



conditions that pose an imminent threat to life or health will be reported immediately to the principal investigator or laboratory supervisor for prompt attention.

For other safety concerns, a safety audit report will be sent to the principal investigator or laboratory supervisor with recommendations for corrective action so that the problem can be resolved before an accident happens.

These inspections are also a valuable teaching tool for WSU graduate students who may pursue careers working in laboratories, as well as current and future laboratory workers.

**Getting Assistance**

Laboratory inspections are conducted randomly and by request.

In addition, an inspection form similar to the form used by EH&S in performing laboratory surveys is available in the Laboratory Safety Manual (Section II-L) or online at [www.ehs.wsu.edu/LSM/sampleinspectionform.asp](http://www.ehs.wsu.edu/LSM/sampleinspectionform.asp). Laboratory supervisors and principal investigators may find this form useful



for conducting the recommended quarterly inspections.

If you have additional questions about laboratory inspections, would like to schedule an inspection for your laboratory, or need assistance, contact EH&S.



**Environmental Health & Safety**

P.O. Box 641172  
Pullman, WA 99164-1172  
(509) 335-3041

Wenatchee.....509-663-8181  
TriCities.....509-372-7163  
Vancouver.....360-546-9706  
Spokane.....509-358-7993

<http://www.ehs.wsu.edu>

# Laboratory Inspections



## Safer Processes, Products, & People

### **Laboratory Safety**

Employees and students who work in laboratories in the Washington State University system are a highly valued resource. Health and safety measures are of great importance in maintaining productivity and enhancing the working and teaching environment in University laboratories.



### **Laboratory Inspections**

Laboratory health & safety inspections are one method for developing and supporting the laboratory safety program (chemical hygiene plan). Safety and housekeeping inspections should be performed at least quarterly by the principal investigator or laboratory supervisor.

Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) also conducts periodic laboratory safety inspections according to an established schedule and upon request. These inspections are made by EH&S personnel in order to ensure the safety of employees, students, and visitors.



### **Scope of Inspections**

The time required for a laboratory inspection varies for each laboratory depending on the size and scope of the lab, with a minimum length of about 30 minutes up to several hours. During this time, EH&S personnel will evaluate laboratory functions according to the State and University regulatory requirements and policies. EH&S inspections will include a general safety and chemical safety audit and a review of the Chemical Hygiene Plan. Some of other things inspectors may be examining include:

- Warning signs and information
- Electrical and equipment
- Emergency procedure plans
- Physical hazards
- Personal protective equipment
- Ventilation
- Compressed gasses
- Special materials, such as blood borne pathogens, select agents, lasers, heavy metals, acutely toxic chemicals, reproductive hazards, carcinogens, etc.



The inspector will also be available to answer safety-related laboratory questions and provide suggestions and written materials about how to improve safety in the laboratory.

### **Purpose of Laboratory Inspections**

The purpose of laboratory inspections is to enhance the level of safety already present in the laboratory. These inspections are performed, not to find fault or lay blame, but to ensure a high level of safety for all those who work in laboratories associated with WSU. These inspections also allow for a proactive evaluation of the laboratory and enable a trained inspector to point out safety issues. The alternative may be costly citations from State inspectors, or even worse, a serious injury or a laboratory disaster.



### **Benefits of Inspections**

Laboratory inspections are not mandated by WSU, however, it is strongly recommended that laboratories be inspected at least annually and that each departmental safety committee support and promote this effort.

When a laboratory is inspected, a completed report will be submitted to the principal investigator or laboratory supervisor.

If a laboratory is found to have some conditions that may create a safety concern, you WILL NOT be given a citation of any sort. Rather, unsafe practices or