

Armstrong State University Department of Chemistry and Physics Safety Practices for Chemistry Laboratory & Research Assistants

Safety in the chemistry laboratory involves a cautious attitude and an awareness of potential hazards. Potential accidents can usually be anticipated and prevented. When safety precautions are followed, fewer accidents occur. The number of laboratory accidents can be reduced if every individual follows all the directions given for the procedure. Special note should be taken of specific instructions given in an MSDS.

General Regulations

1. Students are required to receive appropriate training from their supervisor prior to beginning any new procedure.
2. Whenever a chemistry lab/research assistant is working in a lab, a faculty or staff member of the department must be aware of this and present in the area.
3. Failure to comply with laboratory rules and regulations will result in disciplinary action from your supervisor and referral to the Department Head for further action.
4. Armstrong State University is not responsible for damage to personal effects.

Lab/Research Assistant Responsibilities

1. Locate the safety equipment: eyewash, safety shower, fire extinguishers, first-aid kit and all exits that are to be used in an emergency.
2. Read the MSDS for any material before you handle it, to ensure safe handling. MSDS sheets for all chemicals are available in the lab.
3. Wear chemical safety goggles, defined as being splash resistant, indirectly vented and having a strap. Prescription eyeglass wearers must wear approved chemical safety goggles over their glasses. Unapproved eyewear is unacceptable.
4. Tie long hair back.
5. Wear shoes that cover your feet completely.
6. Wear clothes that provide you with the maximum coverage possible. Loose fitting clothing or accessories should be secured.
7. Always wear protective apparel if there is a possibility that personal clothing could become contaminated or damaged with chemically hazardous material or otherwise directed by your supervisor.
8. Use gloves that are appropriate to the degree and type of hazard; if they become contaminated or you leave the lab, discard them, wash your hands and re-glove if necessary.
9. Wash your hands before leaving the lab.
10. Do not bring food and/or drink in the laboratory.
11. Unauthorized persons are not permitted in any lab.
12. Do not put any object, including your hands, on your face in lab.

13. Do not taste or smell chemicals. If you are directed to note an odor in an experimental procedure, use your hand to waft the odor to your nose.
14. Headphones, earbuds, or communication headsets are not permitted in lab. Use of any other personal entertainment device must be approved by your supervisor.
15. Use the proper transport pail to carry corrosive, flammable or otherwise hazardous materials from one area to another.
16. Use the hood when preparing solutions which create hazardous vapors or when preparing containers of materials that are hazardous.
17. Lab/Research assistants are not permitted to move compressed gas tanks without proper training and supervision.

Housekeeping Rules

1. Read the label on all stock solutions and chemicals carefully.
2. Make sure all containers are properly labeled (at a minimum, the full name of the compound, the name of the person who filled the container, the date the container was filled, and if the compound is flammable, corrosive, carcinogenic, mutagenic, teratogenic, explosive or poisonous.
3. Take no more of a chemical than the procedure requires. Read the procedure carefully to determine the quantity of each stock solution and/or chemical you need. Obtain only that amount. Do not return the excess to the stock container; this will contaminate the stock solution. Instead dispose of the excess properly.
4. Do not insert a dropper or pipet into a stock solution container. Pour a small amount of the stock solution into a beaker and then insert your dropper or pipet into the beaker.
5. When making acid solutions, always add acid to water.
6. Clean up all solid and liquid spills appropriately.
7. All hazardous waste must be disposed of appropriately.
8. The rinsate created from cleaning empty containers that held hazardous compounds is considered hazardous and must be collected into the appropriate waste container.

Accident and Emergency Procedures

1. Report any accident, no matter how small, to your supervisor. If an injury occurs, the supervisor, individual(s) involved and any witnesses will complete an incident report. Incident reports are kept in the first aid kit on the wall in the laboratory. The completed report will be given to the Safety Committee Chairperson and the Department Head.
2. Should an injury occur and a staff or faculty member is not immediately available, follow the "Procedures for Medical Emergency" posted over the phone in the laboratory room.

Medical or Hospitalization Insurance Information

You are not covered by medical or hospitalization insurance through Armstrong State University. If you are involved in an accident, all medical expenses will be your responsibility.

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