



**THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY**
WASHINGTON, DC

Responsible University Official: Senior Associate Vice President for Safety and Security

Responsible Office: Division of Safety and Security/HEMS

Last Revised Date: November 8, 2017

CHEMICAL HYGIENE & COMMUNICATIONS

Policy Statement

The university provides information to the university community about hazardous chemicals by means of a hazard communication program, and hazard communication training to prevent chemical-related injuries in both laboratory and non-laboratory environments. In addition, those university departments, which operate laboratories containing potentially hazardous chemicals, are required to appoint a Chemical Hygiene Officer to implement the guidance provided in the university’s [Chemical Hygiene Plan](#). Individuals using university laboratories are responsible for abiding by the Chemical Hygiene Plan, and attending and completing the annual laboratory safety training.

Reason for Policy

The university is required to provide information on the hazards and identities of chemicals that are used throughout its facilities and in the university laboratories in compliance with OSHA Hazard Communication Standard found in 29 CFR 1910.1200 and Laboratory Standard found in 29 CFR 1910.1450: Occupational Exposures to Hazardous Chemicals in Laboratories. Members of the university community who work in scientific laboratories are exposed to a greater variety of possible hazards than in most workplaces. Some of those hazards call for precautions not ordinarily encountered elsewhere.

Who is Governed by this Policy

Faculty, staff, students, and contractors

Table of Contents

Policy Statement 1

Reason for Policy	1
Who is Governed by this Policy	1
Table of Contents	1
Policy	2
Definitions	3
Related Information	4
Contacts	4
Document History	4
Who Approved This Policy	4

Policy

The University has developed a Hazard Communication Program (the “Program”) which includes the Chemical Hygiene Plan (the “Plan”) to promote the safety of people working with chemicals in workplaces and in laboratories. Copies of the Plan are available on the Division of Safety and Security Health & Emergency Management Services website and in each laboratory where chemicals are used.

Hazardous Communications Program:

The Hazard Communication Program is a compilation of GW policies aligned towards a single mission of workplace safety and proper chemical handling. The components of the program were developed to meet the requirements of the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (“OSHA”) Hazard Communication Standard. The Program consists of this policy, the Chemical Hygiene Plan, and the Hazardous Waste Management Policy.

All GW faculty, staff, students and contractors who work with chemicals in both laboratory and non-laboratory workspaces, have a responsibility to comply with the university’s Hazard Communication Program. Additionally, principal investigators and lab managers have the overall responsibility for the development, maintenance, and implementation of the Program at each laboratory under their purview.

Chemical Hygiene Plan:

The Plan was written to meet the requirements of the OSHA Occupational Exposures to Hazardous Chemicals in Laboratories (known commonly as the “Laboratory Standard”). All GW faculty, staff, students and contractors who work in laboratories where chemicals are present have a responsibility to comply with the Chemical Hygiene Plan.

The Plan provides guidelines for the following:

- Safe laboratory practices;

- Procedures for the use of laboratory chemicals;
- Work practices regarding laboratory equipment; and
- Personal protective equipment capable of protecting individuals from workplace chemical hazards.

Responsibilities under the Plan:

- University-wide: All faculty, staff, students and contractors working with hazardous chemicals should seek medical attention if the individual exhibits symptoms of exposure to a hazardous chemical in the laboratory; or is exposed to a spill, leak, or other occurrence resulting in the likelihood of a hazardous exposure.
- Academic Departments: Principal Investigators (PI) and lab managers are directly responsible for the safety of their workers and ensuring that the chemical hygiene communication is in place and being followed. Each department shall also appoint a Chemical Hygiene Officer (CHO) to serve a leadership role in laboratory safety. The name(s) of each department's CHO shall be submitted to Health & Emergency Management Services no later than September 1st each year. Each department shall maintain site specific training for the department.
- Chemical Hygiene Officer: The primary responsibility of the CHO is to implement the Chemical Hygiene Plan in compliance with OSHA regulations in their respective laboratories. The CHO instructs faculty, staff, students and contractors in their laboratory on:
 - proper laboratory procedures;
 - properly labeling all chemicals;
 - maintaining Safety Data Sheets for each laboratory chemical;
 - specifying personal protective equipment;
 - conducting regular safety inspections; and
 - performing hazardous waste disposal in accordance with the university's Hazardous Waste Management Plan.

The CHO is responsible for preventing chemical exposure by laboratory users beyond the permissible exposure limits provided for each potentially hazardous substance by OSHA.

Definitions

Chemical Hygiene Officer

A designated employee who is qualified by training and experience to provide technical guidance in the development and implementation of the provisions of the Chemical Hygiene Plan.

Hazardous Chemical

Any chemical, substance or product which is known to be present in the workplace in such a manner those employees may be exposed under normal conditions of use or in foreseeable emergency.

Safety Data Sheets (SDS)

Documents that provide detailed information about a chemical’s hazards and how to work with each chemical safely. Each chemical manufacturer or importer is required to provide a SDS for each of their chemicals. Health & Emergency Management Safety can provide copies of Safety Data Sheets upon request.

Related Information

Chemical Hygiene Plan

Hazardous Waste Management Plan

[Personal Protective Equipment Policy](#)

[Policy for Compliance Regarding Select Agents and Pathogens](#)

[OSHA 29 CFR 1910.1450: Laboratory Standard](#)

[OSHA: 29 CFR 1910.1200 Hazard Communication](#)

Contacts

Contact	Telephone	Email
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Document History

- **Last Reviewed Date:** September 28, 2017
- **Last Revised Date:** September 28, 2017
- **Policy Origination Date:** March 1994

Who Approved This Policy

Louis H. Katz, Executive Vice President and Treasurer

This policy, as well as all [university policies](#), are located on the [Office of Compliance and Privacy’s](#) home page.