

SAFETY FOCUS

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI) SAFETY EXPECTATIONS

It is the policy of the University of Utah to provide a safe and healthy environment for all individuals engaged in the work of the University, including faculty, staff, students, and visitors. Building a culture of safety is integral to the success of not only this policy, but to the overall success of the University's research and education missions.

WHO: As a Principal Investigator (PI), you are responsible for the overall culture and accountable for safety within your research group. You set the tone, create the expectations, and set the standards and environment for your group's success. PIs are the single most influential component to a sustained and proactive culture of safety.

College Safety Committees have been established across campus to assist with communicating safety-related information, provide peer-to-peer help identifying and mitigating hazardous situations, and work with Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) to accomplish inspections and ensure corrective actions are taken. PIs can engage local safety committee members for assistance on hazard identification and peer review of controls, plans, and procedures, and to raise concerns.

Environmental Health and Safety is responsible for the interpretation of regulatory requirements, implementation of compliance programs, and periodic evaluation of compliance with local, state, and federal regulations of workplace and environmental safety. In essence, EHS develops tools and resources to support PIs as they assess the risks of their work, develop mitigation strategies, and do their research, and EHS assess compliance through periodic inspections.

WHAT: Demonstrate your commitment to safety in your group and lead by setting the example for safety. Identify, assess, and plan for hazards and risks of procedures and encourage your group members to do the same. Promote an environment where questions and concerns are welcome, discussed, and resolved through mitigation strategies and/or use of controls. Use your local safety committees and EHS to help you identify and assess hazards and develop and incorporate appropriate mitigation strategies.

HOW: Set clear expectations and rules around safety in your group and document those in your lab's required safety plans or procedures. Encourage reporting, discussion, and learning from mistakes, near misses, and/or other incidents. Develop standard operating procedures for working with hazardous or potentially hazardous materials that include engineering and administrative controls, appropriate PPE use, and emergency plans. Discuss safety regularly at group meetings, as part of planning for new research, and ask for ideas toward continuously improving facilities, plans, procedures, equipment, and rules within the group. Use risk assessments as a framework to discuss safety and implement hazard controls. Walk through the research space regularly to observe the conditions and how the work is being done (e.g. safe practices, PPE use, good housekeeping). Praise positive behaviors and coach up those who need more attention to safety.

Resources:

[SAM Quick Start Tutorial and Account Activation](#)
[SAM](#)
[Lab Relocation/Closure Guide](#)
[Facilities Requests](#)
[Safety Committees](#)

WHEN: Getting started:

Work with department for facility related needs: space, electrical, ventilation, seismic restraints, etc. Meet with local safety committee representative. Register in the Safety Administrative Management (SAM) system through EHS.

- A profile will be assigned to indicate the hazards of your planned research.
- Profile review by EHS will indicate necessary plans, procedures, and/or approvals for beginning work.

Identify and assess risks of planned activities, develop mitigation strategies, and plan for emergencies.

Develop and document site specific training. Purchase PPE for planned activities and secondary containment for any hazardous materials. Designate chemical storage and unwanted materials collection areas.

Complete and certify chemical inventory in SAM

Daily/Weekly:

Walk through research space looking for:

- Small changes that may present a hazard, such as tripping hazards, clutter, spills/leaks, and open and unlabeled chemical containers;
- PPE and other controls are used and appropriate to the work; and
- Safe work practices and documented procedures are followed.

Monthly/Quarterly:

Discuss safety as it relates to new and ongoing projects.

Schedule clean up days and inspect the spaces for hazards (e.g. clutter, chemical and unwanted materials labeling, evidence of spills or leaks).

Ask for ideas toward continuously improving safety.

Identify and assess risks of any new activities, develop mitigation strategies, and plan for emergencies.

Annually:

Review documented plans, procedures, and emergency contact information.

Identify and assess risks of any new activities, develop mitigation strategies, and plan for emergencies.

Update and provide site specific training on required plans, newly identified hazards and mitigation strategies, and refresh emergency procedures training.

Complete and certify chemical inventory through SAM.

Perform self-inspection through SAM.

- Depending on the hazards you work with, EHS will periodically inspect your spaces.
- Ask your local safety committee about peer to peer inspections.

Moving or Closing:

Establish a firm stop-work date with time allotted afterward for packing, cleaning, and close out procedures.

Notify EHS and begin working through the close out form at least 60 days prior to move/departure.

Arrange with EHS and Department to transfer chemical, biological, and/or radioactive materials and radiation producing devices.

Assistance with moving can be arranged through Facilities Moving Services.

Request disposal of unwanted materials through EHS.