



DEPARTMENT OF  
**ENVIRONMENTAL  
HEALTH AND SAFETY**

# EHS BULLETIN

**FEBRUARY 2024**

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## HANDLING UNKNOWN CHEMICALS

Labeling chemicals is an OSHA requirement for all chemicals in the laboratory. However, it is not uncommon to find a container left behind from an experiment without a clear label or an older chemical with a damaged label. Every effort should be made to identify unknown chemicals, to communicate any hazards associated with the chemicals, and to avoid added costs involved in removing unknown chemicals by a hazardous waste removal contractor.

### TIPS FOR IDENTIFYING UNKNOWN CHEMICALS:

- Ask other current laboratory personnel if they can assist with identifying the unknown chemical.
- Ask previous researchers or laboratory personnel if they can help identify the unknown chemical.
- If the chemical is in the original container with a damaged label, look for clues on the remaining label for any identity or manufacturer information.
- Analytical procedures can be done by trained laboratory personnel to identify hazard classification to satisfy regulatory requirements for transport and disposal.

If it is not possible to identify the chemical, place a hazardous waste label on the container, place it in secondary containment separate from other wastes in the Satellite Accumulation Area, and contact EHS for removal.

The best and easiest way to deal with unknown chemicals is to prevent them from happening. Here are additional tips on prevention of unknown chemicals:

- Label all chemical containers including beakers, flasks, vials, and test tubes.
- Immediately replace labels that have fallen off or that are damaged or deteriorated.
- Label containers using the full common chemical names. Do not use abbreviations, structure, or formula.
- Use a [mixed chemical log sheet](#) on Satellite Accumulation containers.
- Stored and archived research samples are often stored in boxes containing hundreds of small vials. Label the outside of the box with chemical constituents paying special attention to regulated materials such as radioactive, organic solvents, heavy metals, and other toxics. If the samples are nonhazardous, label them as such.
- Submit hazardous waste removal requests often to reduce the amount of chemicals in the laboratory.
- Employees and students should dispose of all their waste before leaving or graduating from OSU. Each laboratory or department should have a system to ensure that all faculty, staff, and students properly dispose of hazardous waste, including unwanted research samples, before departing the university.

### FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON COLD WEATHER SAFETY, PLEASE SEE THE LINKS BELOW:

- [Chemical and Material Removal Request](#)
- [Training courses offered by EHS](#)
- [Chemical list for EHS supplied safety cans](#)

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

# PORTABLE SPACE HEATERS

With the colder temperatures, some feel a portable space heater is required as a supplemental heat source. The use of portable space heaters on the OSU campus is highly discouraged due to the increased risk of fire, as well as the energy required to operate them. Portable space heaters should not be used to replace a building's fixed heating system.

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) and Facilities Management Energy Services have implemented a portable space heater permitting program. If a space feels too cold and a portable space heater might be needed, please follow the below steps obtain a permit:

- Submit a request for Energy Services to conduct an evaluation of the space.
- If it is determined that the space requires supplemental heating, the request is then forwarded to EHS to evaluate if it is safe to operate a portable space in the workspace.
- If the workspace can support the use of a portable space heater safely, EHS will assist in selecting the proper space heater to use in the workspace and issue a permit.

## HERE ARE SOME OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR PORTABLE SPACE HEATERS:

- Portable space heaters are not allowed in residence halls.
- They must be plugged directly into a wall receptacle; they cannot be plugged into a power strip or an extension cord.
- They must be located more than 36 inches away from combustible materials, such as paper, clothing, curtains, etc.
- All heaters must be capable of automatic shut-off if tipped over.
- They must be turned off and unplugged when the area is not occupied.

For a complete list of portable space heater requirements and the process to obtain a permit, please visit the portable space heater web page at <https://ehs.okstate.edu/portable-space-heaters.html>. These measures are in place to ensure that all staff, students, and faculty are safe at all times.

OSU purchasing requires you to obtain permission from the University Fire Marshal prior to you placing the order using a P Card. Additional information can be found in the [Oklahoma State University Purchasing Card Guidelines 2023](#).

## CURRENT EVENTS

### Bloodborne Pathogen Training

2nd Tuesday of the month, 9-9:45 a.m. and 2-2:45 p.m.  
EHS Conference Room, 003 UHS

Required annually for members under OSHA's standard  
Registration: email name to [chemicalsafety@okstate.edu](mailto:chemicalsafety@okstate.edu)

### Respiratory Protection

1st Tuesday of the month, 8:30-9:30 a.m.  
FM North Building, Room 101C

Required annually for members who wear respiratory protection

Registration: email name to [ohsp@okstate.edu](mailto:ohsp@okstate.edu)

### Fire Safety w/Hands-On Extinguisher Training

2nd Friday of the month, 9-10 a.m.  
EHS Conference Room, 003 UHS

Come join us for fire safety education featuring the BullsEye laser training device

Registration: email name to [ohsp@okstate.edu](mailto:ohsp@okstate.edu)

### Monthly Employee Training

3rd Thursday of the month, 9:30-11:30 a.m.  
EHS Conference Room, 003 UHS

Topics: Hazcom; Fire Safety; Slips, Trips and Falls; Office Safety and Back Safety

Registration: email name to [ohsp@okstate.edu](mailto:ohsp@okstate.edu)