



Florida International University | Department Of Environmental Health & Safety | ehs@fiu.edu

Earth Day falls on April 22 this Year. Earth Day is celebrated annually to raise awareness of environmental issues (i.e., pollution, deforestation, climate change, and wildlife conservation). The first official Earth Day was celebrated in April 1970, bringing awareness to our environmental impact and the need to be proactive about environmental safety for future generations. This newsletter discusses practices that can be implemented in our daily lives, operational changes in the workspace, and the efforts conducted by EH&S to cultivate a greener and more sustainable FIU.

Check out the EH&S website for detailed information on the topics covered in this newsletter and other safety programs and procedures at <https://ehs.fiu.edu/>.

Newsletter Highlights

- Facts, Safety Shout Out, and Upcoming Events
- Making an Impact Through Our Daily lives
- Greener Operations at Work
- Efforts From EH&S

Facts, Safety Shout Out, and Upcoming Events

- This Year marks the 53rd anniversary of Earth Day. Celebrate by incorporating greener practices into your life. Every little bit helps!
- Earth day paved the way for environmental legislation, including the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Acts.
- About one billion people worldwide and 190 countries celebrate Earth Day, but the United Nations General Assembly recognizes it as "International Mother Earth Day"!

Do you know someone who consistently strives to maintain safe and healthy working and learning environments? Nominate them for the EH&S Safety Shout Out by emailing us at ehs@fiu.edu with their name, title, and examples of how they prioritize safety in their work/learning environment. We will feature them on the EH&S website, Instagram, and through our email listserv!

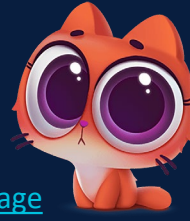
EH&S will host a **Zoom Earth Day Seminar** on **April 20th at 1:30 PM**. Topics include Storm drain basics, the mercury elimination challenge, the 'shut-the-sash' campaign, and other helpful money-saving and environmentally friendly tips. Scan the QR Code or email ehs@fiu.edu.



Making an Impact Through Our Daily lives

Promoting sustainability and reducing our environmental impact is crucial for the environment. Help protect our planet by implementing one or more of the suggestions below. Here are a few practices that can be incorporated into our daily lives:

- **Greener Choices About Plastics:**
 - Use reusable shopping bags.
 - Reusing and then recycling plastic bags (some grocery stores have recycling bins specifically for plastic bags)
- **Reduce, Reuse, or Recycle:**
 - Paper, cardboard, cans, plastics, and glass.
 - Check your county's recycling guidelines.
 - Miami Dade County: <https://www.miamidade.gov/global/solidwaste/recycling.page>
 - Broward County: <https://www.broward.org/WasteAndRecycling/Recycling/pages/default.aspx>
 - Monroe County: <https://www.monroecounty-fl.gov/417/Recycling>
- **Conserve Water and Energy:**
 - Water: turn off the faucet when not in use, like brushing your teeth or taking quicker showers.
 - Energy consumption: unplug appliances that are not in use (like printers or coffee makers), turn off lights when not in use, or switch to energy-efficient light bulbs.
- **Reduce your carbon footprint:**
 - Try carpooling with coworkers or alternatives like public transportation, biking, or walking whenever possible.
 - Buy local and organic if possible to reduce the carbon footprint of transportation of goods and to support local farmers.
- **Plant a native tree, shrubbery, or plant to support the local ecosystem and wildlife.**



Greener Operations at Work

Mercury Elimination

EH&S challenges the FIU community to eliminate mercury wherever possible. Mercury is a toxic substance found in items like thermometers or fluorescent lamps. There are safer, greener, and more sustainable alternatives to mercury that function the same. Fisher Scientific is offering deep discounts from now until July on select non-mercury thermometers. For more information, email ehs@fiu.edu.

Shut the Fume Hood Sash

Chemical fume hoods are ventilated devices designed to limit exposure to hazardous or toxic vapors, fumes, or dust. The sash is a fume hood's door or window designed to open and close to set up the workstation. Here are some energy-saving and safe working tips:

- Keep the sash shut all the way when not in use to protect yourself and conserve energy.
- Only open the sash when setting up the workspace or taking down equipment.
- When using the fume hood, keep the sash opening at 18 inches or less to keep you and your coworkers safe while conserving energy.

Review EH&S Fume Hood Guidelines: <https://ehs.fiu.edu/assets/docs/chemical/fume-hoods-guidelines.pdf>.

Energy conservation

- If your space does not have automatic shut-off lights, make sure to shut the lights off when not in use.
- Keep refrigerators and freezers organized and inventoried to prevent ice build-up and reduce energy!
- Determine if you can unplug an appliance that is not in use; some appliances must be connected to maintain their certification or calibration; others can be unplugged to conserve energy.

Reduction of footprint

- Ensure your chemical inventories are accurate to ensure you do not over-order chemicals. Also, review the chemicals in use and see if they can be replaced with less hazardous materials.
- Reuse chemical containers for hazardous waste storage. You can reuse plastic or glass chemical containers for your hazardous waste satellite accumulation area. Review the requirements here: <https://ehs.fiu.edu/assets/docs/environmental-compliance/empty-containers.pdf>.
- Remember! FIU is a collection facility and not a treatment facility. Do not dump anything down the drain except for water and soap. Chemicals like alcohol, acetones, acids, and bases must all be collected. All hazardous waste must be collected and disposed of through the hazardous waste program. For more information, see the web pages below:
- Chemical Safety Program: <https://ehs.fiu.edu/safety-programs/chemical/index.html>
- Hazardous Waste Program: <https://ehs.fiu.edu/safety-programs/environmental-compliance/index.html#3>

Efforts From EH&S

Stormwater is water that comes from precipitation, mainly rainfall, here at FIU. Stormwater runoff is when precipitation flows into storm drain inlets, introducing it into the storm drain system. Stormwater can transport pollutants into the storm drain system, so we must do our part to prevent this. Pollutants include oil, grease, paint, human or animal waste, and others.

FIU has a zero-tolerance policy for illicit discharges; nothing can be discharged into the sewer drains or storm drain system. Check out FIU's Illicit Discharge policy here: <https://ehs.fiu.edu/assets/docs/environmental-compliance/illicit-discharge.pdf>.

Learn more about Stormwater Basics here: <https://ehs.fiu.edu/assets/docs/environmental-compliance/stormwater-basics.pdf>.

Report a stormwater problem or submit an idea here: <https://webforms.fiu.edu/view.php?id=1013957>.

Review our Environmental Management Policy here: <https://policies.fiu.edu/policy/349>.

Or Check out EH&S' Stormwater webpage here: <https://ehs.fiu.edu/safety-programs/environmental-compliance/index.html#2>.



Visit the EH&S Laboratory Safety webpage for more information, found [here](#).

Reach out with any questions or concerns: ehs@fiu.edu.