

EH&S Newsletter: August_2024

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Ready, Set, Safety!

INTRODUCTION

As we enter the new academic year, our campus is buzzing with activity and new beginnings. To support a smooth and safe start, we have updated and launched two important programs: the Emergency Signage Program and the 2024 Lab Self-Audit (LSA). These initiatives are designed to enhance our campus safety infrastructure and ensure we are well-prepared for emergencies. Alongside these updates, it’s crucial to maintain basic situational awareness amidst the increased foot traffic and excitement of the fall semester. Read on to learn how to participate and contribute to a safer campus environment.

HEADS UP FOR THIS MONTH

- The votes are in! The EH&S’s Safety Slogan Winner is Nicole McFarland! “FIU Safety: Paws and Think Before You Act!” is on our website! Congrats Nicole!
- We still have two (2) contests open: the Safety Scavenger Hunt and the Safety Poster Contest. It is free to join and you can win a prize! Check it out: <https://ehs.fiu.edu/resources/index.html#1>
- August’s Safety Shoutout goes to the Central Reservations group! Check out the [EH&S’ Safety Shoutout feature](#). Consider nominating someone or a group for an EH&S’ Safety Shout by emailing ehs@fiu.edu.

Emergency Signage Program: Enhancing Campus Safety

Our new Emergency Signage Program aims to ensure that all campus spaces with hazards or where experiments are conducted have clear and effective emergency signage. This program is crucial for

providing essential hazard information and emergency contact details that are vital for first responders during emergencies. Here's what you need to know:

- **Program Overview:** The Emergency Signage Program captures data to create and install signage that identifies hazards and provides emergency contacts for each space. This signage is essential for effective emergency response and ensuring the safety of all personnel.
- **Learn more by checking out the website:** <https://ehs.fiu.edu/safety-programs/laboratory/index.html#2>
 - **Video Overview:** Watch our Emergency Signage Program Update Video to understand the details and benefits of this program.
- **Request Signage:** To request emergency signage for your space, complete the Emergency Signage Request Form found on the EH&S Emergency Signage Webpage: <https://ehs.fiu.edu/safety-programs/laboratory/index.html#2>
- **Process:**
 - **Participant Requirements:** Group Leads (the Principal Investigator or the Academic Laboratory Manager) will either submit the request or designate an authorized proxy. The Proxy must be from the Group Leads group and understand the hazards and operations conducted within the space. Capture location details, hazards, and emergency contacts.
 - **Shared Spaces/Open Concepts:** Spaces with two (2) or more groups in the space must collaborate to submit a single emergency signage request that includes hazards in the space. The Group Leads in the space must determine two (2) emergency contacts that will be on all the doors that lead into the space and understand the hazards and operations conducted within the space.
 - **Request Emergency Signage:** An Emergency Signage Request is submitted capturing the location, Group Lead(s), two (2) Emergency Contacts, and all the regulated hazards handled, used, produced, or stored in the space.
 - **Approval Process:** EH&S initiates an approval process. Emails are sent to the group lead(s) as part of the verification process.
 - **Signage Creation:** Upon approval, EH&S creates and installs the signage.
 - **Database Update:** Updated information is shared with FIU Police Dispatch for emergency response coordination.
- **FAQ:** For more details, check out our Emergency Signage FAQ, which covers common questions and provides additional guidance on participating in the program.

Lab Self-Audit (LSA): Ensuring Safety and Compliance

The Lab Self-Audit (LSA) is a mandatory annual self-inspection program for academic and research communities at FIU. It promotes individual accountability, reduces lab-related incidents, and encourages a proactive safety and regulatory compliance approach. Conducted through an online survey, it aims to identify safety and compliance concerns and reduce gaps. The LSA is used in conjunction with EH&S annual inspections to identify deficiencies and implement corrective actions by educating occupants on best laboratory practices.

Here's what you need to know:

- **What Is the LSA?** The LSA is an online survey that helps identify safety and compliance concerns in your lab. It provides links and resources to address these issues and ensure adherence to safety regulations.
- **Timeline and Access:**
 - **Time Frame:** The 2024 Lab Self-Audit will be open for three (3) months. from August 1st to October 31st.
 - **Access:** Access to the LSA is found on the EH&S LSA webpage: <https://ehs.fiu.edu/safety-programs/laboratory/index.html#3>
- **Resources:**
 - **Learn about the LSA:**
 - **LSA Introduction Guide Video:** This video provides all the information you need to know about the LSA!
 - **Prepare for the LSA:** These resources will help you prepare for the audit.
 - **LSA Preview:** A PDF copy of the online survey showing all questions, explanations, choices, and conditional triggers.
 - **LSA Checklist:** This is a condensed version of the questions in a checklist-style format for quick safety walkthroughs. Use it before commencing the LSA or throughout the year to ensure compliance.
 - **Are you required to submit an LSA?**
 - **Determination Survey:** Use the [2024 LSA Determination Survey](#) to determine if an LSA is required for your space. Note that this survey is anonymous and not linked to the LSA.
- **Important Notes:**
 - **Eligibility:** Only FIU employees (staff, faculty) are allowed to complete the LSA. Non-employees (students, volunteers, interns, etc.) are not permitted to fill it out.

Situational Awareness Heads Up Panthers

With the arrival of new students, increased foot traffic, and all the commotion that comes with the fall semester, it's crucial to focus on maintaining a safe and organized environment. The start of the school year usually brings a lot of excitement, but it's also a time to be vigilant about safety and situational awareness. The higher levels of activity mean there are more opportunities for safety issues to arise, so staying alert and minimizing distractions is essential.

- **Be Aware of Your Surroundings:** Regularly scan your environment for potential hazards or changes, such as new obstacles or unusual behavior.
- **Monitor Foot Traffic:** Observe and anticipate movement patterns, especially in high-traffic areas, to avoid collisions and ensure smooth flow.
- **Manage Distractions:** Minimize personal distractions, like phone use, to stay focused on your surroundings and respond quickly to potential safety issues.
- **Communicate Clearly:** Communicate clearly and directly with colleagues and students to ensure everyone is informed and aware of safety procedures.
- **Stay Informed:** Keep up-to-date with any changes in safety protocols or new information related to your environment and adjust your awareness accordingly.
- **Report Concerns:** Immediately report any safety hazards or concerns to the appropriate personnel to address issues before they escalate.