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Welcome, Foolish Mortals, to the Spooky Safety Gazette: Step inside, if you dare, and wander through the shadowy halls, where the nights grow long and the spirits of clutter, looming deadlines, and mischievous chemicals stir. In this month's edition, we guide you through the ghostly corridors of approaching LSA submissions, the tombs of forgotten equipment, and the alchemist's secrets of chemical safety. Along the way, you may encounter mummies, skeletons, witches, and even the occasional playful vampire. Fear not, brave souls, for with vigilance, a touch of magic, and a dash of housekeeping, your lab can remain a safe and spirited sanctuary.

## Newsletter Highlights

 **Spooky Heads Up For This Month**

 **LSA Due Before Midnight Strikes**

 **Zombie Rooms & Creeping Clutter**

 **Potions, Brews, and Chemical Stews: A Cautionary Tale**

## Spooky Heads Up For This Month:

-  Heads up, ghouls and goblins! The mummies are unwrapping, skeletons are rattling, and witches are stirring up a batch of safety spells. This month, a Biosafety Seminar rises from the crypt on October 15, followed by CampusOptics tutorials haunting October 16 and October 23. Wrap yourself in knowledge, dust off your broomsticks, and haunt these sessions like a true lab phantom. The witching hour is near, so check the [Announcements link](#) for full details. Stay spooky, stay sharp, and stay safe! 
- Congratulations to William "Bill" Chamberlain, Marine Branch Lab Manager II for the Field Operations Center with the Institute of Environment, our October Safety Shoutout! Check out or nominate someone for an EH&S' Safety Shout by visiting <https://ehs.fiu.edu>.

## The Witching Hour Approaches: LSA Due Before Midnight Strikes

The witching hour soon approaches, and the twilight zone looms near. Ghosts drift through hallways, skeletons rattle in cupboards, witches cackle from the shadows, and vampires peek from dark corners, all here to remind you that the Laboratory Self-Audit (LSA) deadline is almost upon us. If your space appears on the List of Spaces Required to Submit the LSA on the [LSA webpage](#), you must complete your submission by October 31 at midnight.

The LSA is your magical lantern, helping you spot lurking hazards and ensuring your lab remains a safe environment for your coven of researchers. The [LSA webpage](#) is your spellbook, containing access instructions, the list of required spaces, a PDF preview of the LSA, and a handy walkthrough checklist. Think of it as your potion recipe for order and protection, keeping goblins, mummies, and mischievous poltergeists of disorganization at bay.



Even the slyest werewolves or tiniest sprites cannot perform your audit for you. Gather your team of witches, wizards, and lab familiars, summon your notes, and tackle your LSA before the clock tolls. Every flask checked, every workstation accounted for, every haunted corner illuminated keeps your space from becoming a haunted house of forgotten tasks.

Do not linger in the shadows. The spirits of safety are watching, the mummies are stirring, and the ghosts of incomplete paperwork are restless. Submit your LSA and let your lab shine brighter than a jack-o'-lantern on a moonlit night. Complete your LSA now, and you'll banish the specters of stress before they ever appear.

## Zombie Rooms & Creeping Clutter : Don't Let Your Space Rise from the Grave

Beware the creeping clutter that can turn even the most well-kept laboratories and workspaces into undead graveyards. It starts innocently enough, a box left in the corner, a stack of supplies waiting for "later." Yet with each forgotten item, the room begins to change. Soon, shelves sag under the weight of artifacts no one remembers, hallways narrow with towering stacks, and benchtops vanish beneath relics of research long past. Before long, the lab feels less like a place of discovery and more like a tomb, where the silence is broken only by the imagined stirrings of the undead rising from the mess.

Spaces overtaken by clutter become zombie rooms, drained of life and haunted by items that serve no purpose. Equipment looms like restless mummies, and papers pile like burial shrouds, creating an eerie sense that the room itself is stirring awake with disorder. These spaces do not inspire progress; they suffocate it. Piles of paper stacked above refrigerators or machines are especially sinister, not only violating safe use requirements but also creating a fire hazard waiting to spark.

A tidy lab is no mere mortal convenience. Regular inventories and purges of unused or obsolete materials are the spells that keep your workspace alive and thriving. Old equipment that has outlived its usefulness, or chemicals that have become relics of experiments past, should be properly surplus or disposed of. These actions free up valuable space, reduce hazards, and allow workstations to function at their peak.

Clearing clutter reveals the hidden benefits: smooth workflows, safer access to exits, clean air circulation, and an environment that feels vibrant rather than oppressive. Creativity flourishes in order, and safety becomes second nature when every tool and material is in its rightful place.

To keep creeping clutter at bay, establish a simple routine: schedule monthly "mini-inventories" to catch stray items before they multiply, and assign responsibility so no one assumes it is someone else's problem. For zombie rooms already overrun, gather your team for a one-time purge, catalog everything, and release the relics to surplus or disposal. [The Surplus Department](#) can even swoop in like ghostly collectors; simply fill out the form, and they will whisk away outdated machines and forgotten artifacts. Paper phantoms can also be laid to rest. If your documents are not confidential, they can be recycled. If they are, request a confidential shredding bin through [Work Management](#), a locked coffin for your papers where you feed them through the slot until the service spirits them away for secure disposal.



Do not let your lab become a mummy's crypt of forgotten work or a zombie graveyard of abandoned equipment. Keep it from slipping into the undead with proper housekeeping, and watch your space flourish once more. With each relic banished and every corner restored, your lab rises from the graveyard of clutter like a powerful phantasm of productivity. Let the mummies rest, the zombies slumber, and the undead fade, as your workspace thrives alive with order, safety, and creativity.

## Potions, Brews, and Chemical Stews: A Cautionary Tale

Every skilled witch, wizard, or alchemist knows that the secret to a safe potion lies not only in the recipe but in how the ingredients are stored, labeled, and guarded. A cauldron is no place for mystery brews or forgotten flasks, and in the laboratory, the same truth applies.

Unlabeled containers are like cursed vessels, their contents hidden until misfortune strikes. Whether the bottle was left behind, created in haste, or passed down from others, it must never remain in the shadows. Every container in your space should carry a clear label at all times. If you have inherited an unlabeled item, resist the temptation to divine its nature. Instead, request its release through the hazardous waste program, so it can be handled safely and not summon any restless spirits in a hazardous seance.

Separation is also a vital protection. Just as no wise alchemist would stir venom into an elixir of healing, laboratory waste must never be mixed across categories. Biohazardous waste must remain apart from chemical waste, and incompatible chemicals must be kept in separate containers and segregated. To ignore this rule invites reactions that no spell or charm can contain.



Even the most powerful magicians respect their craft and follow their rituals. Administrative practices, steady oversight, and vigilance are the wards that keep accidents at bay. Establish clear procedures for labeling, storage, and disposal, for these safeguards protect not only your research but your colleagues, your space, and the community.

A well-ordered lab is the true philosopher's stone, turning risk into safety. After all, no discovery is worth conjuring chaos from a cauldron of neglect. True magic is found in the labs where safety and knowledge are brewed together.

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).

