

Discussion and Notes

Keep a copy of these safety training notes and a signed attendance sheet to verify regular safety training. Regulatory inspectors will usually request proof of safety training. A copy of the sign-up sheet we suggest using may be found at www.flinnsci.com/media/412875/signup.pdf.

Did you know? The SDS for all Flinn chemicals may be downloaded from the Flinn Scientific website at www.flinnsci.com/msds-search.aspx.

Science teachers are the most visible and important role models for safety in the science classroom. Wear goggles whenever you are working in the lab, even (or especially) when class is not in session. Students learn from your good example!

General Safety Rules for Science Teachers

The following general safety rules and procedures form a strong “backbone” to improve safety in your school.

1. Carefully plan lab activities. Practice experiments and demonstrations beforehand and review the science and procedure before performing a lab activity. Never perform a demonstration for the first time in front of the class. Evaluate the safety of the demonstration, identify possible hazards, and practice, practice, practice!
2. Review the properties and hazards of all chemicals before use by reading their Safety Data Sheets (SDS).
3. Reduce exposure to hazardous chemicals. Avoid contact of all chemicals with eyes and skin, and make sure appropriate ventilation is available when using respiratory irritants and inhalation hazards.
4. Do not underestimate chemical hazards and risks—few chemicals are without any potential hazards. Even for chemicals with no known hazard, exposure should be kept to a minimum.
5. Read all chemical labels prior to use.
6. Provide a basic set of safety rules for all science classes and explain the rules to the students. Review the safety rules frequently and enforce them consistently. Demand compliance!
7. Wear appropriate eye protection at all times and enforce the school’s goggle policy. The simplest policy will be the most effective: “Goggles must be worn any time chemicals, heat or glassware are used in the laboratory.”
8. Train students on how to use safety equipment (e.g., eyewash, safety shower, etc.). Show students and employees where the safety devices are located so they can be found quickly in an emergency.
9. Only authorized personnel are allowed in the chemical storeroom. The door to the chemical storeroom should be locked at all times.
10. Wear appropriate personal protective equipment at all times, especially when you are working in the lab before or after school.
11. Develop good “chemical hygiene” practices and habits. Never eat in the lab or drink out of laboratory glassware. Always wash your hands thoroughly before leaving the lab area.
12. When leaving the lab, even for a short period, make sure the prep area and laboratory doors are locked. You must make every effort to prevent theft.
13. Know appropriate emergency procedures in the event of a chemical spill, fire, injury or power failure.
14. Review the school’s first aid policy. If an accident occurs and you don’t know what to do, call 911 without hesitation.
15. Know where a telephone or some other means of emergency communication is located. Post emergency telephone numbers by each phone.
16. Do not block fire exits. Keep all aisles clear. Have an alternative evacuation route in the event your primary route becomes blocked.
17. Practice your emergency plans.

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Visit the Flinn Scientific website at www.flinnsci.com to review the Flinn Scientific Student Safety Contract.

18. Know where and how to use master utility controls to shut off the gas, electrical and water supplies.
19. Do not operate electrical equipment with wet hands.
20. Subsequent to an accident, when time allows, fill out an accident report describing the event in detail.

This “Top 20” list of general safety rules will help promote safety awareness, but the list is by no means complete. The best way to prevent accidents is to “think safety” all the time, and to remember that safety is never “done!” Discuss safety incidents as they arise in the future and continue to add to your school’s list of safety rules and procedures.

Always Start with Safety!

At the beginning of the school year we talked about the importance of including safety as a regular agenda item in your science department meetings. Please continue this practice throughout the year. Awareness is key to improving safety and preventing accidents.

Flinn Scientific Values Your Support

Please continue to support our efforts to improve safety in school science labs by ordering all of your science supplies and laboratory chemicals from Flinn Scientific. Thank you!

