

Chemical Hygiene Plan

In the United States of America, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has legal authority in matters concerning employee safety. In most cases, employees are protected by OSHA's General Industry Standards (29 CFR 1910). One of the primary standards is the Hazard Communication Standard (29 CFR 1910.1200). The purpose of 29 CFR 1910.1200 is to ensure that employees are aware of the hazards of all chemicals in their workplace. Information is transmitted through a hazard communication program which includes container labeling, safety data sheets, and employee training.

Since Florida State University employs workers engaged in the laboratory use of hazardous chemicals, the University complies with the provisions of another OSHA standard: 29 CFR 1910.1450 Occupational Exposure to Hazardous Chemicals in Laboratories. This standard is commonly referred to as "[The OSHA Lab Standard](#)." It was developed to provide increased protection to laboratory employees above that provided in the General Industry Standard.

Understanding the moral and legal obligation to provide for the safety of laboratory employees is the first step in complying with the OSHA Lab Standard. The backbone of the Lab Standard is its requirement for employers to develop and carry out the provisions of a written Chemical Hygiene Plan.

The OSHA Lab Standard is a performance oriented standard: the minimum requirements are established by OSHA, but the methods for achieving these requirements are left up to the employer.

With the great diversity of lab activities on campus, it is impossible for any one person to define standard operating procedures (SOPs) for every activity in every laboratory. However, the performance-oriented nature of this standard makes it possible to construct a general framework that can be used by individual laboratories, to meet the requirements of the OSHA Lab Standard.

The Florida State University Chemical Hygiene Plan is implemented and administered by the FSU Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S). The manager of the Chemical Safety Section within the EH&S has been designated as the University's Chemical Hygiene Officer (CHO). Although ultimate responsibility for the development and implementation of the chemical hygiene plan for the University rests with the Chemical Hygiene Officer, it is important to realize that the responsibility for chemical hygiene itself rests at all levels of the University.

The Laboratory Safety Manual serves as the overarching document for the University's Chemical Hygiene Plan. The manual provides information for the safe handling of hazardous materials and chemicals as well as tools for addressing specific laboratory activities.