

KGI Laboratory Housekeeping

We may sound like your parents, but please consider the following to ensure a safe laboratory. When talking about housekeeping common sense usually prevails. One of the many contributing factors associated with accidents and fires is poor housekeeping.

WHAT TO LOOK IN FOR YOUR LAB:

Chemicals

Keep bulk chemicals stored in cabinets or designated storage rooms. Only obtain an amount to keep your test or research going, like a one day supply. This will free up lab bench space and, if you do have a spill, will minimize the amount of chemical released.

Keep the lids on chemical containers. This sounds obvious but it will effectively reduce the possibility of a spill and reduce any fumes released into your lab.

Maintain a good chemical inventory. Label your chemical bottles with easily identifiable labels. Keep your inventory up to date. For an up to date chemical inventory, [link to “K” DRIVE-general office-chemical inventory](#)” An up to date chemical inventory will help you keep track of your chemicals. You may not know this but the inventory may also be used by the fire department and university personnel who are responding to an emergency in your lab.

Cleaning Your Lab

As you tidy up your lab and get organized, don't move your housekeeping problem into the hallway or some other undesirable location. Recycle paper and cardboard properly where it will be promptly removed. Unused or spare equipment should be stored in a designated storage room. Dispose of waste properly. Consider recycling chemicals you no longer use. (Check with Barb Erwin for details)

How cluttered are your lab benches and hoods?

Keep lab benches and hoods as uncluttered as possible. This may seem impossible when you're conducting complicated tests or have numerous test samples, but continually remind yourself to keep things organized.

Keep containers and equipment away from the edge of benches. Are you reaching over bottles, cultures, etc. to get to something? Chances are you're about to knock something on the floor. In October 1998, this happened at a major university on the

East Coast. The resulting fire, as small as it was, ended up evacuating a number of buildings surrounding the lab.

What about the shelves above your desk or lab bench? Keep shelving as orderly as possible. A general rule is heavy items on the lower shelves, lighter items on the upper shelves. Be realistic about how much equipment and supplies you can store on shelving. Overloading shelves with infrequently used equipment and extra lab supplies will likely cause you problems with falling items when you least suspect it. You could injure yourself or fellow lab personnel and likely ruin the test or research you were completing.

Are pathways in your lab unobstructed to the exit?

Keep at least a 3 ft. access path out of your lab area at all times. It is common for equipment and materials to be continually moved in, out, and around a laboratory. Have designated storage spaces for portable equipment and carts that you routinely use.

In your lab can you see the following items:

Fire extinguisher,

MSDS sheets

Fire alarm pull station,

Eye wash station/shower?

Spill Cart (located in autoclave room 535) and (small autoclave room 517)

You may not have all these pieces of equipment in your lab, but the point is: keep emergency equipment in view and accessible. If this equipment is not in your lab, know where it is.