the risks associated with procedures performed in the lab to determine appropriate PPE.

PI Commitment (Initials): _____

3. Sharps and biohazard handling and disposal

Cuts and punctures from broken glass, needles, and other sharp objects are a common lab injury. Please identify potential sharps hazards within your lab and how to avoid them. Evaluate your lab disposal procedures for glassware, needles, scalpels, and other sharp objects. Sharps disposal containers must not be over-filled. Biological waste should be managed based on the biosafety manual rules and procedures. Contact ORA for the correct biological waste disposal procedures.

PI Commitment (Initials): _____

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

Please do not store material where they prevent access or proper function of emergency equipment. These areas need to be readily accessible in case of emergency. Eighteen inches clearance is required below fire sprinklers and 24 inches clearance is required for areas without sprinklers.

PI Commitment (Initials): _____

5. Proper fume hood use

Storing large equipment and containers in fume hoods affects the air flow, which can result in potential employee exposure to air contaminants. Remove unnecessary equipment and containers from fume hoods to minimize negative impacts on air flow. Please do not use fume hoods for chemical storage. Please do not store materials in fume hoods within six inches of the sash opening. Large equipment that must be used the fume hood should be elevated on top of the hood benchtop. Please close the sash when not actively using the fume hood.

PI Commitment (Initials): _____