

The University of Texas at Arlington



INFO AND TIPS FOR TEACHING LABORATORY PERSONNEL AND STUDENTS



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

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

1. 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.
2. Be aware of excessive jewelry. It can react with chemicals or trap chemicals against your skin.
3. Wear appropriate personal protective clothing. This might include goggles, a face shield, a lab coat (made from non synthetic materials), and gloves. Do not wear lab coats, gloves, or other personal protective clothing out of the lab and into non-lab areas. This clothing may have become contaminated and you could spread the contamination.
4. Do not wear contact lenses in a laboratory because chemicals or particulates can get caught behind them and cause severe damage to your eyes.
5. Do not allow children or pets in laboratories.
6. Never pipette anything by mouth.
7. Designate non-lab areas for eating and drinking. Store food and drinks in refrigerators that are designated for that use only.
8. Remember, smoking is not allowed in any University building.
9. 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.
10. Wash your hands frequently throughout the day and before leaving the lab.

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 makes 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 (EH&S) Office and disposed of by Custodial Services.
- Never overfill the broken glass containers. Once the container is full, cover it using the container cardboard lid, seal it with tape, and leave outside the laboratory at the end of the day 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.

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- Broken glass that is contaminated with radioactive materials cannot be placed in the broken glass containers. Contact the Radiation Safety Officer at 2-2185 for proper disposal.

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

- Empty chemical glass containers that are not broken should be rinsed with tap water and the rinse poured into the hazardous waste container. Remove the containers' labels completely and dispose of the glass containers in the regular trash if not broken.

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 the sharps containers and disposed of as infectious waste. An EH&S Office safety specialist 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, a biological waste and sharps request for disposal ([Request for Disposal Form - Biological Waste and Sharps](#)) should be completed by following the instructions on the form and sent to the EH&S Office.

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, start a new one.
- Never put your hands in a used sharps container.
- Do not dispose of these containers with the regular trash or incinerate them. Contact EH&S Office for disposal!

More info:

For further information on any safety issue, refer to
The UT Arlington Laboratory Safety Manual:
http://www.uta.edu/policy/forms/ehs/uta_lab_safety_manual.pdf
or contact Merja Karwoski at 272-2185 or merjak@uta.edu.