

EH&S Newsletter: August 2026

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A Season of Safety Starts Here

Introduction

Let's fall into safety and start the semester strong, safe and sound. As we celebrate Safe + Sound Week, prepare for a safe return to campus, and complete lab self-audits, we all play a role in creating a safer FIU community. Take action this month by refreshing back-to-school safety practices, participating in Safe + Sound Week activities, and ensuring your laboratory is audit-ready. Together, we can make safety a part of everything we do.

Heads Up For This Month

- August 10-16 is National Safe + Sound Week!
- August is Back-to-School Month!
- The 2026 EH&S Lab Self-Audit (LSA) is now open!
- 2026 EH&S Safety Slogan Winner – **Congratulations Sanika Naik from FIU Talent Management & Development!**
- NEW! EH&S Micro-credential course – Fundamentals of Lab Safety. Student and employee sessions are open! Click here for more information: <https://ehs.fiu.edu/announcements/index.html>
- Consider nominating someone for an EH&S Safety Shout Out today by visiting <https://ehs.fiu.edu>.

Celebrate National Safe + Sound Month with EH&S!

August 10–16 is Safe + Sound Week, a nationwide event that recognizes the success of workplace safety and health programs.

- **Champion Safety:** Recognize a colleague with an EH&S Safety Shout Out: <https://webforms.fiu.edu/view.php?id=4585288>.
- **Speak Up:** Report safety and health concerns in your work area: <https://ehs.fiu.edu/report/index.html>
- **Safety Shuffle:** Share safety knowledge with coworkers and identify potential hazards together.
- **Response Ready:** Review your area's Emergency Action Plan and make sure you're prepared.

Together, we can help keep FIU a safe place to learn, work, and thrive.

The 2026 Lab Self-Audit Is Now Open!

The 2026 Lab Self-Audit (LSA) officially opened on **August 3rd**. This year, the LSA is accessible on the FIU CampusOptics platform: https://fiu.campusoptics.com/users/sign_in . Here are a few important things you should know to ensure a successful submission.

1. Make sure to read and review the tutorial to learn how to find the LSA: <https://ehs.fiu.edu/safety-programs/laboratory/2026-lsa-presentation.pdf>
2. Keep an eye out for upcoming notifications.
3. If you have any questions, reach out to the support contacts before the deadline.

Essential Information at a Glance

Deadline: October 31, 2026

Required Participation: An individual LSA must be submitted for each space with hazards (or as assigned in Campus Optics)

Support Contacts:

Margarita Kotzer, mkhabins@fiu.edu

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Gina Oubrar, gigallia@fiu.edu

Where can I find more information?

Check the Lab Safety webpage for more information and additional resources: <https://ehs.fiu.edu/safety-programs/laboratory/index.html>

General Safety Talk 101: Save Your Back!

Back injuries account for one in five work-related injuries. Improper lifting can lead to acute injuries, chronic pain, and long-term musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

Safe lifting requires a combination of preparation, correct body mechanics, and careful handling. Here are some key steps you can take to keep your back safe:

- Assess the weight, shape and size of the load to determine if additional assistance is needed.
- During the lift, bend at the knees and hips, keep your back straight, and engage those core muscles.
- Keep your shoulders aligned with your hips when carrying and take small steps.
- When you've reached your destination, reverse the lift process – bend at knees and hips, keep back straight, and engage core muscles.
- **NEVER** twist or bend at the waist, lift heavy items above shoulder level, obstruct your vision, or hold your breath while lifting.

Back to Campus, Back to Safety

August is National Back to School Month. As the summer draws to a close, and we begin to head back to campus, things can get pretty hectic. It is important to remember these key tips to keep you, your fellow Panthers, and young future Panthers safe throughout the school year.

Watch out for pedestrians

- Don't block the crosswalk when stopped at a red light and yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk or intersection.
- Never pass a vehicle stopped for pedestrians.

Don't pass a stopped school bus with flashing lights

- It is ILLEGAL to pass a bus dropping off or picking up children.

Check for bicycles, skateboards, and scooters

- They can be hard to see. Be extra vigilant in school zones, residential neighborhoods, and on campus.

Don't drive or walk distracted

- Put down the phone and be aware of your surroundings