

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING LABORATORY SAFETY POLICY

Promulgated Spring 2012; Upgraded September 9, 2013; Reviewed December 5, 2015

This policy is meant to be succinct and identify the responsible parties and procedures for laboratory safety in the College of Engineering. The first policy was effective upon adoption by the faculty of the College of Engineering Spring 2012. The policy was upgraded in Fall 2013 to include text described below.

1. Students, postdoctoral associates, and research staff actively conducting research under the direction of a Principal Investigator (PI) are permitted to be in Engineering Laboratories with permission from each laboratory space's designated PI.
2. It is preferred that individuals conducting research limit their laboratory activities to normal business hours, Monday through Friday. However, it is recognized that many scientific experiments cannot be thoroughly conducted during an 8-5 workday, five days per week. With consent of the laboratory's PI, individuals are permitted to conduct their work outside normal business hours.
3. It is recommended that persons conducting research in a laboratory complete their work while other persons are also present in that laboratory. This action will contribute to a safer working environment and provide all persons extra assistance should it be necessary.
4. An emergency contact sign shall be posted on the door (or immediately adjacent to the door) of each laboratory. A College of Engineering template is available for use. This sign includes at the minimum, the contact information for the responsible PI, a secondary contact, emergency responder contact information, and date the sign was posted.
5. An electronic chemical inventory shall be maintained by a single Department representative for each laboratory that accounts for all chemicals present in that laboratory. The inventory, will note at minimum the chemical, amount, date of receipt, and catalog the arrival and depletion on timely basis. The inventory should also contain a corresponding electronic MSDS library (link) of each chemical. Faculty will provide the necessary information to the Department designee so that the inventory can be updated. MSDS hardcopies are not required in each laboratory. Persons working in each laboratory should be directed to the inventory for that laboratory when they are oriented to safety procedures of that space.
6. The PI of each laboratory is responsible for orienting persons under their direction on proper safety practices in that space. Those persons shall be trained on safe operation of equipment (when needed), material storage and use, and other space-specific safety procedures. No person (student, postdoc, teaching or research staff) shall be permitted to operate in a laboratory without a designated PI's safety training. Training for each laboratory is specific to that laboratory. Thus, PI's for each space are responsible for delivering that training.
7. An up-to-date medical kit shall be present in each laboratory.
8. PI's are responsible for informing their Department Chair about any laboratory safety challenges and keeping them informed about research laboratory activity. Each department shall be responsible for the establishment of a more comprehensive laboratory safety policy that is appropriate for their discipline and research areas, which shall at a minimum adhere to the requirements above. (For example, in the ChBE labs, everyone should be wearing glasses at all times, etc.).
9. Departments will provide one MSDS hardcopy to the College of Engineering Dean's Office when new chemicals are received. The Dean's Office will determine where this hardcopy will be stored.
10. Annually, Departments will conduct a chemical inventory of their assigned workspaces, update their electronic chemical inventory, and provide access to the College of Engineering Dean's Office. Annually, the Dean's Office will provide an updated copy of the electronic chemical Inventory to the University of South Alabama Environmental Health and Safety Office.
11. Failure to comply with the above described policy can result in permanent or temporary suspension of access to College of Engineering facilities and this is imposed at the discretion of the responsible Department or Dean of Engineering.