



## MESSAGE FROM THE SENIOR DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the members of EH&S, I would like to thank everyone who celebrated Lab Safety Awareness week with us in February. With your support and in collaboration with CSHEMA, we organized five safety events across campus to enhance and promote safety.



This year we are rolling out two new safety programs. First, the Department of Health and Human Services introduced a new policy on Dual Use Research of Concern (DURC) and Pathogens with Enhanced Pandemic Potential (PEPP). Second, EH&S is launching a new Hazard Notification Board system to replace all lab signage, which will help labs to manage and update hazard information digitally and will eliminate the need to contact EH&S for signage changes.

April is the National Distracted Driving Awareness Month and a great opportunity to remind ourselves of safe driving practices. So, let's pledge to prioritize safety and lead by example. Please be aware that all insurance policies must be approved and purchased through Risk Management to comply with proper coverage and compliance with university policies.

Please feel free to reach out to your new college-specific Environmental Safety and Compliance Officers (ESCOs) for any research safety support. These

individuals are serving as the direct liaisons between EH&S, college/department leadership, and research units. Many thanks for all your support in keeping the UF community safe.

Regards,

Shailendra Singh

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## NIH DURC/PEPP POLICY TAKES EFFECT IN 2025

In May 2024, the Department of Health and Human Services introduced a new policy on Dual Use Research of Concern (DURC) and Pathogens with Enhanced Pandemic Potential (PEPP), replacing previous guidelines. Effective May 6, 2025, the policy expands the list of regulated agents and broadens oversight of life sciences research involving high-risk biological materials.



The UF Biosafety Office, in collaboration with UF Research, is implementing measures to ensure compliance with these new regulations. For questions regarding the policy or its impact, researchers can contact the Biosafety Office at [bsu@ehs.ufl.edu](mailto:bsu@ehs.ufl.edu).

**CONTACT BIOSAFETY**

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## NEW LAB HAZARD SIGNAGE SYSTEM

EH&S recently announced the official launch of the new **Hazard Notification Board** system in 2025. A hazard notification sign must be posted at all entrances to lab spaces containing hazards such as chemical, biological, physical, and radioactive hazards. The updated system now allows lab personnel to manage and update hazard information digitally for real-time accuracy while also ensuring compliance with regulatory standards. It eliminates the need to contact EH&S for signage changes, providing a more efficient and flexible process for all lab staff.

### Implementation Timeline

Labs will have all of 2025 to adopt the new signage format. EH&S staff will continue to verify signage content as usual and assign corrective actions as necessary to address content deficiencies. Starting in 2026, labs that have not transitioned to the new format will receive corrective actions for incorrect signage.

## How Do I Update My Hazard Notification Board?

- Download the appropriate spreadsheet from the EH&S website. Please note: The spreadsheet must be downloaded to your computer before opening. Opening it in a browser tab will not work.
- Remove the old notice board. If needed, contact your Building Manager for assistance. Refer to the [Lab Signage Placement Flyer](#) for guidance.
- Follow the instructions as outlined on the website or in the instructions tab of the spreadsheet.
- Print the completed form in **color** on standard 8.5" x 11" paper.
- Affix the new sign using an appropriate sign holder. Sign holders can be requested (at no cost) through the EH&S website by submitting a [Lab Signage Request Form](#).

### Previous Notice Board:

**NOTICE**

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA  
EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

In case of emergency, call each of the following:

1) Emergency No. \_\_\_\_\_  
2) Police Department \_\_\_\_\_  
3) Call in order until your presence is notified.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

**WEAR SAFETY GLASSES**

**NO SANDALS**

**WEAR FULL COVERAGE SHOES ONLY**

**NO SMOKING**

### Updated Notice Board:

**UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA** **HAZARD NOTIFICATION**

Primary Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Please Select \_\_\_\_\_  
Secondary Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Date Last Updated \_\_\_\_\_

**Entry Requirements**

Eye Protection \_\_\_\_\_ Long Pants or Skirt \_\_\_\_\_ Full Coverage Shoes \_\_\_\_\_ No Food or Drink \_\_\_\_\_ No Smoking \_\_\_\_\_

**Health Assessments** Please Select \_\_\_\_\_ Please Select \_\_\_\_\_

**Hazards Present**

Select \_\_\_\_\_ Select \_\_\_\_\_ Select \_\_\_\_\_ Select \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Information**

**Exit Requirements:** remove PPE and wash hands prior to exiting the lab (the use of one clean glove is acceptable when transporting samples out of the lab).

Review hazard assessments and SOPs for additional PPE requirements when working.

**Emergencies:** 911 \_\_\_\_\_  
**EH&S:** 352-392-1591 \_\_\_\_\_  
**Worker's Comp:** 1-800-455-2079 \_\_\_\_\_  
**Other:** \_\_\_\_\_

Scan for instructions and more information about notice boards:

**EH&S LAB SIGNAGE**

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## LET'S CELEBRATE DISTRACTED DRIVING AWARENESS MONTH

April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month, a reminder to prioritize safe driving. Distracted driving is a leading cause of accidents, but small actions can make a big difference.



### Stay Safe on the Road:

- Put down your phone – Use hands-free tech or pull over to text/call.
- Plan ahead – Set your GPS or playlist before driving.
- Stay alert – Avoid multitasking and focus on the road.
- Speak up – Encourage drivers to stay attentive.

Let's commit to driving safely and setting an example in our community. Check out the [National Safety Council website](#) for more resources. Stay safe and spread awareness!

**MORE INFO**

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## CONNECT WITH RISK MANAGEMENT FOR INSURANCE PURCHASES

To ensure proper coverage and compliance with university policies, all insurance purchases at the University of Florida must be approved and processed through the Risk Management Department. Without proper oversight, departments may inadvertently purchase policies that don't fully address their needs or may work with providers who fail to explain coverage details clearly.

For more details on procurement procedures, including allowable purchases, please visit [Procurement's website](#). Please feel free to reach out to Risk Management at 352-392-1591 or [risk@ehs.ufl.edu](mailto:risk@ehs.ufl.edu) for assistance.

## **EMBEDDED SAFETY OFFICERS COMMIT TO ENHANCING RESEARCH SAFETY**

As recently announced, the University of Florida has taken a significant step toward strengthening laboratory safety with the introduction of Environmental Safety and Compliance Officers (ESCOs) in key research-intensive colleges. This initiative stems from the 2022 internal audit of UF's lab and research safety programs, which identified the need for dedicated, embedded safety professionals to provide individualized safety support, strengthen the safety culture within individual units, and ensure compliance with regulations.

By serving as direct liaisons between EH&S, college leadership, and research units, ESCOs help simplify safety procedures, ensure compliance requirements, and provide real-time guidance. Their presence allows Principal Investigators and Lab Managers to focus on research while ensuring a safe and efficient work environment.

**Please welcome our ESCOs to their new roles:**

- College of Liberal Arts & Sciences: Dr. Nicholas Cavallaro
- College of Medicine: Dr. Laurence Prunetti & Alek Aranyos
- College of Veterinary Medicine: Dr. Raies Mir
- IFAS: Devin Leonard & Ethan Church

## **SPRING BREAK SAFETY TIPS**

Spring Break is a time to relax and recharge, but safety should always come first. Whether you're hitting the beach or traveling, keep these seven tips from the Florida Sheriffs Association in mind:

1. Plan ahead. Research your destination before you go.
2. Share your itinerary with family and friends.
3. Use the buddy system and look out for each other.
4. Be cautious online. Wait until you're back to post or keep accounts private.



5. Leave valuables at home. Protect your keepsakes by not bringing them.
6. Drink responsibly. The legal drinking age is 21; know your limits.
7. Trust your instincts. If something feels off, it probably is.

Stay smart, stay safe, and enjoy your break. Go Gators!

## FL SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION

## BEWARE OF NESTING HAWKS

Hawks are protective of their nests in early spring and will swoop down or strike the heads of anyone walking too close to their nest. This defensive behavior will subside as the chicks learn to fly and leave the nest. Hawks are federally protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Carry an umbrella with you when entering areas around **Norman Hall**, which is known for hawk activity.



## STAFF SPOTLIGHT



### Alek Aranyos

Environmental Safety & Compliance  
Officer  
College of Medicine

EH&S is excited to welcome Alek Aranyos as an Environmental Safety and Compliance Officer (ESCO) for the College of Medicine. Alek holds a B.S. in Microbiology & Cell Science and has 14 years of experience as a Biological Scientist in infectious disease, vaccinology, and gene therapy labs at UF's College of Veterinary Medicine and College of Medicine.



### CONTACT ALEK

As an ESCO, Alek will provide on-site lab support, training, and compliance guidance, working closely with principal investigators and EH&S to ensure biosafety, lab safety, and chemical safety. Outside of work, he enjoys time with his wife and newborn, as well as tennis, pickleball, paddle sports, hiking, and biking.



### CONTACT SCOTT

#### **Scott Barker**

Environmental Health & Safety  
Coordinator I  
EH&S Lab Safety

EH&S is excited to welcome Scott Barker as an Environmental Health & Safety Coordinator I in Lab Safety. Scott brings 10 years of experience as a chemist in the chemical manufacturing and pharmaceutical industries. He spent six years producing the Nobel Prize-winning Grubbs catalyst in Pasadena, CA, and later worked in process R&D and analytical chemistry for pharmaceutical companies, including Gilead Sciences. He holds a B.S. in Chemistry.

In his role, Scott will conduct lab safety inspections, provide hydrofluoric acid training, and support the chemical inventory system. His hobbies include rollerblading, hiking, resistance training, biking, music, and cooking.

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#### **New Hires**

Nikki Keller, *Building Codes  
Program Assistant*

#### **Awards**

Congratulations to Julie Ramsey and Tara Hetsler for winning this year's

Alek Aranyos, *Environmental  
Safety and Compliance Officer*  
Karleen Weissinger, *Building  
Codes Inspector I*  
Scott Barker, *Environmental  
Health & Safety Coordinator I*  
Preston Hicks, *Hazardous  
Materials Specialist I*

Superior Accomplishment Award for  
their outstanding contribution to  
Business Affairs and the University of  
Florida.



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***ehs.ufl.edu***

UF Environmental Health & Safety | 916 Newell Drive PO Box 112190 | Gainesville, FL 32611 US