



Florida International University | Department Of Environmental Health & Safety | [ehs@fiu.edu](mailto:ehs@fiu.edu)

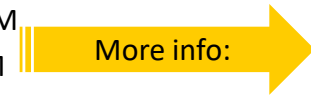
Happy Valentine's Day! This day has roots in ancient Rome and has evolved into a celebration of love and affection. It was in the 18th century when it became popular to exchange cards, flowers, and gifts. In this lovely newsletter, we focus on sharing our love with new employees and some tips to help you love yourself ergonomically and mentally. We want to hear from you about any challenges you are facing in the working and learning environment. EH&S is coming to you! We are hosting four (4) in-person seminars on different campuses where we want to hear from you! Come join us!

## Newsletter Highlights

- ♥ Heads Up For This Month
- ♥ Guide for New Lab Employees
- ♥ Loving Your Workspace: Ergonomics Tips
- ♥ Caring For Your Mental Health

## Heads Up For This Month:

- ♥ Join us for an in-person seminar where we want to hear from you.
  - ♥ CTS CTS 1st Floor Main auditorium: Feb 5 at 11 AM
  - ♥ BBC MSB 105: Feb 6 at 11 AM
  - ♥ MMC WC 130: Feb 8 at 1 PM
  - ♥ EC EC 2300: Feb 8 at 11 AM
- ♥ Lab Safety Awareness Week is February 12-16, 2024: check out our webpage for more information, challenges, and upcoming events.
- ♥ Annual Emergency Wash unit inspections are currently underway!



## New Lab Employee Guide: Tips for setting up and staying connected

### ♥ New Principal Investigator or Laboratory Manager? ♥

Welcome to FIU! EH&S requires submitting the New Principal Investigator or Lab Manager Safety Compliance Form to ensure the safety of all individuals conducting research. You can find the form at <https://ehs.fiu.edu/assets/docs/lab-safety/ehs-f218-new-pi-safety-compliance.pdf>. The checklist included in the form is easy to follow and is designed to ensure that EH&S can support all research operations through their Safety Programs. Complete all the requirements before beginning work in the space. The instructions include the following:

- ♥ Joining the EH&S laboratory safety email group
- ♥ Request Emergency Signage
- ♥ Complete the required EH&S Training
- ♥ Conduct on-the-job Safety Training with all space occupants
  - ♥ Check out this fun video discussing basic laboratory safety: <https://youtu.be/N0QqLVUDkvA?si=tIBamdB6R1LAWUJev>
- ♥ Update and maintain required Emergency and Procedural documents
- ♥ Obtain access to the Chemical Inventory Program
- ♥ Identify the Special Hazards involved in your work



The form must be completed and submitted to EH&S before commencing operations within the space; it must be submitted through email to [ehs@fiu.edu](mailto:ehs@fiu.edu). If you have any questions or concerns, please email [ehs@fiu.edu](mailto:ehs@fiu.edu).

### ♥ New Laboratory Staff? ♥

Welcome to FIU! Even if you are support staff, EH&S recommends reviewing the Form named New Principal Investigator or Laboratory Manager Safety Compliance Form because some requirements apply. For example:

- ♥ Requesting to be added to the EH&S email group, where EH&S sends out pertinent information.
- ♥ Completing required EH&S Training
- ♥ Obtaining on-the-job Safety Training from the Principal Investigator or Laboratory Manager
  - ♥ Check out this fun video discussing basic laboratory safety: <https://youtu.be/N0QqLVUDkvA?si=tIBamdB6R1LAWUJev>
- ♥ Reviewing required EH&S documents



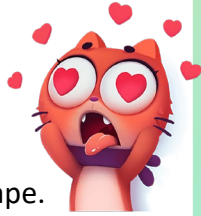
If you have any questions or concerns, please email [ehs@fiu.edu](mailto:ehs@fiu.edu).

## Love your Workspace: Ergonomic Tips

Ergonomic workspaces are important for health. Consider time spent on repetitive motions. Here are tips for office and lab settings. Check out this EH&S infographic: <https://ehs.fiu.edu/assets/docs/general/ergo-remotedesktop-infograph.pdf>.

### Office Work Ergonomic Tips:

- ♥ Ensure the chair supports the natural curve of your spine and that your feet touch the ground comfortably.
- ♥ Adjust desk height to keep wrists straight and parallel to the ground while typing.
- ♥ Position the monitor at eye level.
- ♥ Maintain a distance of about arm's length from the screen to minimize eye strain.
- ♥ Keep the keyboard and mouse close enough so elbows are close to your body, forming an L-shape.
- ♥ Take short breaks every hour to stand, stretch, or walk around. Vary working position throughout the day.



### Laboratory Work Ergonomic Tips:

- ♥ Keep workstations organized to minimize unnecessary reaching and twisting.
- ♥ Store commonly used items within arm's reach to reduce strain on the back and shoulders.
- ♥ Rotate between different tasks to avoid prolonged periods of repetitive work; avoid excessive bending or angling of the wrist.
- ♥ Use anti-fatigue mats during prolonged periods of standing.
- ♥ Choose laboratory tools with comfortable and ergonomic grips.

## Caring For Your Mental Health

Prioritizing mental health is vital in demanding academic and research environments. Faculty, staff, and students can benefit from cultivating mental resilience and emotional intelligence. Here are some tips to help with that.

### Develop Emotional Intelligence:

- ♥ Prioritize Mental Health Days: Recognize the importance of mental health days; recharge and focus on yourself.
- ♥ Recognize and Label Emotions: Pay attention to your emotions, identify them, and understand their triggers.
- ♥ Empathize with Others: Cultivate empathy by actively listening and understanding the perspectives of others.
- ♥ Practice Mindfulness: Incorporate mindfulness techniques into your daily routine. This can include meditation, deep breathing exercises, or simply taking moments to be present and aware of your surroundings.

### Set Realistic Expectations:

- ♥ Define Boundaries: Clearly establish and communicate personal and professional boundaries. Recognize when to say no and prioritize tasks to avoid feeling overwhelmed.
- ♥ Celebrate Achievements: Acknowledge and celebrate both small and significant accomplishments. Setting realistic expectations and recognizing achievements can positively impact your mental outlook.

### Foster Social Connections:

- ♥ Build Support Systems: Cultivate strong social connections with friends, family, and colleagues. Share your thoughts and feelings, and be open to offering support in return.
- ♥ Engage in Positive Conversations: Foster an environment where conversations focus on positivity and growth. Surround yourself with individuals who uplift and inspire you.

### Support from FIU's Office of Employee Assistance (OEA):

- ♥ Assistance and Support: Take advantage of counseling services provided by the university. Professional support can offer valuable coping strategies and provide a safe space for self-reflection. The Office of Employee Assistance offers free, confidential professional assistance to help employees and their families. Email them at [oea@fiu.edu](mailto:oea@fiu.edu) or call them at (305) 348-2469 (everything is confidential!).
- ♥ Connect with Others: FIU's Office of Employee Assistance strongly believes in the benefits of social connections and support. They offer Support and other FIU Community Groups to provide faculty and staff a safe space to cultivate and maintain a sense of well-being and empowerment through connecting with colleagues. Check out all their services and support on their website: [oea.fiu.edu](http://oea.fiu.edu).



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

Reach out with any questions or concerns: [ehs@fiu.edu](mailto:ehs@fiu.edu).