



EHS Bulletin

August 2020

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Reducing Waste to Attain Sustainability

Reducing the generation of waste at the source is an effective waste minimization option as well as a simple way to reduce overall expenses for OSU. When ordering chemicals, only request what is needed to accomplish the task or experiment.

Sometimes chemicals are over-ordered because it appears more economical. However, when a large container of a chemical is purchased, often only a small quantity is taken out for use and the remainder is stored. As the bottle has been opened and exposed to the atmosphere, it may no longer be regarded as a high-quality chemical. Only purchase amounts required or consider sharing with other groups.

The stored material that is unusable must be disposed of and that has a cost associated with it. With a little planning, chemicals can be ordered to be ready when needed, reducing the amount of unused chemicals at the end of the project or research. By not generating waste in the first place, the need for handling, transporting and disposing of waste is eliminated.

Where possible and safe to do so, reduce the scale of experiments and protocols to the minimum size necessary to accomplish research objectives. Avoid unnecessary or wasteful use of laboratory supplies, use washable or reusable laboratory glassware in place of disposable items. While some products need to be single-use items for the integrity of the project and safety, it may be possible to reuse other items after appropriate decontamination and cleaning.

Simple ways to reduce waste:

- Substitute less hazardous materials in tasks and experiments
- Implement procedural change
- Use older chemicals first, before they decompose
- Prepare only enough solution for immediate use
- Review disposal procedures before purchasing chemicals
- Avoid the use of heavy metals when possible
- Reduce the number of testing samples
- Reduce the number of consumable materials used, such as pipette tips

If you have any questions or concerns about how to reduce waste generation, please contact EHS at ehs@okstate.edu or (405)744-7241.

Maintaining Egress Routes During COVID-19

Recently, one of the most overused statements has been, “This is an unprecedented time.” While the coronavirus outbreak has turned lives into something that no one could have ever imagined, safety is still a priority. While the goal of social distancing is a priority, one fundamental life safety truth remains: There is no justifiable reason for locking or blocking egress doors or compromising the means of egress from any building.

When walking around campus and entering buildings, there is new signage that has been placed to promote social distancing. There are designated doorways as an entrance or an exit only. Stairwells have also been designated as up or down only. While this signage is good to promote social distancing during normal building operations. In the event of an emergency or the activation of the fire alarm system, all stairwells and doorways are open and available for the evacuation and egress from buildings.

While egressing from the building, masks are still required and attempt to maintain social distancing while taking the most direct and safe path of evacuation and egress from the building. Too many people have died in fires over the years due to compromised means of egress, or confusion as to what path they should take to reach safety.

It is recommended that everyone be familiar with any building that they enter. Look for exit signage, this will direct you to an egress path in case of an emergency. This egress pathway may be different than the way you entered the building, so familiarization is important.

Protecting students, employees and visitors from this virus is a priority. Equally important is ensuring properly functioning egress paths that can be utilized during emergencies.



If you have any questions or concerns about egress paths in a campus building please contact EHS at fls@okstate.edu or (405)744-7241.

Current Events

Bloodborne Pathogen Training

2nd Tuesday of the month, 9-10 am or 2-3 pm
EHS Conference Room, 003UHS
Required annually for members under OSHA's standard.
Registration: Email name to chemicalsafety@okstate.edu

Respiratory Protection

1st Tuesday of the month, 8:30-9:30 am
FM North Building, Room 101c
Required annually for members who wear respiratory protection.
Registration: Email name to ohsp@okstate.edu

Fire Safety w/ Hands-on Extinguisher Training

2nd Friday of the month, 9:00-10:00 am
EHS Conference Room, 003UHS
Come join us for fire safety education featuring the BullsEye laser training device.
Registration: Email name to ohsp@okstate.edu

Monthly Employee Training

3rd Thursday of the month, 9:30-11:30 am
EHS Conference Room, 003UHS
Topics: Hazcom; Fire Safety; Slips, Trips, and Falls; Office Safety; and Back Safety
Registration: Email name to ohsp@okstate.edu