

Maverick Safety Matters

Environmental Health & Safety

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Maintain Safety When Working Remotely

Whether you are working on campus or from home, the COVID-19 pandemic has probably changed the way you work. Employees providing essential services to the campus community have been especially stretched thin; working longer hours than usual, and working more shifts, leaving less time to sleep and recharge.

Slips and falls occur every day as a result of inattention. You can minimize accidents and injuries by practicing safety.

- Be on the lookout for unsafe conditions that may lead to slips and falls.
- Watch out for foreign substances on the floor.
- Clean footwear thoroughly when entering the building.
- Take advantage of handrails on stairs and ramps. They are there to protect you from falls.

Accidents can happen anywhere at any time, which is why we're also sharing recommendations to help you maintain a safe environment while you work remotely:

- Consider lighting and space when setting up your workstation. Make sure you have enough lighting and space to work comfortably.
- While you are home and sharing space with your family members, be sure to sanitize your workstation and practice frequent handwashing. You should also keep your space free of trash and other hazards that could cause you to slip, trip or fall.
- Ensure walking paths and doorways are unobstructed. This will help prevent slips, trips or

falls and keep paths clear in case of an emergency.

- Use power cord ties. Cord ties can help you keep your cords organized, preventing trip and fire hazards.

Finally, prevent awkward postures and eye strain by making your workstation setup more ergonomic:

- Eliminate sources of glare behind the monitor and try not to face directly into a window.
- Follow the 20-20-20 rule by looking at an object at least 20 feet away for 20 seconds every 20 minutes.
- Keep your shoulders relaxed with your elbows at your side.
- Do not overreach for your keyboard or writing tools.
- When in seated position, your hips should be level-to-slightly-higher than your knees.
- If your feet don't touch the floor, use a box or footrest to prop them up.
- Your elbows should be even or slightly lower than your keyboard.
- If possible, use an external monitor, keyboard and mouse.
- Take regular stretch breaks throughout the day.

Please refer to the diagram on page 2 for guidelines on how to set up your workstation ergonomically to avoid strains and injuries while you work.

Workers' Compensation Offers New Text2Fill Prescription Option

In addition to the traditional prescription First Fill Form, there is now an option for employees to implement a convenient, new form called Text2Fill. Using the [Text2Fill process](#), an employee with a work-related injury can receive the Rx First Fill Card directly on their mobile phone using text messages.

After receiving a prescription from their provider, the employee will text UTA00 to toll free 833-FRSTFILL (833-377-8345). Follow the on-screen instructions to receive an image of the prescription card right to their phone. The First Fill Prescription Card can then be presented along with the injury

related prescription(s) to your local pharmacy.

If any problems are encountered filling prescriptions or finding a participating retail pharmacy, please call RxBridge at 833-RxBridge (833-792-7434) or use the pharmacy locator at www.RxBridge.com.



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Work Safely from Home *(continued from page 1)*

Proper Setup of Workstation

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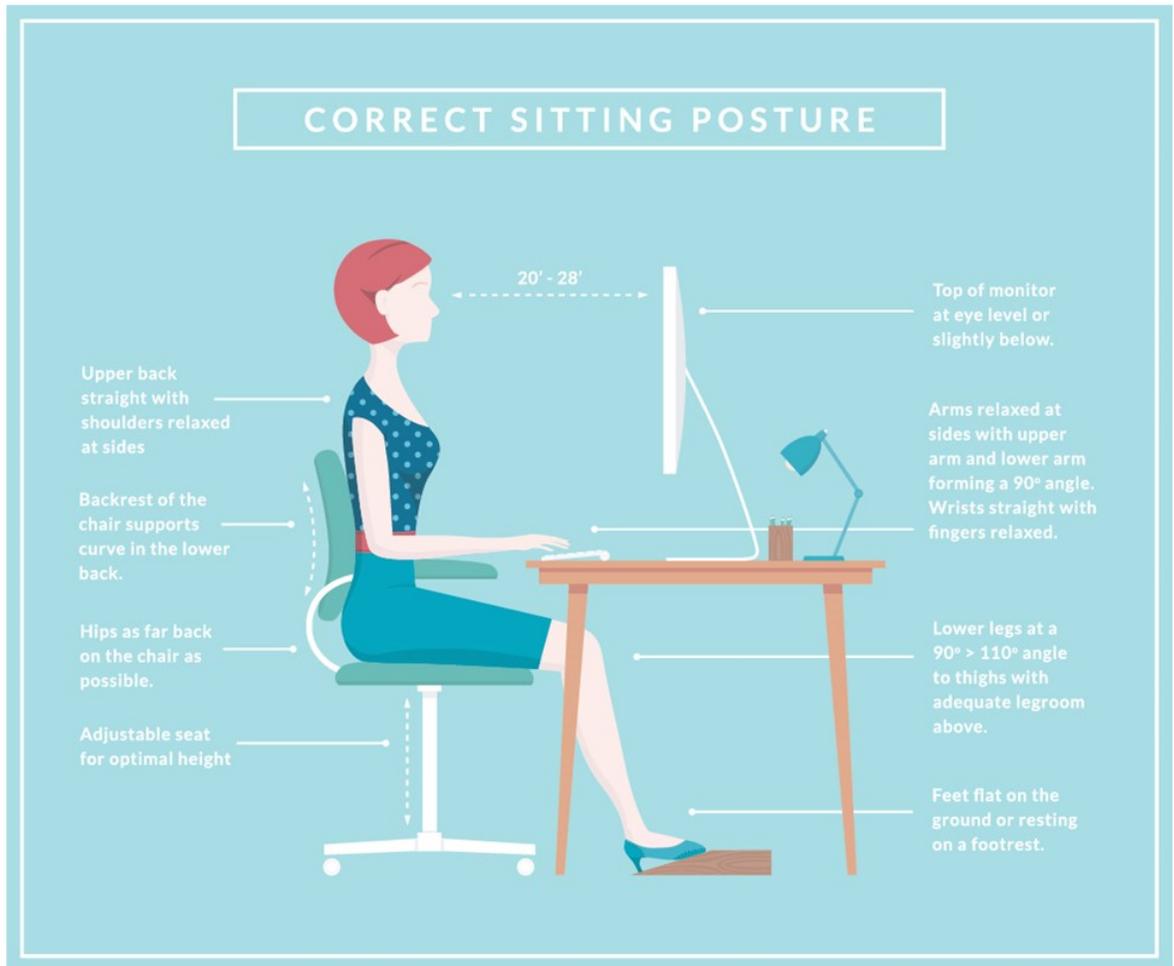
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Conquering Workplace Stress

Workplace stress is normal, but when the stress is excessive it can wreak havoc on the productivity, performance, and physical and emotional health of employees. It can also interfere with job safety. There are several ways to help deal with stress.

First, be aware of the common causes of workplace stress.

- Fear of being laid off
- More overtime due to staff cutbacks
- Pressure to perform to meet rising expectations but with no increase in job satisfaction
- Pressure to work at optimum levels—all the time!
- Lack of control over how you do your work

Next, recognize the signs of excessive workplace stress:

- Feeling anxious, irritable, or depressed
- Apathy, loss of interest in work
- Problems sleeping
- Fatigue

- Trouble concentrating
- Muscle tension or headaches
- Stomach problems
- Social withdrawal
- Loss of sex drive
- Using alcohol or drugs to cope

Then, try some of these stress busting tips.

1. Exercise

- a. Working out regularly is one of the best ways to relax your body and mind.
- b. Exercise will improve your mood, but you have to do it often for it to pay off.
 - i) Good: At the least, 3 to 5 times a week for 30 minutes
 - ii) Better: 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderately intense exercise like brisk walks
 - iii) Best: Add 75 minutes of a vigorous exercise like swimming laps, jogging, or other sports that get your heart rate up

How to Dispose of Expired Chemicals

Expired chemicals can be dangerous when they exceed their expiration dates.

A chemical might undergo chemical changes due to different storage conditions. It could react with other chemicals present in the air or in the environment. This could change its nature (reaction to create other compounds), properties and/or purity. A chemical might undergo physical changes as well.

Certain chemicals are simply unstable and decay or degradate over time to something else, without the need of external input/changes. Some chemicals are unstable and within a few months or years tend to turn into dangerous substances. For example, there are some Peroxide Forming Chemicals which need to be disposed of after 3–12 months (depending on the chemical and the storage conditions) or they may explode.

Some chemicals will be stable enough not to turn into a hazard, but still have a negative effect on the measurements or syntheses that are performed with them, because the compounds no longer have the composition listed on the bottle.

Per [Chemical Safety Procedure CO-IS-PR3](#), each CEMS PI/chemical owner shall request the disposal of expired chemicals according to the manufacturer's expiration date by submitting a waste removal request or an extension request (if it is necessary to retain the expired chemical) via CEMS as described in [Standard Operating Procedure for Expired Chemicals](#) (see F. Expired Chemicals of Section IX. Management of Chemical Inventory).

If you are a Chemical Owner, and have an expired chemical, you can request its disposal or a one year

extension via CEMS <http://cems.uta.edu>. An automated message will be sent by CEMS to your email address similar to this:

[Your First Name] [Your Last Name],

This automated email is being sent to inform you that you own (1) expired chemical(s). Please [review the list of expired inventory] and click the waste request or extension request button for each container listed.

If you choose to submit Waste Disposal Request, transfer the container with Expired Chemical to the Waste Accumulation Area of your Laboratory and attach a filled out Waste Tag to it.

Thank you.

Step 1: Click on the link sent by CEMS.

Step 2: Login by entering your email address and CEMS password. **Or** by using the University Single Sign-on feature which does not require a separate CEMS password but your UTA network credentials.

Step 3: Choose **Waste Request** (find the expired chemicals and place them into the secondary containment in the waste accumulation area of your laboratory) or **Extension Request**.

Step 4: If an Extension Request has been submitted, the CEMS administrator will approve or deny your request upon which you'll receive another email notification.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact [Elisabeth Rowlett](#) at 817-272-2185.

Managing Stress *(continued from page 2)*

2. Eat well

- Eating a regular, well-balanced diet helps you feel better in general. It may also help control your moods.
- Aim for meals full of vegetables, fruit, whole grains, and lean protein for energy. And don't skip any. Skipping meals can put you in a bad mood, which can actually increase your stress.

3. Sleep well

- Try to improve the quality of your sleep by going to bed and getting up at the same time every day, even on weekends. Aim for 8 hours a night—the amount of sleep most adults need to operate at their best.
- Turn off screens one hour before bedtime. The light emitted from TV, tablets, smartphones, and computers suppresses your body's production of melatonin and can severely disrupt your sleep.
- Avoid stimulating activity and stressful situations before bedtime such as devoting time to work.

Instead, focus on quiet, soothing activities, such as reading or listening to soft music, while keeping lights low.

4. Chill out

- When you're driving on the highway, switch to the slow lane so you can take it easy.
- Break down big jobs into smaller ones. For example, don't try to answer all your emails if you don't have to — just answer a few of them.
- Try yoga, meditation, listening to music you like, and other relaxing activities and hobbies.

5. Talk it out

- Find a friend, co-worker, or family member you feel comfortable sharing your feelings with. Talking about things that are troubling you can help lower your stress.

Content of this article was republished from the Bongarde electronic newsletter "SafeSupervisor."

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EH&S Staff Remediate Mercury Spills

Check out
EH&S on
Facebook
to keep up
with all our
events &
training:

[UT Arlington
Environmental
Health & Safety
Office](#)



Chemical Safety Specialist Kelsey Contreras uses a mercury vacuum to clean up a mercury spill on March 3rd in Nedderman Hall B06B. On March 8th there was a second spill inside an incubator in Room 318 of Chemistry Physics building.

In March, EH&S responded to two mercury spills on campus within a week. First a thermometer broke in a chemical storage room in Nedderman Hall. Even though it fell in the corner, a majority of the room had mercury beads scattered across the floor. A four stage process was required to completely clean the spill.

Initially the beads are vacuumed up, then mercury indicator powder is placed on the floor. After 24 hours, if the yellow powder is pinkish-black in color, this indicates that there is more mercury present and further remediation is needed (*see photo below*). Air testing is the final step in verifying that the mercury has been successfully remediated.

Five days later there was another broken thermometer spill in the Chemistry Physics building necessitating a similar cleanup procedure. EH&S encourages laboratories still utilizing mercury thermometers to replace them with digital or alcohol thermometers whenever possible.



EH&S TRAINING COURSES

Online safety training is located on the EH&S training management website: <https://uta-ehs.org>

Bloodborne Pathogens for Laboratory Research Personnel
Bloodborne Pathogens (Non-Research)
BioSafety Level 2
On-Site Biohazardous Waste Management
Vaccinia Virus
Laser Safety
Radiation Awareness
Radiation Producing Machine
Hazard Communication & Waste Mgmt- Academic
Hazard Communication & Waste Mgmt- Non-Academic
Fire Alarm Device

Back Injury Prevention
Confined Space Entry Awareness
Hand & Power Tool Safety
Hearing Conservation
Lockout/Tagout
Respiratory Protection
Class C Underground Storage Tank
Defensive Driving Awareness
12 & 15 Passenger Van
Powered Industrial Truck (Forklift)
Hot Work Safety

Call us at 817-272-2185 to schedule specific trainings not available online:

Radioactive Materials Respirator Fit Testing Fire Extinguisher

The [Great Escape with Fire Extinguisher Training](#) and [Evacuation Chair](#) in person trainings are offered on a bimonthly basis. [Click here for the schedule](#). Please call to sign up for a date.

DRIVING UTA VEHICLES

Defensive Driving Awareness - This online course must be completed every 3 years to remain an authorized driver of UTA vehicles. Additionally, an individual driving record check (MVR) must be updated annually.

12 & 15 Passenger Van Training: Take the online course first. A behind-the-wheel driving test is also required and will be conducted on the dates and times below at the EH&S office, 500 Summit Ave. Drivers must have already passed the Defensive Driving Course and have a current approved driving record check (MVR) to attend. **Class size is limited, so please call 817-272-2185 to register ahead of time.**

Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, van training has been suspended and will only be scheduled upon request.



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