



DEPARTMENT OF
**ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH AND SAFETY**

EHS BULLETIN

MAY 2026

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FLAMMABLE STORAGE & REFRIGERATOR SAFETY

Storing flammable materials in standard refrigerators poses a major explosion risk because internal components like thermostats

can ignite accumulated vapors. To maintain a safe laboratory environment, follow these essential requirements:

APPROVED EQUIPMENT ONLY

Never store flammables in household or commercial units. You must use:

- Flammable Material Refrigerators: Built with external or sealed electrical parts to prevent internal ignition.
- Explosion-Proof Refrigerators: Required for hazardous areas where vapors exist both inside and outside the unit.

HOW TO IDENTIFY SAFE UNITS

Before placing any materials inside a cooling unit, check for the following safety indicators:

- Safety Labeling: Look for manufacturer stickers stating “Flammable Materials” or “Explosion-Proof (Class I, Division I)”.
- Specific Design Features: Safe units are designed without internal lighting, exposed wiring, or switches that could spark.

OPERATIONAL BEST PRACTICES

Maintaining safety requires consistent habits beyond just using the correct equipment:

- Secondary Containment: Always use secondary containers (like trays) to prevent spills within the unit.
- Temporary Cooling: Use ice baths for short-term cooling.
- Proper Storage: When refrigeration is not required, keep all flammable liquids in approved safety cabinets.

MAINTENANCE AND COMPLIANCE

If you are unsure about the safety rating of a specific unit in your laboratory, do not use it. Contact EHS immediately for an equipment evaluation. Ensuring your equipment is compliant is the first step in preventing catastrophic laboratory fires.

For questions or more information, email ehs@okstate.edu or call (405) 744-7241.

SUN SAFETY

Many OSU employees and students spend time working outdoors, increasing their exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation and putting them at greater risk of sun damage and skin cancer. Did you know skin cancer is preventable? Unfortunately, the dangers of skin cancer have been neglected. The sun emits UV radiation, which causes skin cancer and premature skin aging.

OSU employees and students should use extreme caution working outdoors in the sun, especially if any of these physical features are present:

- Numerous, irregular, or large moles
- Freckles
- Fair skin
- Blond, red, or light brown hair

Steps to protect from exposure to UV radiation:

- **Lather on the sunscreen** - Generously apply sunscreen, approximately 1 ounce to cover all exposed skin, ears, scalp, lips, neck, tops of feet, and backs of hands at least 20 minutes before going outside. Select a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of at least 15 to provide protection from both ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) rays. Reapply every two hours, even on cloudy days, and after sweating.
- **Wear protective clothing** - Wear light-colored protective work clothing with a tight weave or high-SPF clothing, such as a long-sleeved shirt, pants, gloves, and a wide-brimmed hat.
- **Seek shade** - Seek shade when possible; remember the sun's UV rays are greatest between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm. Take breaks in shaded areas.
- **Wear safety sunglasses** - Wear safety sunglasses, and they should have an ANSI Z87.1-2015 certified impact protection rating and both UVA and UVB ray protection.
- **Check the UV index** - The UV index provides important information to help plan outdoor work activities. Use the UV index app found at <https://www.epa.gov/enviro/uv-index-mobile-app>.

For more information on sun safety, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's ["What You Need to Know about Sun Safety Video"](#)

CURRENT EVENTS

Respiratory Protection

1st Tuesday of every month at 8:30 a.m.
FM North Building, Room 101C
Registration: email ohsp@okstate.edu

Bloodborne Pathogen Training

2nd Tuesday of every month at 9 a.m. and 2 p.m.
EHS Conference Room, 003 UHS
Registration: email chemicalsafety@okstate.edu

Fire Safety w/Hands-On Extinguisher Training

2nd Friday of every month at 9 a.m.
EHS Conference Room, 003 UHS
Registration: email ohsp@okstate.edu

Monthly Employee Training

3rd Thursday of every month at 9:30 a.m.
EHS Conference Room, 003 UHS
Registration: email ohsp@okstate.edu

Laboratory Safety and Hazardous Waste Training

4th Tuesday of every month at 8:30 a.m.
EHS Conference Room, 003 UHS
Registration: email ohsp@okstate.edu

For questions or more information, email ehs@okstate.edu or call (405) 744-7241.