EH&S Newsletter_December_2023 Written

Newsletter Highlights

A New Year Is On The Horizon! 2
Heads Up For This Month 2
LSA Top 5 Fails 2
Upcoming Emergency Wash Unit Inspections 3
Laboratory Safety Inspections: How to Always Be Prepared 3

A New Year Is On The Horizon!

As the end of the fall semester approaches, EH&S wants to take a moment to wish you all a happy holiday season and a happy new year! It's important to enjoy the last part of 2023, but let's make sure we do so safely. This newsletter will discuss the top five compliance gaps found during the 2023 Laboratory Self Audit, upcoming emergency wash unit inspections, and ways to prepare for laboratory inspections throughout the year. Safety is everyone's responsibility!

Heads Up For This Month

- 2024, here we come! Let us close the year off strong and set ourselves up for the next year!
- December's Safety Shout out goes to Tom Scicluna, Professor of Sculpture in the College of Communication, Architecture + The Arts. Check out his biography or EH&S' Safety Shoutout feature.
- Consider nominating someone or a group for EH&S' Safety Shoutout by emailing ehs@fiu.edu!
- During periods of lower campus activity, always use the buddy system during operations to stay safe.

LSA Top 5 Fails

EH&S (Environmental Health and Safety) is currently reviewing the data collected during the 2023 Laboratory Self Audit (LSA) to identify areas of improvement and reduce systematic compliance gaps. To achieve this, EH&S will create initiatives and campaigns to promote awareness. After analyzing the data, EH&S has identified the following top five (5) compliance gaps. To view the compliance gaps identified in previous years, please check out the data reports published annually on the LSA webpage: https://ehs.fiu.edu/safety-programs/laboratory/index.html#3.

1. First Aid kits had the highest failure point because they were either not present, restocked, or checked annually.
2. The next high failure point is not having an accurate chemical inventory reflected in EH&S's Chemical Inventory System. If you do not have access to the system or need assistance in navigating the system, please get in touch with the Chemical Safety Officer, Margarita Kotzer: mkhabins@fiu.edu. FIU must provide a precise list of chemicals per location. In the event of an emergency, it is crucial for the safety of emergency personnel to have access to this information.
3. The following failure point is the EH&S safety trainings were not conducted by all space occupants. It is required for all space occupants to have the EH&S safety trainings completed before commencing work in the space. The required trainings depend on the hazards found in the space and have different expirations (some must be conducted annually, while others every three years). Regardless of the level of interaction, all space occupants must complete the required trainings based on the hazards found in the space. Check out the EH&S training webpage for more information: https://ehs.fiu.edu/training/courses-available/index.html.
4. Additionally, the EH&S training records for all space occupants must be easily accessible in the space by everyone in the vicinity. The training records can either be accessed electronically or physically printed out. If the records are electronic, everyone in the space must be able to furnish them upon request.
5. The fifth-highest failure point is not having spill kits for all the hazards in the space, not annually checking the spill kits, or not restocking/replenishing used spill kit materials. All occupants need

to be familiarized with this kit, whether they interact with the hazard or not, to ensure proper spill containment. Additionally, annual inspections and training of the spill kits are required. Lastly, used materials must be restocked or replenished immediately.

Report incidents, injuries, and near misses to EH&S through the EH&S reporting tool found here: https://ehs.fiu.edu/report/index.html.

Upcoming Emergency Wash Unit Inspections

In the first quarter of 2024, EH&S will conduct the annual inspections of emergency wash units, including safety showers, eye washes, squeeze bottles, gravity eye washes, and more. They are designed to provide water to wash or flush away hazardous substances that accidentally come into contact with the skin or eyes. The EH&S annual inspection is split into two major components: the unit's structural integrity and the user interaction. Here are some things you can do to ensure compliance.

- Ensure the unit is unobstructed. There must be a 3-foot clearance around the unit to ensure access.
- Check the unit for damages, leaks, or faults and report them to the Department of Facilities Management.
- Check temporary squeeze bottles and ensure they are sealed and not expired. If they were used or expired, they must be replaced before operations can commence/continue.
- Activate the plumbed units periodically to eliminate sediment buildup. Please note that some units drain directly onto the floor, which creates a slip-and-fall hazard. Ensure you have sufficient cleaning supplies when periodically activating the units.

Remember, your primary means of safety is reducing risk by eliminating potential splash and spill incidents. Next is handling the hazards appropriately, with great caution, and utilizing the correct personal protective equipment. After these precautions are the emergency wash units; they should never be considered your first line of defense.

Each unit (except squeeze bottles and gravity units) has an EH&S inspection tag, which logs inspections. If your unit does not have it or has not been inspected within the past year, contact EH&S by emailing ehs@fiu.edu.

Laboratory Safety Inspections: How to Always Be Prepared

EH&S conducts laboratory inspections periodically throughout the year. Staying organized and complying with all safety regulations is imperative to ensure a safe working and learning environment. Here are some tips to always be prepared.

- Conduct a visual inspection at least once a year to ensure the space is operational, any issues are reported, and the clutter is removed. Think about streamlining standard operating procedures by simplifying the process, relocating hazards, or rearranging equipment to make the process easier. Ensure all workstations and benches are clear of clutter.
- Ensure the EH&S Emergency Signage, placed outside the door, is updated annually to accurately reflect hazards and space contacts.

- Check and update room access for your space. As a university, it is common to have a high turnover; ensure you check who has access to your space every semester and add or remove users accordingly.
- Keep an inventory of all the equipment and ensure they are all operational and calibrated/certified as needed. Some equipment, like the chemical fume hoods and biological safety cabinets, require annual recertification.
- Ensure all hazards and chemicals are inventoried and labeled. All chemicals must be accurately inventoried in the EH&S Chemical Inventory System. Special Hazards must be registered with the appropriate EH&S Safety Officer. All space occupants must be made aware of all the hazards within the space, even if they have no interaction with it.
- Label all hazards, samples, and storage appropriately.
- Ensure hazards and samples are stored in compatible containers and contained so as not to expose all space occupants.
- Ensure all emergency documents and contact information are accurate and reviewed by all space occupants annually or as hazards/procedures change.
    - Emergency procedures, like spill procedures, evacuation, and incident/injury procedures, must be physically posted.
    - Other documents like standard operating procedures and shutdown procedures do not need to be posted but must be easily accessed by all space occupants.
- Ensure logs for equipment or chemicals are in place, and training records are accessible.
- Ensure it is common practice to donn the appropriate personal protective equipment before commencing operations or interacting with hazards. Also, set up and break down for operations should be conducted daily, and hazards must be contained and stored correctly.