



Lab Safety Policy

Category: Human Resources

Jurisdiction: Vice President, Administration and Finance

Approval Authority: Executive Team

Established on: November 13, 2024

Amendments: None

Most Recent Review: November 13, 2024

Purpose

Lakehead University (“Lakehead”) is committed to workplace health, safety, and security for all its Laboratory Personnel. Lakehead will not tolerate unsafe acts and will take all reasonable and practical measures to prevent workplace injuries while Laboratory Personnel are engaging in laboratory work.

Scope

This policy applies to all Laboratory Personnel, which for the purposes of this Policy is defined to include Lakehead staff, faculty, graduate students, undergraduate students, visiting scholars, interns, volunteers, post-doctoral fellows and other members of the Lakehead University community who carry out work or other activities in laboratories that are owned, leased or otherwise controlled by Lakehead University (the “Lakehead Labs”).

Responsibilities

Laboratory Personnel shall:

1. Be aware of, reviewed and adhere to all applicable laws, safety policies and procedures as they pertain to the hazardous materials and equipment they work with.

2. Participate in all training required by Lakehead and endeavor to work safely.
3. Conduct work or activities authorized by the lab supervisor, in Lakehead Labs.

Joint Health and Safety Committee - Labs and Studios (the “JHSC”) shall:

1. Conduct regular inspections of the Lakehead Labs on campus, review policy and applicable procedures to ensure legal compliance, with the minimum of administrative burden.
2. Participate in incident and accident investigations.
3. Provide advice and guidance in matters pertaining to Lakehead Lab safety.

Supervisors shall:

1. Ensure the provision of adequate supervision and training to all Laboratory Personnel working in Lakehead Labs.
2. Lead the resolution of Laboratory Personnel safety concerns and/or complaints promptly and in good faith.
3. Seek the guidance of the JHSC, Office of Human Resources - Health & Safety, Physical Plant and/or external safety professionals when required.
4. Escalate health and safety concerns/complaints/non-conformity to the Chair and/or Dean as appropriate.

Office of Human Resources - Health & Safety shall:

1. Provide basic safety training
2. Develop and maintain policy or guidance documents where required
3. Participate in regular inspections
4. Facilitate health and safety concerns and/or complaints resolution
5. Alert supervisors to issues of non-conformity or unsafe practices, provide best practices and advice, and forward unresolved issues to the appropriate member of Senior Administration for resolution.

Supervision

At least one [competent supervisor](#) (the “Supervisor”) must be available in person for all new Laboratory Personnel still in training during regular working hours. The Supervisor must be available by phone or in person to respond to emergency situations. During periods when the

Supervisor will be away from campus, the Supervisor shall appoint an emergency designate. The designate must be familiar with the Lakehead Lab, its contents and specific emergency procedures, and available by phone. Visitors are only permitted in labs when they are directly supervised by laboratory personnel and are authorized by the Supervisor to be in the lab.

Training

Each Supervisor shall ensure that Laboratory Personnel accessing Lakehead Labs under their supervision, have completed the training required by Lakehead University prior to beginning work in the Lakehead Laboratory unsupervised. It is the Supervisor's responsibility to provide lab specific training to all Personnel working in the Lakehead Lab, and periodically refresh this training. This training must be documented and shared with the Office of Human Resources - Health & Safety. The Supervisor shall retain a copy of the training documentation for the duration of time the Laboratory Personnel have access to the Lakehead Lab and an additional five years thereafter.

Emergency Contacts

A current list of all Laboratory Personnel who can respond to a lab incident must be maintained by the Supervisor and filed with Security Services. An emergency contacts list must be available in a visible location in each Lakehead Lab. This list must be kept current and reviewed frequently for accuracy.

Hazardous Materials

Chemical inventory must be current and maintained using the University's [online chemical inventory system](#). Chemicals with shelf lives or explosive/poisonous degradation products must be catalogued by expiry date to enable appropriate disposal when the shelf life has expired. A list of these chemicals will be maintained on the Health and Safety website. Procurement of new chemicals must be sourced through the Purchasing office, use of purchasing cards is not allowed. Gifts of chemicals must be scrutinized for safety, whether they are expired, appropriate quantity for the use intended, and storage requirements. Chemicals accepted as gifts must be inventoried properly and promptly using Lakehead's [online chemical inventory system](#).

In order to support Lakehead's sustainability in its online inventory system, chemicals shall be purchased, whenever possible, through Chemical Stores so that the smallest quantity required is stored within individual laboratories. Office of Human Resources - Health and Safety and the Department of Chemistry will maintain a [list of chemicals](#) available through Chemical Stores to aid in purchasing for the lowest cost and hazard.

[Hazardous waste](#) generated in the Lakehead Lab must be catalogued promptly through the University's [online chemical inventory system](#) and labelled with the corresponding waste request number. Storage of hazardous waste in the Lakehead Lab must be in a suitable location and in appropriate containers. Under no circumstances shall Personnel leave Lakehead University property without cataloging hazardous waste requests for all hazardous waste generated in the Lakehead Lab.

Hazardous materials which act as acute poisons and have a corresponding antidote must have the antidote available in all areas where the poison is handled or stored. Antidotes must be inventoried in the Chemical Inventory System and care must be taken to ensure expiry dates of any antidotes are recorded and monitored.

Lakehead University currently does not have a license to handle radioactive materials. As such, purchase or acquisition of radioactive materials is prohibited, until and unless the University acquires the requisite license and trained Laboratory Personnel.

Safety Documentation to be held in the Laboratory

A Supervisor must ensure a "safety binder" be kept in each Lakehead Lab, and shall consist of at least the minimum required contents listed on the Health and Safety website and any lab specific emergency procedures.

Signage shall be posted on the exterior of each Lakehead Lab door depicting the hazards contained in the space and communicating the restrictions for housekeeping staff within the Lakehead Lab. Signage will be provided by the Office of Human Resources - Health & Safety in accordance with information provided by the Supervisor.

Transportation of Hazardous Materials

Laboratory Personnel shall ensure that any transportation of hazardous materials over public roadways, this transportation shall be conducted with the utmost care, in appropriate containers, and in compliance with this policy and the [Transportation of Dangerous Goods regulations](#). Transfer of infectious materials requires a Material Transfer Agreement in compliance with the University's License issued under the Human Pathogens and Toxins Act, and must be initiated by the University Biosafety Officer. Laboratory Personnel shall ensure that any transportation of hazardous materials within the University campus follows standards in the University's Laboratory Safety Operating Procedures.

Non-Conformity

Through inspections and/or investigations following any incidents and/or concerns, if a Lakehead Lab is deemed by Lakehead University (including through a member of the JHSC, or a member of Office of Human Resources - Health & Safety, Security Services or Physical Plant) to pose an immediate threat to lab occupant's life, safety, or infrastructure of the University, access to the Lakehead Lab may be suspended until it can be made safe for occupation. All cases where this action is required, or cases where repeated attempts to resolve sub-standard conditions with the Supervisor are not effective, the matter will be referred to the respective Dean and Associate Vice-President of Human Resources for resolution.

Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed at least once every five years by the Associate Vice-President of Human Resources.

Review Period: Five years;

Date for Next Review: 2029-2030;

Related Policies and Procedures: H&S Policy; Biosafety Policy; Chemical Storage Procedure; Compressed Gas and Cryogenics Procedure; Decommissioning Lab Policy; Hazardous Waste Disposal Procedure; Hazard Reporting Procedures; Laboratory Safety

Operating Procedures; Laser Safety Procedure; New Personnel Training Procedure; WHMIS Procedure

Policy Superseded by this Policy: Radiation Use, Compressed Gas and Cryogenics Safety Policy, Waste Disposal.

The University Secretariat manages the development of policies through an impartial, fair governance process, and in accordance with the Policy Governance Framework. Please contact the University Secretariat for additional information on University policies and procedures and/or if you require this information in another format.

Office of the University Secretariat

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