



Housekeeping for Laboratories Guide

General

Campus laboratories that are cluttered and poorly organized present a variety of safety hazards to researchers, students, and visitors. In some cases, campus laboratories have been cited by government regulators for excessive clutter and related hazards.

These requirements are based on regulations, campus policies, consensus “best practices,” and input from researchers and laboratory safety professionals. To maintain a safe and well-organized laboratory, it is important to properly dispose of chemicals and equipment that are no longer needed, and not to buy in bulk unless there is space available to safely store the material. Also, it can be useful to schedule “lab clean-up days” periodically throughout each academic year.

Controlling clutter in campus laboratories requires all of the following:

- Aisles, exits, and hallways are to be clear of obstructions and slipping or tripping hazards (eg. pipette tips on the floor).
- Access must not be blocked to any of the following:
 - Eyewash/safety showers
 - Electrical panels (keep clear at least 36 inches in front of these)
 - Fire extinguishers
 - Chemical storage cabinets
 - Fume Hoods
 - Waste containers
- Containers of unwanted materials (including trash) should be emptied on a regular basis and must never reach the point of overflowing.
- Excess materials are to be stored in a neat, secure manner that provides easy access and reduces the potential for falling, collapsing, rolling, or spreading of the material. Overhead storage is to be limited to lightweight, non-hazardous items.
- Chemical containers, supplies, and equipment are to be stored away from the edges of benches.
- Containers holding chemicals should not be stored on the floor. When this is unavoidable, such containers are to be stored in plastic tubs or other secondary containment.
- All spills are to be cleaned up promptly. There are to be no puddles, powders, or unknown materials on floors or work surfaces. - Sharp objects are to be stored so as to prevent any cut or puncture hazard.
- Equipment, chemicals, glassware, and supplies not in regular use are to be stored in areas other than workstations.
- Leg space beneath benches and desks is not to be used for storage in a way that prevents proper ergonomic posture.
- Sufficient open space is available within the laboratory to manage the acquisition and disposition of materials.

Fume Hoods

- Fume hoods are to be kept free of clutter and not used for long-term storage of equipment, chemicals, or supplies that are not regularly used in the fume hood.
- Personnel must be able to see clearly through the protective glass sashes on fume hoods. Minimize postings and writing on sashes.
- Chemical containers, supplies, and equipment are to be stored away from the edge or lip of the fume hood.
- Containers holding chemicals should not be stored in the fume hood. When this is unavoidable, such containers are to be stored in plastic tubs or other secondary containment.
- All spills are to be cleaned up promptly. There are to be no puddles, powders, or unknown materials on work surfaces.
- Sharp objects are to be stored so as to prevent any cut or puncture hazard.
- Equipment, chemicals, glassware, and supplies not in regular use are to be stored in areas other than the fume hood.

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