Running Unattended Equipment and Experiments.

Equipment and experiments that run unattended during the day and overnight have the potential of causing significant problems and harm to University personnel, facilities and equipment. We recognize there is a need to run these experiments for certain laboratory processes but laboratory personnel must take certain precautions when doing so. A hazard analysis should be done to consider the negative consequences that could occur if power or water were interrupted, or available signage is not adequate to warn other personnel that might come into the lab. Water leaks from hoses pulling out from water supplies are the most common problem we encounter with unattended experiments. Please be sure that all your hoses are connected with hose clamps or other types of secure fittings so potential negative impacts to your research and building floods can be avoided (two floods in June this year).

Appropriate Clothing in the Laboratory

Summer weather is here so everyone should be reminded about appropriate clothing in the laboratory. Laboratory personnel should wear long sleeved/long legged clothing and avoid short sleeved shirts, short trousers or skirts. A laboratory coat should be worn over street clothes and be laundered regularly. A laboratory coat is intended to prevent contact with hazardous materials and minor splashes or spills. Shoes should be worn in the laboratory at all times. Sandals and perforated shoes are not appropriate. In addition, long hair, neck ties and loose clothing should be confined. When personnel are in laboratories that are actively handling hazardous materials, use of appropriate clothing and personal protective equipment must be strictly enforced.
SUMMER LABORATORY SAFETY NEWSLETTER

Empty Chemical Container Disposal

Empty chemical containers are required to be properly managed because chemical residuals could still be a hazard to personnel handling the containers or the contents could still be regulated as hazardous waste. Containers that held organic solvents should be aired out in a chemical fume hood and those that held solids should be shaken or scraped clean. Some acutely hazardous chemicals require triple rinsing prior to disposal in the regular trash (with all rinsate collected as a hazardous waste). Once empty or determined acceptable for disposal, you must remove, cover over or deface all warning labels (caps must also be removed) prior to leaving them out for the regular trash. If you have one gallon solvent bottles, EHS can take them for recycling in other labs. Additional information such as our empty container fact sheet, along with empty container labels can be found in the Hazardous Waste program page section of the EHS website.

Ionizing and Non-Ionizing Radiation

There are two major types of radiation used on the NU campus: Ionizing and Non-Ionizing. Ionizing radiation comes in the form of x-rays and radiolabeled chemicals used in research labs. This type of radiation can emit electrons from atoms, thus creating ions. Non-ionizing radiation comes from sources such as lasers, but other examples are sound waves, visible light, and microwaves. This type of radiation has enough energy to excite, or vibrate atoms, but doesn't create and emit ions. Both types of radiation are regulated and controlled by Environmental Health and Safety for compliance with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health - Radiation Control Program. Additional information can be found in the Radiation Program page of our website.