

11. LAB SAFETY

All students must read and understand the information in this document with regard to laboratory safety and emergency procedures prior to the first laboratory session. Your personal laboratory safety depends mostly on YOU. Effort has been made to address situations that may pose a hazard in the lab but the information and instructions provided cannot be considered all-inclusive.

Students must adhere to written and verbal safety instructions throughout the academic term. Since additional instructions may be given at the beginning of laboratory sessions, it is important that all students arrive at each session on time.

With good judgement, the chance of an accident in this course is very small. Nevertheless, research and teaching workplaces (labs, shops, etc.) are full of potential hazards that can cause serious injury and or damage to the equipment. Working alone and unsupervised in laboratories is forbidden if you are working with hazardous substances or equipment. With prior approval, at least two people should be present so that one can shut down equipment and call for help in the event of an emergency.

Safety training and/or information should be provided by a faculty member, teaching assistant, lab instructor, or staff member at the beginning of a new assignment or when a new hazard is introduced into the workplace.

Emergency Response

It is your responsibility to read safety and fire alarm posters and follow the instructions during an emergency.

Know the location of the fire extinguisher, eye wash, and safety shower in your lab and know how to use them.

Notify your instructor immediately after any injury, fire or explosion, or spill.

Know the building evacuation procedures

Common Sense

Good common sense is needed for safety in a laboratory. It is expected that each student will work in a responsible manner and exercise good judgement and common sense. If at any time you are not sure how to handle a particular situation, ask your Teaching Assistant or Instructor for advice. **DO NOT TOUCH ANYTHING WITH WHICH YOU ARE NOT COMPLETELY FAMILIAR!!!** It is always better to ask questions than to risk harm to yourself or damage to the equipment.

Cape Breton University Occupational Health & Safety Manual

Personal and General Laboratory Safety

- Never eat, drink, or smoke while working in the laboratory.
- Read labels carefully.
- Do not use any equipment unless you are trained and approved as a user by your supervisor.
- Do not use fume hood unless an up-to-date certification sticker has been applied. Stickers of successful certification shall be affixed in clear view on each of the fume hoods by an outside contractor.
- Wear safety glasses or face shields when working with hazardous materials and/or equipment.
- Wear gloves when using any hazardous or toxic agent.
- Clothing: When handling dangerous substances, wear gloves, laboratory coats, and safety shield or glasses. Shorts and sandals should not be worn in the lab at any time. Shoes are required when working in the machine shops.
- If you have long hair or loose clothes, make sure it is tied back or confined.
- Keep the work area clear of all materials except those needed for your work. Coats should be hung in the hall or placed in a locker. Extra books, purses, etc. should be kept away from equipment that requires airflow or ventilation to prevent overheating.
- Disposal - Students are responsible for the proper disposal of used material if any in appropriate containers.
- Equipment Failure - If a piece of equipment fails while being used, report it immediately to your lab assistant or tutor. Never try to fix the problem yourself because you could harm yourself and others.
- If leaving a lab unattended, turn off all ignition sources and lock the doors.
- Never pipette anything by mouth.
- Clean up your work area before leaving.
- Wash hands before leaving the lab and before eating.

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