

TIPS AND INFORMATION FOR LABORATORY PERSONNEL

Everyone in a laboratory is responsible for his/her own safety and for the safety of others. Before starting any work in a laboratory, become familiar with the procedures, equipment, chemicals, and biological materials that you will use. If you don't understand something, ask!

The following **10 golden rules** are recommended **for working safely in a laboratory**:

- Never wear shorts, loose clothing, sandals, or open-toed shoes in the laboratory. Make sure you know where the emergency shower, eyewash, and fire extinguisher are.
- Be aware of excessive jewelry. Jewelry can react with chemicals or trap chemicals against your skin. Jewelry or long hair increases the risk of being caught in the machinery and poses an entanglement hazard.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). This might include safety glasses, chemical safety goggles, a face shield, a laboratory coat (made from non-synthetic materials), gloves, and respiratory protection. Do not wear laboratory coats, gloves, or other PPE out of the laboratory or in non-laboratory areas. The PPE may have become contaminated and you could spread the contamination.
- Do not wear contact lenses in a laboratory because chemicals or particulates can get caught behind them and cause severe damage to your eyes.
- Do not allow children or pets in laboratories.
- Never pipette anything by mouth.
- Designate non-laboratory areas for eating and drinking. Store food and drinks in refrigerators that are designated for that use only.
- Remember that smoking is not allowed on the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA) campus.
- Never work alone in a laboratory if it is avoidable. If you must work alone, make someone aware of your location and have them call or check on you periodically.
- Wash your hands frequently throughout the day and before leaving the laboratory.

A couple of words of wisdom about **housekeeping**:

- Clean your work areas throughout the day and before you leave.
- If necessary, clean equipment after use to avoid the possibility of contaminating the next person's experiment.
- Keep all aisles and walkways in the laboratory clear to provide a safe walking surface and an unobstructed exit.
- Don't leave clutter (empty boxes, paper etc.) in the laboratory. This creates a fire hazard.

How to handle **broken glassware**:

- Inspect all glassware before use. Discard any broken, cracked, or chipped glassware.
- Place non-contaminated broken glassware into the broken glass containers that are provided by Custodial Services, the chemical stockroom (Chemistry Department), or Environmental Health and Safety Office (EH&S) and disposed of by Custodial Services.
- Never overfill the broken glass containers. Once the container is full, cover it using the container's cardboard lid, seal it with tape, and leave outside the laboratory for Custodial Services to pick up with a note indicating that it is trash.

- Broken glassware with biological contamination should be handled as described under "sharps" in this document if it may be capable of transmitting infectious disease.
- Broken glass that is contaminated with radioactive materials cannot be placed in the broken glass containers. Contact the EH&S Radiation Safety Officer at 817-272-2185 for proper disposal.

How to dispose **empty unbroken chemical glass containers**:

Please, follow instructions in [SOP-Proper Disposal of Empty Chemical Containers](#).

Protect yourself from **sharps**:

Sharps that are considered special waste include:

- ✓ hypodermic needles
- ✓ hypodermic syringes with attached needles
- ✓ scalpel blades
- ✓ razor blades
- ✓ disposable razors
- ✓ Pasteur pipettes
- ✓ Broken glassware is also treated as special waste if it may be capable of transmitting infectious disease.

All of the above listed items shall be deposited into sharps containers and disposed of as special waste. If sharps are contaminated by biohazards, they need to be deposited into sharps containers with a biohazard symbol and disposed of as infectious waste. EH&S will deliver, pick up, and dispose of sharps containers to any departments or laboratories at no charge. Keep these containers in each work area that generates sharps. In order for the containers to be picked up, please send a request for disposal through [CEMS](#) by following the instructions in the [Standard Operating Procedure – Request for Biological Waste Removal](#).

Good to know about **sharps**:

- To avoid accidental sticks, place hypodermic needles directly into the sharps containers and do not recap, bend, break, clip, or remove from disposable syringes.
- Do not attempt to treat (decontaminate) sharps yourself for any biohazard.
- Do not allow the containers to become overfilled. They should not be more than $\frac{3}{4}$ full when picked up.
- Do not force anything into a sharps container. If it is full, close it and start using a new sharps container.
- Never put your hands in a used sharps container.
- Do not dispose of these containers with the regular trash or incinerate them.

More info:

For further information on any safety issue, refer to
[The UTA Laboratory Safety Manual \(Chemical Hygiene Plan\)](#)
[The UTA Biosafety Manual](#)

OR contact EH&S by email: ehsafety@uta.edu or by phone at 817-272-2185.