

EH&S Newsletter: December 2024

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‘Tis the Season for Safety Cheer

Introduction

As we approach the end of the year, it's an ideal time to reflect on our safety practices and consider future improvement opportunities. In this issue, we highlight the top compliance gaps identified in the LSA. We will also discuss important upcoming inspections and certifications that will help ensure your space remains compliant. Additionally, we would like to gather your feedback on safety seminar topics that are most important to you. Your input will help us create engaging and relevant content, which will increase participation. Let’s work together to maintain a safe and successful environment in the coming year!

Heads Up For This Month

- The Department of Environmental Health & Safety wishes the FIU community a joyful and safe holiday season! Reflecting on this year, we’re inspired by your commitment to fostering a secure and thriving environment. Together, let’s continue prioritizing safety and embrace the opportunities of the coming year with optimism and resilience. Happy Holidays!
- 2025 is on the horizon! Let us be proactive in our approach to safety!
- Consider nominating someone or a group for an EH&S’ Safety Shout by visiting <https://ehs.fiu.edu>.

LSA Top 12 Compliance Gaps

The 2024 Laboratory Self Audit (LSA) results are currently being analyzed to identify the top compliance gaps. EH&S uses this information to construct awareness campaigns to reduce compliance gaps. In 2024, the top 12 trending compliance deficiencies are related to various emergency procedures. These gaps highlight the importance of properly maintaining, displaying, and reviewing critical emergency procedures

to ensure all space occupants are prepared to handle various emergencies. EH&S reminds all labs that these procedures are crucial for the safety and well-being of everyone in the laboratory.

It is imperative to understand the differences between them and their requirements. Below are the requirements and descriptions of the necessary documents.

Requirements:

- All procedures must be established before starting operations, updated as necessary, and before introducing equipment, materials, or hazards.
- Regardless of their interaction level, every occupant in the space must receive, review, and acknowledge these procedures annually.
 - EH&S strongly recommends a hands-on walkthrough of these procedures and implementing an annual acknowledgment form to ensure understanding.
- Everyone in the space must always have access to this information.
- The following Emergency Procedures must be physically displayed in the space: Emergency Spill Procedures, Emergency Incident/Injury Procedures, and Emergency Evacuation Procedures.

Emergency Hazardous Spill Procedures: These instructions provide directions on the safe and effective response to minor accidental releases of hazardous materials. They outline steps for containment and cleanup to minimize risks to human health, the environment, and property. They should dictate how to identify a minor or significant spill and what to do in either scenario. The procedures must be displayed in the space and distributed to all occupants (electronically or physically). They are only applicable to spaces with special hazardous materials.

https://ehs.fiu.edu/_assets/docs/environmental-compliance/spill-response-procedure.pdf

Emergency Incident/Injury Procedures: Protocols for the immediate response to accidents, injuries, or other emergencies. They outline steps for identifying if it is a minor or major incident, providing first aid, locating the nearest lifesaving equipment/ materials, contacting emergency services, and managing the situation until professional assistance arrives. Their importance lies in ensuring prompt and effective responses to mitigate harm and aid those affected. They must be displayed in the space and distributed to all space occupants (electronically or physically). https://ehs.fiu.edu/_assets/docs/resources/emergency-incident-or-injury-procedures-template.docx

Emergency Evacuation Procedures: Aimed at swiftly evacuating occupants during rapid on-set emergencies (e.g., fires, gas leaks, etc.). They provide specific steps for evacuation routes, assembly points, and, if possible, quick containment measures to minimize uncontained hazards. Their importance lies in safeguarding lives, removing individuals from danger, and protecting first responders from additional hazards if possible. It must be displayed in the space and distributed to all occupants (electronically or physically).

<https://ehs.fiu.edu/safety-programs/fire/evacuation-procedure/index.html>

Shutdown Procedures: Instructions for safely shutting down operations and equipment, securing hazards, and halting all activities when there is sufficient time (i.e., hurricane, scheduled maintenance, etc.). Their

importance lies in ensuring the orderly and safe cessation of operations, minimizing damage to equipment and resources, and protecting personnel and the environment from potential hazards. Must be distributed to all space occupants (electronically or physically).

https://ehs.fiu.edu/_assets/docs/lab-safety/ehs-doc611.00-emergency-shutdown-guidelines-2020.12.21.pdf

IMPORTANT! *It is not mandatory to adhere to a particular template when developing these procedures for your operations. EH&S does provide template guides to help you brainstorm ideas and consider various aspects of your operations. You can use the information provided as a reference, but it is essential to customize it to suit your specific circumstances.*

Upcoming Inspections and Certifications

As the first quarter of 2025 approaches, Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) is preparing for inspections and certifications designed to maintain safety and compliance across the FIU working and learning environments. These assessments will be conducted within the first quarter or have been scheduled throughout the year.

Scheduled Inspections and Certifications Include:

- Fire Safety
 - Fire Safety Inspections
 - State Fire Marshal Inspections
 - Fire Extinguisher Inspections and Annual Certifications
- General / Industrial Safety
 - General Safety Walkthroughs
 - General Industrial Safety Inspections
 - Industrial Equipment Certifications
 - Environmental Compliance Inspections
- Laboratory Safety
 - Biological Safety Inspections
 - Chemical Safety Inspections
 - Controlled Substance Safety Inspections
 - Hazardous Waste Inspections
 - Annual Laboratory Safety Inspections
 - Laser Safety Inspections

- Radiation Safety Inspections
- Emergency Eye Wash and Safety Shower Spot Inspections
- Fume Hood Certifications

Security Reminder

To ensure your space's safety and integrity, only grant access to EH&S staff, approved vendors, or regulatory entities accompanied by EH&S representatives. All EH&S personnel can access FIU locations and will always introduce themselves upon arrival. You can verify staff identity through the EH&S online staff directory, assuring that the person entering your space is authorized. <https://ehs.fiu.edu/about/staff-directory/index.html>

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact EH&S.

Upcoming Safety Seminars: Share Your Voice!

EH&S is committed to supporting the FIU lab community by offering annual safety seminars and open forums. These seminars cover various essential topics to promote awareness and compliance, but we want to ensure they remain relevant, engaging, and valuable to you.

We are inviting your input to make these seminars even better. Is there a safety topic you'd like us to address? Are there specific challenges or hazards in your space that would benefit from a focused discussion? Let us know! Your suggestions are crucial for tailoring our seminars to meet your needs.

Additionally, we are seeking ideas on connecting with the lab community more effectively and boosting attendance at these events. Whether through scheduling changes, alternative formats, or new outreach strategies, we value your feedback on what works best.

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