

Office & Workplace Safety Guidelines

Scope

The scope of the guideline pertains to reducing accidents and injuries on campus, primarily in offices and non-laboratory workplaces. Although there are specific standards governing laboratory hygiene and activity, laboratories which contain office space as part of a suite or office equipment will comply with these guidelines and the general safety guidelines contained herein may also be applied to these spaces. The guideline applies to personnel, students, and any visitors to campus.

Introduction

One of the elements of the Governor's State Employee Risk Management Administration Program (SERMA) is office safety. Per the General Duty Clause from the OSHA Act of 1970, all employers must provide a work environment "free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm", and the following information is intended to help workers recognize and mitigate such hazards. To ensure a safe workplace, the following guidelines are being provided for your information. By adhering to these guidelines, safety hazards in the office and workplace can be identified and expediently corrected to avoid potential injury.

Office safety, or workplace safety, is the practice of ensuring a safe, working environment for employees, students, contractors, vendors, and other visitors. It is the responsibility of the University to promote health and safety by reducing the likelihood of accidents in the workplace that may result in property damage or loss, illness, injuries, or the loss of life. Such results contribute to lost labor hours or lost wages; diminished reputation leading to more employee turnover, difficult recruitment, and lower student enrollment; and fines. Maintaining a culture of safety in the workplace lowers such losses, boosts morale and trust within a department and TU, and promotes productivity.

Employees should stay attentive in the workplace to avoid hazards. As the type of work area differs on campus, the hazards and mitigation strategies will differ, and it is important for everyone to be familiar with them. These guidelines may be used to offer solutions for workers to improve overall health, improve efficiency in locating items, utilizing space, disposing items, and lower fire and accident risks. If uncertain, always use common sense when safety is a concern.

General Guidelines

A. General Safety

1. Inspections

- a) EHS will conduct inspections of the workplace on a periodic basis as required by federal, state, and local regulations, TU Policy, and EHS safety programs.
- b) Inspections may also take place on an episodic or case-by-case basis. Such inspections will be based on area or equipment evaluation, incidents, worker complaints, reported concerns, or observed/reported violations, particularly in offices.

2. Incidents

- a) Office Managers and Supervisors should record incidents and near-misses.
- b) Employees (including Office Managers and Supervisors) may submit reports to EHS via the [Environmental Health & Safety Incident Report Form](#).
- c) Office Managers and Supervisors should work with EHS to investigate each incident and develop steps to prevent a recurrence.

3. Training

- a) Follow all safety procedures and required training.
- b) Attend emergency drills.
- c) Use safety equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) as required. Contact EHS for guidance or concerns.
- d) Workplace Injury Prevention Training and other trainings may be assigned/accessed virtually through Vector Solutions SafeColleges found at the following URL: <https://towsonehs-md.safecolleges.com/training/home>. Workers shall request training by emailing safety@towson.edu or by calling the Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) office at 410-704-2949. If Respiratory Protection is required for use of respirators, a respiratory fit test is also required and may be scheduled through EHS.
- e) In-person trainings will be conducted based on the subject area and scheduled by appointment.

4. First Aid, CPR, & AEDs

- a) First aid kits may be provided and restocked by your department. Liquids and ointments should be replaced upon expiration or removed altogether. Make sure all personnel are aware of where first aid kits are stored and are trained how to use them.
- b) For workplaces that are equipped, eyewashes and safety showers (EW/SS) may be used in case of an emergency involving hazardous material exposure to the eyes, face, or body (e.g. chemical splashes, fine irritants, other hazards). Personnel should be made aware of [EW/SS locations](#) and how to use them.
- c) While it is recommended for each area to have a responsible employee who is fully CPR-trained, employees may contact 911 and be able to perform [hands-only CPR](#) until emergency assistance arrives.

- d) AEDs are available on campus and provide instruction upon activation. Personnel should be made aware of the [AED locations](#) near their workplace.

5. Environment

a) Physical Health & Welfare, Health Emergencies

- i. *During breaks, if able, try to enjoy fresh air outdoors. Go for a walk or to Burdick Hall (athletics facility, gymnasium, etc.)*
- ii. *If you feel ill prior to coming to work, it is recommended to remain at home and notify your Supervisor.*
- iii. *If you feel ill while at work, notify your Supervisor and return home.*
- iv. *If you are minorly injured, you may go to Concentra Urgent Care (employee) or TU Health Center (student).*
- v. *If you are severely injured or have a medical emergency while performing work, seek assistance by calling 911 or TUPD at 410-704-4444. Report the incident to your Supervisor, and report to EHS via [Environmental Health & Safety Incident Report Form](#) once it is safe to do so.*
- vi. *In case of poisoning, contact 911 or the National Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222. Report the incident to your Supervisor, and report to EHS via [Environmental Health & Safety Incident Report Form](#) once it is safe to do so.*
- vii. *Use the [TU Emergency Resource Guide](#) for reference and print out the [TU Emergency Pocket Guide](#).*
- viii. *Observe any reported allergies within the office and workplace. Post notices at entrances or where appropriate to guide workers in assisting to reduce potential allergens when feasible.*

b) Mental Health (Stress, Emotion)

- i. *To reduce stress and prevent fatigue, it is recommended to take mini-breaks throughout the day.*
- ii. *If possible, change tasks at least once every two hours.*
- iii. *Relax the mind and body by stretching arms, neck, and legs often if you do the same type of work for long periods of time.*
- iv. *Rest your eyes often by closing them or looking at something other than the work at hand.*
- v. *Breathe deeply several times by inhaling through your nose and exhaling through your mouth.*
- vi. *In addition, always try to eat your lunch somewhere other than your desk.*
- vii. *Refrain from loud talk and yelling.*
- viii. *Avoid combative and violent confrontations.*

c) Facilities

- i. *Keep facilities in good condition, in the interior and from the exterior.*
- ii. *[Facilities Management](#) may also be contacted for maintenance to the physical facility; installation of permanent fixtures, equipment, and shelving;*

pest control; overgrown landscaping; and other services. Please check their webpage to avoid attempting unsafe or otherwise unapproved activities.

- iii. In the case of daily maintenance of common areas and provision of some paper goods related to hygienic needs, campus housekeeping staff may be contacted. Daily maintenance may include cleaning/disinfection of surfaces and fixtures, vacuuming, mopping, removal of municipal solid waste (garbage) and comingled recycling.*
- iv. Prevent damage to facilities by observing unusual conditions or behavior and by reporting incidents and near-misses as recommended in Step A2e.*
- v. If damage occurs or an emergency condition arises that requires immediate repair to the facility, contact Facilities Management.*

d) Space Arrangement

- i. Make sure every effort has been made to arrange office and workplace.*
- ii. Arrange office furniture and electrical appliances with safety and personnel in mind and to obtain maximum utilization of installed facilities (overhead lighting, overhead drop cords, and outlets located on posts).*
- iii. Provide easy access to furniture and equipment to be cleaned and maintained.*
- iv. Aisles and walkways should be ordered in an intuitive manner and kept clear of obstructions.*

e) Signs

- i. Observe and follow all safety signs in the office and workplace.*
- ii. Post OSHA literature and posters in common areas within the office and workplace.*

f) Reduce Sound Level (Noise and Vibration)

- i. Avoid, reduce, or isolate noise/vibration created by work activities, where feasible.*
 - 1) Repair faulty equipment.*
 - 2) If so equipped, use features that provide noise barriers or which eliminate or muffle sound.*
- ii. Headphones, earbuds, and other devices used to hear sounds should be used with electronics to reduce environmental noise.*
- iii. Earmuffs, earplugs, and other noise-reduction devices should be worn to protect hearing in the workplace, but there is a lower likelihood for their use within an office. Such devices will be used in laboratories, mechanical rooms, workshops, warehouses, outdoors, or other places where loud noise may be a feature of the setting, work, or equipment.*

g) Maintain Indoor Air Quality/Humidity

- i. Air flow and moderate humidity are important to maintaining comfort and air quality.*

- ii. *Indoor relative humidity for an air-conditioned environment, such as an office or classroom, should be maintained between 30-50%.*
- iii. *Follow the TU Policy on [no smoking](#).*
- iv. *Assure that the HVAC system and water pipes/fixtures are properly maintained. Excessive, uncontrolled moisture or water damage from this infrastructure may lead to property damage, mold growth, and other safety- and health-related issues.*
 - 1) *Do not create excess heat or steam in areas that are not designed to remove them.*
 - 2) *Do not block ventilation grates with boxes, furniture, or equipment (e.g. filing cabinets).*
 - 3) *Report issues to Facilities Management or EHS.*
- v. *Do not create excess dust without proper ventilation. This may trigger allergies, cause other respiratory distress, or in severe cases, may create a fire hazard. If dust is generated by regular work activities, respirators and respiratory fit tests may be required along with training through the TU Respiratory Protection Program.*
- vi. *Clean up spills (including liquid wastes) promptly and remove all organic wastes (e.g. food scraps, soiled containers) regularly.*
- vii. *Use air purifiers as appropriate.*
- viii. *Assure that your work area is cleaned regularly. Removing dust, vacuuming, and mopping may be necessary at times.*

h) **Lighting & Visibility**

- i. *Use adequate, steady lighting in all common areas, walkways in office, and workplaces to conduct work or travel in a safe manner. The workplace should not be too dim or too bright, which puts additional strain on the eyes.*
- ii. *Local lighting (e.g. lamps) should be provided for doing close work where higher visibility is required.*
- iii. *Ensure that exterior lighting is adequate and functional.*
- iv. *Replace faulty or burned-out light bulbs and related fixtures by reporting the outage to Facilities Management.*
- v. *Be aware of any glass doors or glass furniture.*
- vi. *Use window blinds and other equipment to reduce glare that obscures view or creates eye strain.*

i) **Monitor and Moderate Temperature**

- i. *Protect equipment and promote personal comfort by using the thermostat to maintain room temperature, (68°-74°) for offices. Report issues with thermostat to Facilities Management.*
- ii. *Avoid extreme temperatures (cold and hot) when feasible and wear appropriate attire for the hazards associated with temperature. Follow guidance in the [Heat Stress and Heat Illness Prevention Program](#).*

- j) Proper Housekeeping
- i. *Keep offices and workplaces clean and orderly. Reduce clutter as necessary.*
 - ii. *Make sure storage rooms are kept neat, orderly, well-lit, and material is properly stored.*
 - iii. *Ensure that common areas (e.g. kitchen, bathroom, lounge, conference room, elevators, entryways) are cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis. Contact campus housekeeping staff if necessary.*
 - iv. *Clean up spills promptly. A caution sign should be available in case of spills and wet floors. Cleanup supplies should be readily available.*
 - v. *Do your part to keep storage areas, stairwells, and other low-traffic areas free of waste paper, empty cartons, trash, and other materials. This promotes comfort and organization, but in addition, reduces odors, pests, and other health-related factors.*
 - vi. *On campus, there are various waste streams. Please use the most appropriate waste stream to dispose wastes. Examples include municipal solid waste (also known as garbage or trash), comingled recycling (paper/mixed paper, cardboard, aluminum, unbroken glass, plastics), and compost (food scraps, yard waste, compostable materials). For other wastes, see below.*
- vii. *Broken Glass Waste*
- 1) *Sweep up broken glass immediately.*
 - 2) *Avoid picking up broken glass with your bare hands.*
 - 3) *Wear gloves and use a broom and a dustpan.*
 - 4) *Any fine pieces from shattered glass should be blotted up with damp paper towels to avoid spreading dust or accidentally creating projectiles.*
 - 5) *Place broken pieces into a rigid container or box and label the container "Broken Glass" and seal it with tape to hold the contents prior to disposal.*
 - 6) *Never place loose pieces of glass into a regular waste receptacle.*
- viii. *Other Sharps*
- 1) *Razor blades, thumb tacks, and other sharp objects should not be put loosely into drawers. They should be packed in appropriate containers or the blades and points kept stuck in foamed polystyrene blocks.*
 - 2) *Never store pencils in a container on the desk with points upward.*
 - 3) *Place used/broken blades or other sharps waste in a rigid container, such as a biohazard box.*
- ix. *Hazardous Waste (Chemical)*
- 1) *For hazardous wastes, follow guidance from the [EHS Chemical Safety & Hazard webpage](#) under the subheader **Hazardous Waste Management**.*
 - 2) *Hazardous wastes here may refer to hazardous liquid or solid chemicals, gas cylinders, light bulbs/ballasts, batteries, electronics, appliances, or*

other substances that may not be disposed or removed by campus housekeeping staff or via dumpster.

k) **Prohibited Items and Behavior**

- i. Avoid bringing or using the following items on campus (this list may not be comprehensive):*
 - 1) Weapons*
 - 2) Illegal drugs and related paraphernalia*
 - 3) Alcohol*
- ii. Follow the TU Policy on [no smoking](#).*
- iii. Follow the TU Policy for [animals on campus](#).*
- iv. Avoid bringing space heaters, air conditioners, and personal appliances to campus.*
- v. Avoid bringing recreational drones on campus. For permitted drones, follow the TU Policy for [drone flights](#).*
- vi. No horseplay.*
- vii. Avoid items on the DO NOT BRING portion of this [hyperlink](#).*

6. **Ergonomics**

- a) Avoid repetitive motion disorders.
- b) Ensure that there is enough space for free, unobstructed movement through the office and to conduct work.
- c) For computer use, see [Ergonomics Guidelines for Computer Workstations](#).
- d) Telephone Use
 - i. Cellular phone/smartphone*
 - 1) Use of such phones and other mobile devices have similar hazards to computer use (e.g. glare and eye strain, neck and shoulder strain from craning head downward to view for long durations of time).*
 - 2) Repetitive strain with hands and wrists is similar for computer use, but thumb injury may be prevalent from sending frequent text messages.*
 - 3) Improve posture and avoid frequent use to reduce strain.*
 - 4) Use of speakerphone, headset, or other hands-free device (when feasible) may also reduce strains.*
 - ii. Landline/VoIP*
 - 1) Neck tension is caused by holding the phone between the head and neck. Use a headset or speakerphone if you use the telephone for extended periods of time.*
- e) For laboratories, see [Ergonomics Guidelines for Laboratories](#).
- f) For lifting heavy objects, see [Ergonomics Guidelines for Materials Handling](#).

7. **Office Equipment/Boxes**

- a) Use, Maintenance, & Placement
 - i. Do not operate equipment without proper authorization.*

- ii. *Do not operate equipment unless properly trained on its use or directed by a qualified employee or Supervisor.*
- iii. *Ensure that machines with sharp edges, moving parts, or other hazards are guarded to prevent accidents. Do not remove these guards.*
- iv. *Follow all procedures, user manuals, and warning labels/decals associated with equipment.*
- v. *Keep equipment and machines clean and working properly.*
- vi. *Secure machines that tend to move during operation.*
- vii. *Do not use any machine that smokes, sparks, shocks, or appears defective.*
- viii. *Do not use machinery, equipment, or tools that has been locked out/tagged out for maintenance, deemed faulty, or otherwise has been marked as out-of-service. Keep such items unplugged until maintenance is performed or the items are removed.*
- ix. *Provide adequate ventilation and clearance to equipment and machines to prevent accumulation of heat, dust, or gas emissions. Avoid placing large equipment such as copiers in a small room for this reason.*
- x. *Machinery and equipment should be placed on level, steady surfaces. Do not place machines near the edge of a table or desk.*
- xi. *Avoid placing machinery and equipment near sinks or water sources unless ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI)-enabled or otherwise appropriate.*

b) Equipment/Tools with Sharp, Cutting, or Puncture Hazards

- i. *Keep pointed objects such as razor blades, knives (e.g. X-Acto), etc. boxed or properly stored. Avoid blindly reaching into a desk drawer or other storage areas where such hazards may exist.*
- ii. *Take care when using this equipment. Examples include but are not limited to paper cutters, letter openers, kitchen knives, X-Acto knives, box cutters, utility scrapers, scissors, paper shredders, staplers, staple removers, hole-punchers, pens, pencils, thumbtacks, push pins, message spindles.*
- iii. *Close hand-operated paper cutters after each use and activate the guard.*
- iv. *Use the equipment for its intended purpose, do not improvise.*
- v. *Always use safeguards included with the equipment and keep them in place when the equipment is not in use (i.e. close the cutting arm on a paper cutter, and use the guard/lock).*
- vi. *Ensure that all emergency stops/safety switches on machines are identified and in proper working order.*
- vii. *When sealing envelopes, use a liquid dispenser, not your tongue.*

c) Equipment/Tools with Moving Parts

- i. *Keep body parts and hair clear of equipment and tools with moving parts. Tying back long, loose hair should be practiced when using such equipment.*
- ii. *Loose clothing and jewelry should be avoided when using this equipment. Examples of loose clothing may include loose belts, loose sleeves or pants,*

scarves, and ties; examples of loose jewelry may include necklaces and chains, bracelets, and loose/hoop earrings.

- iii. Remove any other adornments or modifications to the clothes or person that may be caught in the mechanisms of the equipment used when in use.*

d) Heavy Objects, Equipment, Furniture, Storage (Pinch, Crush, Fall Hazards)

- i. Keep large or heavy objects and equipment on floor, lower shelves, in storage areas, or otherwise secured. Do not place heavy objects on top of cabinets. Be aware that anything on top of a cabinet, high shelf, or tall equipment may fall off if a drawer is opened suddenly or with vibration.*
- ii. Keep equipment balanced and load levels evenly to avoid a tipover.*
- iii. Do not block ventilation grates with boxes, furniture, or equipment.*
- iv. Top-heavy equipment and furniture should be otherwise secured to the floor or wall. Bookcases, filing cabinets, shelves, racks, cages, storage cabinets, and similar items over four feet tall should be anchored to walls when feasible.*
- v. Avoid injuring fingers by closing all filing cabinet/desk drawers with the handle. Open and close drawers slowly, one drawer at a time.*
- vi. File Cabinets and Shelving*
 - 1) Ensure that file cabinet drawers cannot easily be pulled clear of the cabinet.*
 - 2) Open only one drawer at a time to keep the cabinet from tipping.*
 - 3) Fill the bottom drawer first to stabilize the unit. The reverse would be used when removing items.*
 - 4) Avoid top loading (i.e. adding objects to shelving or file cabinets from the top with no supporting weight in lower levels).*
 - 5) Do not place cabinets in such a way that exits or aisles will be blocked if the cabinets doors are open, where feasible.*
 - 6) Close drawers when they are not in use.*
- vii. Desks*
 - 1) Keep desks in good condition (i.e., free from sharp edges, nails, etc.)*
 - 2) Ensure that desks do not block exits or aisles.*
 - 3) Ensure that glass-top desks do not have sharp edges.*
 - 4) Ensure that desks with spring-loaded tables function properly. The table should not spring forth with enough force to cause an injury.*
 - 5) Do not climb on desks. Use an approved ladder.*
 - 6) Close drawers when they are not in use.*
 - 7) Repair or report any desk damage that could be hazardous.*
- viii. Chairs*
 - 1) Make sure office chairs are in good condition.*
 - 2) Report any chair damage that could be hazardous.*

- 3) *Take care when sitting in a chair with casters/rollers. Make sure it does not roll out from under you as you sit down. If so equipped, use caster brakes to lock the chair in place to avoid movement.*
- 4) *Do not lean back in office chairs, particularly swivel chairs with casters/rollers.*
- 5) *Do not climb on any office chair. Use an approved ladder.*
- 6) *Do not roll chairs over electrical cords.*

ix. *Storing large boxes*

- 1) *Label contents.*
- 2) *Stack the heaviest boxes at the bottom.*
- 3) *Do not stack boxes too high or tight.*
- 4) *Do not block exits or aisles.*

8. Slips, Trips, Falls, and Collisions

a) *Definitions*

- i. *Slip – person loses traction with a surface due to a slippery condition*
- ii. *Trip – person loses balance due to collision with obstructions*
- iii. *Fall – person loses balance due to slip or trip, and subsequently drops to a lower surface*
- iv. *Collision – person strikes an obstruction or another person*

b) *Doors, Aisles, and Walkways*

- i. *Keep aisles, stairs, and exits clear.*
- ii. *Be attentive to your surroundings.*
- iii. *Use designated paths when available.*
- iv. *Avoid running inside buildings or offices.*
- v. *Walk slowly around corners, through intersections, and into high-traffic areas.*
- vi. *Wear shoes with adequate tread, slip-resistant work shoes, or other appropriate footwear to avoid slips.*

vii. *Doors*

- 1) *Walk slowly into entrances.*
- 2) *To prevent striking someone, doors opening into corridors may be signed “Caution – Open Slowly”.*
- 3) *Do not stand behind doors in the direction which they open.*
- 4) *Close all exit doors when finished with use.*

viii. *Obstructions - Flooring/Walkways*

- 1) *Walkways, including sidewalks, stairways, and ramps shall be free of defects.*

- 2) *Report uneven or cracked sidewalks or floors. If ¼-inch change or more exists for cracks, gaps, or height level for a flat surface, this creates a trip hazard.*
 - 3) *Clearly mark any difference in floor level that could cause an accident.*
 - 4) *Keep floors clean, dry, free of paper clips, rubber bands, and other foreign objects or obstructions.*
 - 5) *Ensure that stairs, steps, floors, and walls are well-maintained and free from broken tiles, protruding nails, splinters, holes, loose boards, loose panels, loose carpet, hooks, and staples. Report such issues to Facilities Management for repairs.*
 - 6) *Clean any spills as they occur.*
 - 7) *Be alert and use handrails while using stairways.*
 - 8) *If rugs or floormats are used, they should be nonslip or otherwise secured.*
 - 9) *Do not place waste receptacles or other objects in walkways.*
- ix. *Obstructions – Equipment/Furniture*
- 1) *Arrange office furnishings in a manner that provides unobstructed paths for movement.*
 - 2) *While walking or moving, avoid loose electrical and phone cords that are hanging as these may cause tripping hazards. If you cannot move a cord, have a new outlet installed or secure the cord to the floor with cord covering strips. Do not tape cords down or have them run underneath carpet or rugs.*
 - 3) *If running cables/cords along the walkway, use UL-approved cord covers (cable protectors).*
 - 4) *Ensure electrical and/or telephone cables do not cross, dangle, or extend into walkways or under chairs. Use UL-approved cord covers or otherwise secure cables/cords in place when feasible to avoid trips.*
 - 5) *Ensure heavy hanging objects are properly secured.*
 - 6) *Ensure office chairs are in good condition: free of sharp edges, broken seats, loose backs, loose arm rests or loose casters.*
 - 7) *Keep desk and file cabinet drawers closed when not attended. Drawers should have safety stops.*
 - 8) *Keep desks and file cabinets in good condition (free from protruding screws, loose trim, etc.)*
- x. *Transporting Items*
- 1) *Use utility carts to move multiple items or large, bulky items.*
 - 2) *Avoid using stairways while carrying large stacks, packages, furniture, or equipment that is too heavy and/or obstructs your view. Instead, use elevators and use [proper lifting techniques](#).*
 - 3) *Assistance may be requested for [Moving Services](#) (through Facilities Management) for moving items between buildings or offices within the same building.*

- 4) *Deliveries of large items from a vendor should be delivered (if not also installed) to the final point of use, when feasible.*
- 5) *Employees transporting large, bundled loads (especially pallets) should enroll in the Forklift Safety Program.*

xi. Inclement Weather

- 1) *Wear shoes or boots with extra traction.*
- 2) *Entering a building from outdoors during inclement weather creates a slip hazard from footwear, umbrellas, coats, and outerwear. Take care to wipe footwear on floor mats at the entrance and remove wet outerwear.*
- 3) *Use care when entering and exiting vehicles.*
- 4) *When walking on slippery surfaces, take short steps for stability. Spreading arms and feet out slightly may add balance while walking.*

c) Heights

- i. Always use approved stepladders or stepstools to reach items on a high shelf. Never stand on desks, chairs, or other equipment. Never climb on shelves.*
- ii. Rolling ladders and stands used for reaching high storage should have brakes that operate automatically when weight is applied to them.*
- iii. All ladders must comply with the [Ladder Safety Program](#).*
- iv. Ladder users should be familiar with this program.*
- v. Employees lifting or picking loads (especially pallets) should enroll in the Forklift Safety Program.*
- vi. Employees working at heights/high locations not appropriate for ladders should enroll in the Aerial Lift Program.*

9. Chemical Hazards

- a) *Use adequate equipment, signage, procedures, and training to mitigate hazards.*
- b) *Never receive, store, transport, or use laboratory- or industrial-grade chemicals, or other hazardous materials in an office or other workplace settings that are inappropriate.*
- c) *Only chemicals meant for basic cleaning and maintenance, office and school supplies, handwashing, or otherwise designed for consumer use shall be permitted.*
 - i. Nonhazardous options for items should be purchased where feasible.*
- d) *Follow guidance in the Hazard Communication Program.*
- e) *Make sure that all containers, including nonhazardous chemicals and wastes, are labeled, accounted for, and stored properly.*
 - i. Use chemical name or trade name to label containers.*
 - ii. Ensure that any secondary containers are labeled and compatible with the chemical prior to use.*
 - iii. Keep containers closed when not in use.*

- iv. *Store chemicals in a safe, secure, dry, cool area away from heat, sunlight, and moisture. Do not store chemicals on the floor, sills/ledges, or high shelving. Do not store chemicals in high traffic corridors or near exits.*
- v. *Only store compatible chemicals together to avoid unintended reactions.*
- f) Keep an inventory of such chemicals and discard them as necessary.
- g) Maintain Safety Data Sheets for each chemical used for reference.
- h) Use PPE such as gloves and splash goggles with cleaners and solvents.
- i) Other basic chemical hygiene will be observed (i.e. no highly volatile items without proper ventilation, no unattended open containers). Any product or process that may be deemed hazardous for other workers in the vicinity by its use should be avoided. If it cannot be avoided, reconsider its use for another less hazardous substitute, or notify the other workers in your area and be considerate of their health and yours.
- j) Never mix chemicals together. Purchase the appropriate desired product observing all steps in these guidelines.

10. Recordkeeping

- a) Maintain user manuals, certifications, and maintenance records for machinery, equipment, and tools.
- b) Maintain personnel training records on file.
- c) Maintain records of all inspections and incidents. All information related to OSHA reportable illnesses and injuries requiring OSHA 300 Log and related documents (OSHA 300A and OSHA 301) are kept on file with Human Resources.

B. Fire Hazards, Emergencies, & Awareness

1. Decorations

- a) Please see the [University Decorations Policy](#).

2. Electrical Hazards

- a) Infrastructure
 - i. *Maintain 36 inches of clearance around electrical panels.*
 - ii. *GFCI outlets should be installed within 6 feet of water sources.*
 - iii. *Never use electrical rooms/closets for miscellaneous storage.*
- b) Equipment
 - i. *Be alert around electrical equipment. If it is not working properly or is giving off an unusual odor, disconnect it, and have it serviced.*
 - ii. *Unplug any equipment before performing maintenance or repair. Unplug defective electronic equipment and have it repaired or replaced as soon as possible. In addition, tag the defective device with a "Do Not Use" Warning sign until it can be repaired or replaced.*
 - iii. *Keep all heat producing devices away from anything that might burn such as curtains, clothing, boxes, etc. Leave plenty of space around the device to allow heat to dissipate. Allocate sufficient space around copying machines,*

computers, coffee pots, microwaves, and other equipment that might give off heat.

- iv. Make sure all appliances in the work area are turned off at the end of the day. It is best to assign one person to check this each day.*
- v. All electrical tools and equipment, including cords, cables, and hoses shall be free of splices and shall not extend into walkways. All receptacle plates and junction boxes must be properly secured. Frayed or damaged insulation on electrical cables at receptacle ends (grounding prong missing, broken plugs) are considered defective.*

c) **Electrical Abuse and the Use of Electrical Cords and Power Strips**

- i. Extension cords are only permitted for temporary use (i.e. less than 8 hours). It may be appropriate to have permanent wiring installed if more electrical outlets are needed in a given area.*
- ii. Use only UL-listed appliances and extension cords. Inspect them regularly for defects.*
- iii. Avoid running cords along metal pipes, other fixtures, or metallic surfaces.*
- iv. Do not overload circuits, power strips, or abuse outlets. Check the amperage rating and make sure it is not being exceeded. The diameter of an extension cord must be at least as large as the cord of the device being plugged into it. Similarly, match your appliance power requirements to the circuit power. Most electrical circuits only supply 15 or 20 amps per room for all the outlets. Multiple-outlet power strips must include a fuse protected by an internal circuit-breaker switch, which will trip open and stop electrical flow when overloading occurs. Use of electrical "octopuses" to obtain more outlets is prohibited.*
- v. Never plug one extension cord into another and never plug more than one extension cord into one electrical outlet.*
- vi. Do not wrap electrical cords around metal water pipes or warm appliances.*
- vii. Replace damaged wires/cords. Inspect electrical cords regularly and replace them if they are cracked, frayed, or have a broken connection.*
- viii. No wires/cords may be placed in an area where they can be stepped upon or easily damaged. Wires should never be taped to the floor/carpet. This includes wires from power cords, speaker wires, cable TV coaxial, phone wires, etc. If wires are in a foot traffic area, they must be in a UL-approved cord cover. Take caution when running wires along the walls, around doorframes and behind furniture. Make sure that the wires are not damaged and that any furniture does not move to damage the wiring.*

3. **Hazardous Materials**

- a) Hazards from consumer products such as aerosol dusters and flammable liquids such as alcohol or other solvents can cause fires if not handled, stored, and disposed properly. Do not store these items near heat-producing and electrical equipment and clean up any spills or leaks promptly.

- b) Do not stockpile a large volume of chemicals outside of flammables cabinets.

4. Waste Hazards

- a) Keep work areas, storage areas, stairwells, and emergency exits clear of combustible materials.
- b) Never throw matches or hot objects into waste receptacles.
- c) Never put oily rags or solvent-soaked objects into waste receptacles.
- d) Avoid intentional burning of wastes.

5. Fire Emergencies & Awareness

- a) Be aware of important emergency information.
 - i. *Know the location of fire alarms.*
 - ii. *Know the location of, and routes to, at least two emergency exits from your work area.*
 - iii. *Know evacuation procedures and the designated rendezvous points.*
 - iv. *Have evacuation plans at eye level near each stairway and elevator lobby, and immediately inside public entrances.*
 - v. *Know who to report to in case of an emergency.*
 - vi. *Know emergency telephone numbers and other forms of contact.*
- b) Maintain evacuation routes and exits.
 - i. *Keep aisles, stairs, and exits clear.*
 - ii. *Never use an elevator to evacuate the building during an emergency.*
 - iii. *Ensure all aisles have at least 44 inches of clear space to allow safe egress in fire emergencies.*
- c) It is TU Policy to evacuate immediately [in case of fire](#).
- d) Have appropriate security. Arson is the single largest cause of fires in office buildings. Therefore, proper security measures to keep unauthorized people out of the building or restricting access where needed will help prevent theft and fire.
- e) Maintain safety equipment. Notify Emergency Preparedness/Fire Safety Manager for deficiencies in equipment. Report any equipment that is missing, defaced, damaged, or inaccessible.
 - i. *Fire doors should always be accessible and able to close completely and automatically.*
 - ii. *Two exits should be visible from all public areas (look for exit signs).*
 - iii. *Horns, bells, and pull stations for fire alarms should be accessible, and free of foreign objects such as paper, rags, or wooden blocks.*
 - iv. *Keep smoke detectors clear of obstructions.*
 - v. *Keep fire extinguishers accessible, properly mounted and secured, clear of obstructions, and report if empty.*
 - vi. *Keep 18 inches of clearance around sprinkler heads to avoid obstruction.*

6. Electric/Motorized Vehicles

- a) No electric or motorized vehicles are allowed inside University buildings.

C. Security

1. Keep doors locked as required, specifically at end-of-day and after normal work hours.
2. In offices, cabinets containing sensitive materials should be kept locked when not in use. In other parts of the workplace, use locks where appropriate to protect equipment.
3. Set alarms as required.
4. Practice proper cybersecurity habits.
5. TUPD may be contacted for security concerns.
6. It is recommended to use the buddy system when working beyond normal work hours. Notify TUPD if you plan to work alone in a given space after hours.

D. Vehicular and Pedestrian Traffic

1. Observe all posted signs, signals, notifications, and warnings while traveling on campus. In this step, vehicles are defined as any machine used primarily for transporting people or goods and pedestrians are any person traveling by foot.
2. All applicable local, state, and federal regulations for safe travel shall be observed.
 - a) Mobile device use while driving requires use of speakerphone, headset, or other hands-free device. Distracted driving is prohibited. No handheld phone use, texting, alcohol, or drug use prior to or while driving. Aside from accidents and injuries, violations may lead to employment perils, fines, imprisonment, injuries, or death.
 - b) Pedestrians should avoid distracted walking to prevent accidents, injuries, or death.
 - c) Distractions while using any vehicle (including motor vehicles) should be avoided.

Resources

To request guidance, training, or for other general inquiries, contact EHS by emailing safety@towson.edu or by calling the Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) office at 410-704-2949.