What to Expect When You're Inspected

Inspection FAQs

YOUR INSPECTION TEAM

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Do I need to update my lab’s roster in both L@B and LHAT?

The L@B and LHAT rosters are synced daily so you only need to update one, the other will be automatically updated by the next day.

My EHS 101 training has expired; do I need to take it again?

Three years after taking EHS 101 you need to take EHS 101 Refresher Training which is accessible through the UC Learning Center. It usually takes about 20 to 30 minutes to finish.

Why are we still talking about SOPs?

Standard Operating Procedures are a long standing Cal/OSHA requirement. The UCLA Settlement Agreement gave further emphasis on their importance for lab work that involves hazardous chemicals/operations. SOPs need to be reviewed periodically (at least annually) and each lab must have a process for making sure that when new SOPs are needed, they are written.

What’s the difference between a JSA and an SOP?

JSAs (Job Safety Analyses) and SOP's (Standard Operating Procedures) are similar in that they both are written documents that describe how to work safely with hazards. Traditionally, JSAs have been used for fabrication and shop hazards, along with a multitude of other tasks in the skilled trades, whereas SOP’s have been used primarily in research environments where the emphasis tends to be on chemical hazards or processes involving chemical hazards.
**CHEMICAL SAFETY**

**When should I label my waste container?**

Label your chemical waste container as soon as you start collecting waste. Every container with waste must be labeled with a Hazardous Waste Program (HWP) label. Starting from the first day waste begins accumulating, you have six months before EH&S needs to come pick it up.

**Why do I have to test my emergency eyewash?**

Rust can accumulate in water pipes. Testing eyewashes ensure clean water is available in an emergency. Flush test your eyewashes on a monthly basis by slowly pushing the handle away from you until water is flowing freely and you see that the stream(s) will be able to effectively rinse your eyes. Let it run for 15 seconds. Mark the eyewash tag with your initials and the date; including the year. EH&S provides eyewash test tags that attach to your eyewash.

**What type of gas cylinder restraints are non-combustible?**

Go with metal chains/bands and racks made of Unistrut or other non-combustible material. Cloth restraints will burn in a fire which could cause cylinders to fall to the ground, damaging the regulator or valve. Cylinder restraints should be positioned at approximately ⅓ and ⅔ the height of the cylinder.

**Why do I have to cap my gas cylinder?**

The regulator and valve are vulnerable if the cylinder were to fall. Remove the regulator when the cylinder is not in use and protect the valve with the cylinder cap to prevent the sudden release of gas under high pressure. This release of pressurized gas can cause the cylinder to become a projectile.

**ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT SAFETY**

**Why is daisy-chaining a safety hazard?**

Extension cords and power strips are rated for a particular maximum load, or amperage. Daisy-chaining, or connecting extension cords and power strips in series, makes it easy to overload the wiring.
Most labs have an abundance of cords. Proper cord management is essential to good housekeeping and safety. Zip-ties for proper cord management, cord/cable protectors for walkways, and general awareness around cords as tripping hazards can dramatically improve lab safety.

How can I organize my electrical cords to minimize the abrasion and tripping hazards?

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What is a GFCI and how can I tell if my equipment is protected by one?

A GFCI, or Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter, (also known as a GFI, or Ground Fault Interrupter) is a circuit breaking device that can act quickly to stop the flow of current and prevent shocks. GFCI's are often seen incorporated into outlets (think of the set/reset outlets you see in bathrooms), but can also be incorporated into the electrical design of the device, or in the circuit breaker of the electrical panel. Some electronic devices may have labeling to alert the user of internal GFCI protection, but others may not. It’s best to look up the specifications for your device to confirm whether or not it is protected (or just plug the device into a GFCI outlet).

What is a bench-top smoke filter?

Lab areas often do not have sufficient ventilation to remove harmful fumes produced during soldering. In these cases, a bench-top smoke filter is recommended. Bench-top smoke filters (or smoke-eaters) are small fans with carbon activated filters that draw and filter harmful fumes from your work area. They can be purchased for ~$100 from various manufacturers.
Why do I need to wear torso-to-toe clothes when I’m not working with any hazards in my lab?

Though you may not be working with any hazards in your lab, there are still hazards present and you could be exposed if there was an accident. For instance, if a beaker holding a hazardous chemical got knocked over to the floor and you were nearby it could splash on your legs and feet. For more information read the UC Systemwide Personal Protective Equipment Policy.

This seems like a lot of work!

We recognize that you’re doing some great safety work out there, and we appreciate all you have done. This year we kick off our inaugural UC Berkeley Excellence in Laboratory Safety Award competition. In November, our EH&S department in conjunction with the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost will award eight labs displaying outstanding safety based on inspections and overall effort. Good luck!