



As the semester winds down and campus settles into its cozy holiday rhythm, we are excited to bring you a cheerful end-of-year edition of our Safety Newsletter. December is a time for celebration, reflection, and preparing for a fresh start, and we want to help you close out the year feeling informed and supported. Whether you work in a busy research lab, an active office, or a quieter space this season, there is something here for you. From festive safety reminders to behind-the-scenes highlights from EH&S, we hope this edition brings a bit of warmth and fun while keeping safety front and center. So grab a cup of cocoa, settle in, and enjoy our holiday-themed look at safety across campus.

## Newsletter Highlights

### Heads Up For This Month

- A Safety Carol: A Journey through time**
- Naughty or Nice: Making a List and Checking it Twice**
- Behind the Scenes at EH&S: An End of Year Review**

## Heads Up For This Month:

- Heads up for January. EH&S will begin the annual safety shower and eye wash inspections across FIU. Please ensure all units remain fully accessible at all times and run all plumbed units weekly to keep water fresh and clear. If your area uses eye-wash squeeze bottles, check their expiration dates and replace them as needed, as departments are responsible for maintaining these units. Let us start the new year with safe, proactive habits that keep every workspace ready for emergencies.
- Congratulations to Amer Awwad, Senior Research Scientist for the Applied Research Center, our December Safety Shoutout! Check out or nominate someone for an EH&S' Safety Shout by visiting <https://ehs.fiu.edu>.

## A Safety Carol: Journey through Safety's Past, Present & Future

The office was quiet as you wrapped up your day, muttering a tired “Bah humbug” as you pushed through your final tasks, unaware that this December evening would bring unexpected company.. A soft clatter echoed behind you. A figure appeared, wrapped in chains made from broken PPE, frayed cords, and forgotten procedures. The Ghost of Safety Past.

It reached for your hand, and the room disappeared. You stood in scenes from earlier years. Aisles cluttered. Containers unlabeled. Shortcuts taken because nothing bad had happened yet. You saw near misses you once brushed off and moments when a small hazard was ignored. The Spirit reminded you that every strong safety culture begins by learning from yesterday.

The world shifted again. You were now watching your workplace as it is today. Some people followed procedures with care. Someone secured a loose cable. Someone double-checked a label. You saw teamwork and quick reminders that kept everyone safer. But you also noticed the easy corners to cut. A cord stretched across a walkway. Safety signs ignored for a “quick fix”. Items blocking an exit. You realized how much safety depends on choices made in the moment.

A cold breeze announced the arrival of the Ghost of Safety Future. Silent and steady, it showed you two paths. In one, incidents grew and the workplace suffered. In the other, the team was trained, the space was orderly, and safety was part of every action. You saw the future that comes from commitment and consistency.

You breathed deeply, realizing the Spirits had given you a gift. The past gave you wisdom. The present gave you awareness. The future gave you choice.

You rose from your desk with new clarity. Safety is not about perfection. It is about actions. It is about improving one step at a time. It is about choosing to protect yourself and those around you each day.

This season, we invite you to awaken renewed. Learn from the past. Stay aware in the present. Shape the future. Let this be the year safety becomes a habit that lasts long after December.



## Naughty or Nice: Making a List and Checking it Twice

The holidays are a time for cheer, reflection, and checking your safety list twice, just like Santa's elves keep an eye on who has been naughty or nice. This month, take a look at your workspace and see where you fall. Are you keeping hazards at bay while spreading holiday cheer, or sneaking down the chimney of risky behavior?

### Naughty or Nice Checklist

#### Lab Practices

: Leaving uncapped containers, unlabeled bottles, or spills unattended.

: Capped contains proper labeling, secondary containment, tidy benches, and prompt spill clean-ups

#### Chemical Storage

: Storing incompatible chemicals together, ignoring expiration dates, or letting unknowns pile up.

: Segregating chemicals by class, checking expiration dates, and keeping an updated chemical inventory.

#### Electrical Safety

: Daisy-chaining extension cords, cords crossing aisles creating tripping hazards, or overloading outlets.

: Using approved power strips, unplugging equipment when not in use, and keeping cords organized and away.

#### Housekeeping & Facilities

: Blocking exits, fire extinguishers, or eyewash stations; leaving clutter in hallways.

: Clear pathways, accessible safety equipment, and consistent cleaning.

#### PPE & Behavior

: Skipping PPE or just wearing long sleeves or long pants.

: Always wearing proper PPE and using a lab coat in addition to the covered limbs.

#### End-of-Year Prep

: Leaving experiments running unattended over the break or forgetting to check freezers.

: Completing shutdown procedures, securing hazardous materials, and updating emergency contacts.

If you noticed some “Naughty” behaviors in your space, now is the perfect time to make improvements. A safe working environment protects you, your colleagues, and the work you have invested in all year. As you enjoy the season, remember that small actions have a big impact.

Ensure everyone returns in the new year to a safe, cheerful environment through a proactive safety approach. May your holidays be bright, your labs safe, and your safety list forever “Nice”.



## Behind the Scenes at EH&S: Year-End Highlights

Ever wonder what happens behind the curtain at EH&S throughout the year? Our team has been hard at work supporting research, academics, operations, and the FIU community. Here is a look at the impact our programs have made across campus.

**Safety Education and Public Outreach:** EH&S proudly represented FIU on the national stage through CSHEMA, where we presented maximizing outreach and earned three awards for innovation, process improvement, and marketing. We celebrated National Safety Month with contests, tabling sessions, and online engagement. Our team reached more than 488 new employees through bi-weekly New Employee Experience sessions and recognized ten outstanding Panthers through Safety Shout Outs. Training efforts reached more than 25,000 online module completions and over 500 attendees in instructor-led classes. Throughout the year, we responded to 138 health and safety concerns and expanded awareness efforts across multiple platforms.

**Environmental Compliance:** To strengthen stormwater awareness, EH&S hosted volunteer events, distributed educational materials, and supported the FIU Sustainability Fair. Our team conducted 89 compliance inspections and partnered with Facilities Management to improve stormwater and storage tank compliance processes.

**Fire Prevention and Life Safety:** EH&S transitioned to CampusOptics to better track fire safety assets, drills, and inspections. Between July 2024 and August 2025, our team completed 77 plan reviews, 182 event inspections, 53 permits, 78 emergency responses, and provided more than 700 hours of fire safety support.

**General Safety:** Using CampusOptics, we enhanced inspection tracking and shifted our training focus to reduce slips, trips, and falls. We completed 117 injury investigations, implemented 57 corrective actions, and conducted 25 safety inspections. Our team also documented 64 indoor air quality assessments.

**Laboratory Safety:** CampusOptics now supports our inventory system, waste requests, inspections, and lab management. A successful beta test helped refine the platform ahead of the July 2025 rollout. The 2024 LSA reached 608 participants, supported by stronger campaigns and leadership involvement. EH&S also hosted a DCM Open Forum, coordinated DCM monitoring resources, and completed more than 689 lab inspections, 65 research proposal reviews, 313 surveillance clearances, 1,346 hazardous waste pickups, and 324 research approvals.

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).