



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

Office of Research and
National Laboratories
Office of Research Safety

SAFELab Newsletter

(Safety Advisory Forum for Experimental Laboratories)

Volume 1, Issue 2

January 2019

Upcoming Training

Radiation Safety

Monthly, on Tuesday from 9-11:30 am

Jan. 15

Feb. 12

Mar. 12

Chemical Hygiene Plan (Lab Safety)

Weekly on alternate Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 12-1 pm

Jan. 8, 16, 22, 30

Feb. 5, 13, 19, 27

Mar. 5, 13, 19, 27

Comprehensive Biosafety

Bi-weekly on Tuesday from 1-4 pm

Jan. 8, 22

Feb. 5, 19

Mar. 5, 19

IATA Shipping Dangerous Goods

Last Tuesdays, 1-4 pm

Jan. 29

Tentative: Feb. 26, Mar. 26

[Click here to sign up](#)

Responsible Science and Code of Conduct

While the Office of Research Safety (ORS) teams provide expert guidance and training on the handling of hazardous materials, laboratory personnel are ultimately responsible for the application of knowledge and safe practices gained through consultation with our staff. Therefore, it is essential that individuals maintain a certain level of responsibility while working with hazardous materials



Pictured above: James Wright, Sr. Chemical Safety Officer, and Jay Schroeder, BSD Lab Safety Specialist, taking an inventory of hazardous chemicals after a small explosion in a laboratory fridge.

Online Research Safety Education Courses

ORS education and training courses are offered via live training sessions or via web-based, on-line course offerings.

All online courses are available on the Environmental Health and Safety Assistant (EHSA) platform. To enroll or take an ORS training course, simply go to <https://ehsa.uchicago.edu/training>.

Announcements

UCAIR

The **University of Chicago Accident and Incident Reporting** system ([UCAIR](#)) provides a user-friendly mechanism for reporting work-related accidents and incidents to [EHS](#) and [ORS](#). For more information about UCAIR, visit the [FAQs page](#).

Please remember to first call 123 (on-campus phone) or 773.702.8181 (off-campus phone) for accidents requiring emergency response to ensure the appropriate emergency response personnel are notified.

Involved individuals, supervisors, affected persons, or witnesses can submit reports. Anonymous reporting is available for events that do not require medical treatment.



Click icon to visit the UCAIR website

Educational Assignments and Volunteers in the Lab

If you plan to have someone from outside the University volunteer to temporarily work in your lab (e.g., a student from an external organization seeking an educational experience, or someone who simply wants some experience), they must first be approved by Employee Labor Relations, Risk Management, and the Office of

at UChicago. [Learn more.](#)

Special Event Recaps

Mercury Thermometer Exchange

The Joint Research Safety Initiative (JRSI) held a Mercury Thermometer Exchange event on Tuesday, Dec.11, 2018. They had approximately 260 thermometers exchanged for safer counterparts free of charge. This was an incredible feat to mitigate potential mercury-based lab accidents in the future!

If you were not able to attend, ORS will continue to offer mercury thermometer exchanges. Please contact ORS to arrange a time to bring your contained, unbroken mercury thermometers for the exchange program.



ORS Scavenger Hunt: Safety Games

During the month of October (National Biosafety Month), ORS hosted a university-wide, safety-oriented scavenger hunt: The Safety Games. This event aimed to highlight the crucial roles of safety in academic research. The scavenger hunt included three sessions, each lasting 15 hours across two days with about 20 “challenges” per session, for a total of 59 challenges. Eighteen teams with a total of 68 researchers registered to participate in this event. About half of the teams completed all 59 challenges ranging from trivia questions, finding specific supporting documents on the ORS webpage, photos or videos of safety equipment, and even physically visiting University

Research Safety. This policy is mandated for safety and University liability concerns.

To begin the process:

If you are not in BSD and:

- The person is 17 years or younger submit this [Educational Assignment Proposal Minor](#) to elrelations@uchicago.edu
- The person is 18 years or older, submit this [Educational Assignment Proposal Non-Minor](#) to elrelations@uchicago.edu

If you are in BSD, do as instructed above, but also submit this [BSD Volunteer and Educational Assignment Request](#) to volunteers@bsd.uchicago.edu.

Upon receipt of the forms, the designated Human Resources office will contact ORS, and a Safety Officer will contact the individual and the supervisor to schedule the applicable safety training. This must be completed prior to the start of work in the lab. Please feel free to [contact the ORS Administrator](#) with any questions.

[Click here for the ORS Training and Minors in the Lab policies](#)

of Chicago Occupational Medicine, the Emergency Room or locating a Research Safety Officer.

Themed after "The Hunger Games", The Safety Games was well-received. Over 94% of the participants surveyed agree that the event broadened their awareness of laboratory safety and enhanced their safety knowledge and/or practices. Most participants also found the scavenger hunt effective in learning about resources available from ORS and would be interested in participating in a similar scavenger hunt in the future.

The photos and videos generated by the teams provided a glimpse of the safety culture in individual laboratories. Through this media, researchers demonstrated a deep understanding of UChicago safety policies, identified best practices, and creatively demonstrated safety as an integral component of effective and responsible research.

Congratulation to the top teams. A video montage of their challenge submissions was presented during the award ceremony and available below:

First place video: <https://youtu.be/h86IUI56Uyk>

Second place video: <https://youtu.be/f7e3eJU-8ZQ>

Third place video: <https://youtu.be/6mKI0RJUMH0>

If you're interested in participating, we will hold this event again in October 2019. Information will be shared in our newsletter, website and posters around that time.

Quick Tips

Quick Tip 1: Got Frost?



The Office of Research Safety can help you defrost your freezers. Short-term storage is available to facilitate lab freezer defrosting. Defrosting your freezers is a great

Special Projects

Duke Infectious Disease Response Training (DIDRT) is one of the nine Ebola Biosafety and Infectious Disease Response Worker Training Program funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS). The DIDRT program is a group of five higher education institutions with expertise in high containment laboratory. The consortium includes Duke University (lead institution), University of Chicago, Colorado State University, George Mason University and University of Louisville.

Each consortium member institution targets a specific audience based on their expertise to provide training in occupational settings that carry the potential for increased exposure to contaminated materials or infected individuals with a focus on hands-on learning and a train-the-trainer model.

Consortium Core Goals:

- Prepare the nation's front-line workers for the next epidemic
- Develop up-to-date, high quality, effective biosafety and infectious disease training for an array of worker populations

way to extend the life of your freezers, clean out unwanted or abandoned items, and identify any hazardous materials lurking in the freezer that you may not be aware of. Contact your Divisional Lab Safety Specialist or the Office of Research Safety for more information about arranging a lab freezer defrost.

[Contact ORS for more info.](#)

Quick Tip 2: Don't eat that Pb & Jelly!

Lead (Pb) is a soft, malleable, and relatively dense metal. This metal is excellent at attenuating photons of ionizing radiation and is often used as shielding in applications such as medical procedure areas, research experiences, and in the shipping of radioactive materials. However, decades of medical and scientific research on this useful material have found that exposure to inorganic lead can have negative health effects. Using lead appropriately (it shouldn't be used as your doorstep) and using gloves to handle lead will help minimize the spread of lead residue and will limit your exposure to this bioaccumulating material. Luckily, the Radiation Safety office will assist in the recycling of your lead once you are done using it!

Almost as good as your favorite food delivery service (which will bring your edible peanut butter and jelly), the University's Radiation Safety office will come to your lab to pick up any lead you are no longer using to shield sources of ionizing radiation. The Radiation Safety office will survey the lead to look for any radioactive contamination, and then appropriately repurpose or recycle the lead that is collected. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out: radsafety@uchicago.edu or 773-702-6299.



-Assess workers risks and deliver training to 550 workers per year

Since the awarding of the grant in 2015, the University of Chicago team (ORS Biosafety department) alone has trained over 400 custodial services workers, over 200 healthcare/laboratory staff, and supported George Mason University in training 200 emergency responders in Washington, DC. Twenty of the trainees in the custodial and healthcare staff completed the comprehensive train-the-trainer program, providing a lasting benefit to the community.



[Click here for more information](#) or [contact ORS](#)

Joe Kanabrocki participates in an ad hoc committee to develop NASEM report

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), working with other agencies involved in biodefense, asked the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) to develop a framework to guide an assessment of the security concerns related to advances in synthetic biology, to assess the levels of concern warranted for such advances, and to identify options that could help mitigate those concerns. To assist the U.S. DoD's Chemical and Biological Defense Program (CBDP), the NASEM appointed an *ad hoc* committee to: (1) develop a strategic framework to guide an assessment of the potential security vulnerabilities related to advances in biology and biotechnology, with a particular emphasis on synthetic biology; and to (2) use the outlined strategic framework to generate an assessment of potential vulnerabilities posed by synthetic biology, including an evaluation of the current landscape of science and technology.

This NASEM report, "Biodefense in the Age of Synthetic Biology," discusses the framework developed, the conclusions and recommendations derived from this study, and a description of potential vulnerabilities posed by synthetic biology. Access the report [here](#).

Quick Tip 3: Protective Eyewear

The Fisher Store Room in GCIS offers a variety of protective eyewear to choose from. Be sure to wear proper personal protective equipment in the laboratory.



Related Links

Office of Research and National Laboratories
Howard Taylor Ricketts Laboratory
Environmental Health & Safety
Animal Resources Center
Marine Biological Laboratory



Learn more about the Office of Research Safety or our partners by visiting our website
at <https://researchsafety.uchicago.edu/>

Questions?

Email: researchsafety@uchicago.edu

Call: 773-834-2707



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