

Visitors and Volunteers in Research and Academic Areas that Contain Hazardous Materials and/or Equipment (Non-Minors) Policy

Issue: March 8, 2016

Revision: November 13, 2025

Applies To: This Policy applies to all academic and service units involved in research and academic operations involving hazardous materials and/or equipment. If visitors or volunteers are minors (under 18 years of age), refer to the EHS Policy [Minors in Research and Academic Areas](#). Volunteers for Michigan Medicine clinical spaces must refer to [Volunteer Services](#).

Visitors and Volunteers in Research and Academic Areas Policy Statement

Unsupervised visitors and volunteers create a risk for injury and increased liability for the University. EHS requires that all visitors or volunteers are supervised (detailed below) when they enter a laboratory/shop/studio to work or for a visit. Adequate supervision should be determined by the Laboratory Director or Department Head based on a risk assessment of the activity to be performed, ensuring individuals are properly trained and their competencies to perform the procedure safely have been assessed. A minimum level of supervision is that a responsible person (defined on page 5) should be accessible to visitors and volunteers in the event they have questions, concerns or an incident arises.

The intent of this policy is to reduce or eliminate the risk of personal injury to visitors/volunteers in research laboratories/shops/studios, and the risk of damage to projects and property.

Observation Only Visits

The individual (non-minor) is **not** conducting any research or academic activities using hazardous materials or equipment.

Approval Process

Anyone wishing to bring a visitor into an active research facility **must** follow their department's approval process.

PPE Requirements

Individuals **must** be provided with appropriate *PPE* as needed based on work activity underway in the laboratory/shop/studio. At a minimum, safety glasses, long pants, and closed-toe shoes **must** be worn in laboratories/shops/studios where chemicals are used or stored. Long hair must be tied back. Lab coats and other PPE (gloves, ear/face/foot protection, and helmets) deemed necessary by the hazards present **must** be worn even during observation-only visits.

Training

Observation-only visitors **must** receive a brief discussion of potential hazards that may be encountered in the laboratory/shop/studio during their visit, and procedures to follow if there is an emergency. Documentation of training is recommended.

Visitors and Volunteers Performing Research and Academic Activities (Non-Minors) Using Hazardous Materials or Equipment

Approval Process

Anyone wishing to bring a visitor/volunteer into research and academic facilities for the purpose of conducting research or academic activities **must**:

1. Seek approval from their Department Head.
2. Upon approval and prior to the start of work in the *research and academic facility*, all non-UM affiliated individuals **must** complete the attached [U-M Research and Academic Areas Use Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability for Volunteers and Visitors](#).
3. UM affiliated individuals (e.g. UM enrolled students) do not need to sign a liability waiver. Departments that wish to have documented roles and responsibilities for this activity may do so.

PPE Requirements

Individuals **must** be provided with appropriate PPE as needed based on work activity. At a minimum, safety glasses, gloves, long pants, and closed-toe shoes **must** be worn in laboratories/shops/studios where chemicals are used or stored. Long hair must be tied back. Lab coats and other PPE (ear/face/foot protection and helmets) deemed necessary by the hazards present **must** be worn when directly working with chemicals and will be provided at no cost. Visitors/volunteers for shops/studios must follow the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)-General Guideline when there are any potential hazards to the eyes, face, head, feet, hands, or conduct work involving electrical or fall hazards.

Training

EHS General Chemical Laboratory Safety training available through MyLinc must be completed by each individual before beginning work with hazardous materials or equipment.

Additional EHS training courses as deemed necessary. The additional training may include but is not limited to:

- Hazard Communication for Individuals Working in Research Support Units, Labs and Shops
- Bloodborne Pathogens
- Centrifuge Training
- Autoclave Standard Operating Procedures
- Laser Safety Basic Training
- Radiation Safety
- X-ray Diffraction
- Shipping Regulations for Infectious Substances
- Shipping Regulations for Shipping with Dry Ice
- Shipping Regulations for Shipping with Chemical Preservatives

- Working Safely with Viral Vectors

Site-specific training provided by the Laboratory Director/Supervisor must cover necessary work practices, procedures, and policies to ensure that all individuals are protected from potentially hazardous chemicals, biological pathogens, and dangerous equipment used in the workplace. Training on emergency procedures must also be included.

Medical Surveillance

Medical Surveillance may be a requirement depending on the type of research and academic work activities being conducted. Examples may include respiratory protection clearance, animal handler, or audiograms for noise exposure.

1. Consult with EHS on the need for medical surveillance. Individuals may be required to participate in the university medical surveillance program.
2. Individuals may be requested to show proof of current medical surveillance from another entity.

Recordkeeping

1. All Training must be documented and maintained in the research and academic facility with the EHS document binder.
2. Records of the approval and waiver forms must be maintained by the research and academic facility for at least one year.

Emergency Procedures for Observers and Those Performing Research and Academic Activities

All near misses, injuries, accidents, and illnesses **must** be reported. Appropriate medical treatment may be necessary. Determine what **must** be done for each visitor/volunteer and ensure all responsible persons are aware of the procedures.

All incidents that result in injury or illness **must** be reported to Insurance and Claims Administration, filling out their [Injury Report](#) as well as the EHS [Incident and Near Miss Form](#).

Visitors/volunteers should be referred to their physician or the nearest emergency center depending on the nature of their issue.

Appendix A: Related Documents

- [U-M Standard Practice Guide \(SPG\) 605.01 - Safety, Health and Environmental Policy](#)
- [U-M Standard Practice Guide \(SPG\) 601.42 - Covered Visitors](#)
- [U-M Volunteer Guidelines](#)
- [U-M Lab Use Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability for Volunteers and Visitors \(non-minors\)](#)
- [EHS Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)-General Guideline](#)
- [University of Michigan Academic Laboratory and Research Safety Policy](#)
- [U-M Chemical Hygiene Plan](#)

Appendix B: Roles and Responsibilities

Everyone at the University of Michigan has the right to expect a safe and healthy work environment. They also have a responsibility to help ensure a safe and healthy environment for themselves and others. These responsibilities are detailed in the University of Michigan Research and Academic Safety Policy. The policy is issued by the Department of Environment, Health & Safety (EHS) in collaboration with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) that oversees and provides direction for the Research Safety First Initiative. The ELT is composed of the following: the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Executive Vice President and CFO, the Vice President for Research, and the Executive Vice President for Medical Affairs. The policy is endorsed by the ELT and applies to all faculty, staff, students, and visitors in university research and academic areas (teaching labs, shops, studios, etc.) as defined above or when conducting university-related active laboratory or field research in other locations. Please visit the [Policy link](#) to view role-specific responsibilities, including but not limited to the following categories:

- All faculty, staff, other employees, and students
- Graduate Student Research Assistants/Trainees
- Post-Doctoral Trainees/Fellows
- Laboratory Director (Faculty/Lab Manager/Supervisor)
- Department Chair
- Facility Managers/Department Managers/Key Administrators/Chief Department Administrators
- Unit (School/College/Department) Safety Coordinators

Deans, Directors, and Department Heads

- Review and approve requests, if appropriate, for visitors and volunteers working and observing in U-M Research and Academic Facilities.

Laboratory/Shop/Studio Director

- Follow and implement procedures in accordance with this Policy to obtain approvals as required for visitors and volunteers and maintain documentation of approvals.
- Provide ongoing supervision of all visitors and volunteers. Designate a qualified laboratory/shop/studio supervisor and an alternate supervisor, if necessary.
- Ensure visitors and volunteers receive training and maintain documentation of the training.
- Ensure visitors and volunteers are provided with PPE as required for their work.
- Implement and document appropriate safety policies and procedures in accordance with the U-M [Chemical Hygiene Plan](#).
- Ensure that adequate facilities, ventilation, and equipment are provided for the safe use of hazardous materials, and for the appropriate disposal of hazardous waste.
- Ensure employees are instructed on and follow proper procedures and utilize protective equipment provided during their work as detailed in written SOPs.
- Contact EHS to request training and technical assistance, and to evaluate health and safety concerns within their unit.

EHS

- Provide technical assistance to research and academic operations regarding allowing visitors and volunteers into research and academic areas.



- Prepare and provide access to training tools for research and academic operations.

Glossary of Terms

TERM	DEFINITION
Chemical Hygiene Plan	U-M Chemical Hygiene Plan is a written program that applies to all research, teaching, student, and other laboratories at U-M covered by the MIOSHA Hazardous Work in Laboratories Standard.
Department Head	This individual holds authority over a Principal Investigator or other researchers and is in a position to review requests for visits. This raises the approval level beyond the individual lab or research and academic facility.
Laboratory Director	The person with the highest level of authority within the laboratory or academic area. In research labs, this is typically the Principal Investigator (PI).
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
Research Facility	Includes any space within a U-M building where clinical, research, production or laboratory support operations are conducted. This includes space where research animals are housed or supported.
Responsible Person	Any person approved by a Lab Director or Department Head to oversee and/or supervise the activities of a visitor/volunteer while in the research and academic facility.
Volunteer or Visitor	Any person entering a research and academic facility or laboratory on campus for a tour or non-compensated work-related purpose.