

# EH&S Newsletter: February 2025

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## Safety That Lasts, with Care from EH&S

### Introduction


As February unfolds, it’s the perfect time to “fall in love” with safety and make it a priority in our everyday practices. This month, we’re focusing on strengthening our commitment to safe environments by reflecting on current safety measures and identifying opportunities for improvement. Your input continues to be invaluable, and we invite you to share your thoughts on which topics matter most to you as we prepare for the upcoming safety seminars. Together, we can ensure a safe, successful, and “heartfelt” approach to maintaining the well-being of our community. Let’s make safety a priority, now and always!

### Heads Up For This Month

- The Department of EH&S is sending a safety-filled Valentine to the FIU community this February! We’re *falling* for your dedication to safety and are *smitten* by the way we’ve all worked together to create a secure and thriving environment. Let’s keep the *love for safety* burning bright and *heart* the opportunities ahead with passion and care. Be safe, be smart, and let’s make 2025 a year full of love and safety that *never skips a beat!*
- The February Safety Shout Out goes to **Donaley Dorsett**, Associate Director of Building Operations in Engineering Campus.
- Consider nominating someone or a group for an EH&S’ Safety Shout by visiting <https://ehs.fiu.edu>.

### February Safety Seminars: 3 Campuses in 3 Days!

As part of Lab Safety Week, EH&S is hosting **three mandatory safety seminars** covering critical topics to keep our research and workspaces safe. Each session will be available in person and via Zoom (same link for all sessions).

 Schedule & Topics:

**Tuesday, Feb. 11 | 11 AM | BBC: MSB 105** – General Safety & Space Management

**Wednesday, Feb. 12 | 1 PM | MMC: WC 130** – New DCM Regulation & Peroxide-Forming Chemicals

**Thursday, Feb. 13 | 11 AM | EC: EC 3930** – Gas Cylinder Safety & Chemical Safety

Each session will start with a brief overview of key safety topics, followed by an open discussion where you can ask questions and raise concerns. Your participation is essential in maintaining a safe and compliant environment across FIU.

Join in person or via Zoom! <https://fiu.zoom.us/j/89800503873?pwd=I7luTaL2wxQaUDIKxroBFR0tpZ8BK8.1>

We look forward to seeing you there!

We've created a short survey to capture your thoughts and ideas to simplify this process. Completing the survey takes only a few minutes and will have a lasting impact on how we serve the FIU community.

Your participation helps us shape a safer, more informed environment for everyone. Together, we can make 2025 the safest year yet! Complete the Survey here.

[https://fiu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_6x3k25GXtQg6gpo](https://fiu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6x3k25GXtQg6gpo)

## Incident Reporting: Have you updated the new procedure?

At FIU, it is critical to report all incidents—whether they require medical attention or not—as well as any near misses. Prompt and accurate reporting helps ensure a safer environment and supports the well-being of all staff and students.

Updated Process for Reporting Incidents:

- Log in to <https://my.fiu.edu>
- Click on the "Health and Safety" tile
- Click on the "Report Incident" button
- Select either:
  - Incident (Medical Request)
  - Incident (Report Only)

This streamlined reporting process ensures that incidents are properly documented and addressed. Whether the incident requires medical attention or is just a near miss, your report plays a crucial role in improving safety protocols and preventing future issues.

Our department conducts investigations on all reported incidents, as well as others we identify through routine safety assessments. By proactively assessing hazards, we implement corrective actions—whether through physical improvements or operational adjustments—to mitigate risks and prevent future occurrences.

Remember, timely reporting is key to maintaining a safe and healthy FIU community.

## Chemical Safety: Proper Storage & Disposal Matters

Ensuring the safe storage and disposal of chemicals is paramount for safety and compliance. By following best practices and understanding the critical procedures, we can protect people, equipment, and the environment.

Recent incidents underscore how lapses in chemical storage and disposal can create hazardous situations. These events emphasize the necessity of regularly evaluating chemical storage spaces, keeping labels accurate, and guaranteeing that all personnel are trained in safe handling practices.

A proactive approach to safely manage hazards includes conducting annual training and reviewing operations. This provides an opportunity to reinforce basic safety principles, assess current procedures, and identify any potential hazards within shared spaces. Routine evaluations help maintain compliance and ensure that unsafe practices are addressed before they lead to serious incidents. By making these reviews a standard practice, we can reinforce safe behaviors, identify potential risks early, and ensure that storage and disposal procedures remain effective and up to date.

The **key to safe storage** is understanding the specific hazards associated with each chemical. This means reviewing each substance's Safety Data Sheet (SDS) before storing it. The SDS will guide you on safe storage practices, including appropriate containers and segregation requirements. For example, flammable chemicals should never be stored near oxidizers, and reactive chemicals should be kept separate from incompatible materials.

Creating **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** for chemical storage and conducting regular **inventory checks** are vital. These checks will help identify deteriorating containers or chemicals past their useful life, allowing staff to address issues before they result in hazardous situations.

**Regarding disposal**, never dispose of chemicals in sinks, drains, or regular trash. **Collect and segregate waste** according to compatibility. Properly label containers for hazardous waste and place in the satellite accumulation area (**SAA**) of the space. Regular inspections of the SAA will help spot potential issues before they lead to spills or leaks.

Proper chemical handling is not just a regulatory requirement—it's part of maintaining a culture of safety. We can minimize risks and ensure safe working and learning environments by providing training for all staff, ensuring proper storage, and implementing safe disposal practices. **EH&S is always available to guide you on best practices and help with any concerns regarding chemical safety.**

Check out the "Common Waste Disposal Streams" guide on our website that outlines methods of disposal for different types of waste, including Hazardous Waste, Solid Hazardous Waste, Biomedical or Biological Waste, Universal Waste, Other Items/Materials, Empty Containers, and Unwanted Supplies.

[https://ehs.fiu.edu/\\_assets/docs/environmental-compliance/assorted-wastes.pdf](https://ehs.fiu.edu/_assets/docs/environmental-compliance/assorted-wastes.pdf)