

Volume 4 | Issue 4



MESSAGE FROM THE SENIOR DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues,

We are delighted to share that the EH&S team is working to enhance your experience with the EH&S online lab compliance platform (GatorTRACS). An updated system is planned to launch in the second half of 2026. This upgrade will feature a user-friendly interface, improved functionality to streamline compliance tasks, and new tools to better support lab and research safety programs. Starting 2026, PIs and lab staff will receive monthly e-mail updates on progress.



In this newsletter, you'll find important topics on preparing your lab for winter break, how to respond to fire alarms, staying safe during the holidays, the lab manager mentorship program, new EH&S training courses, a new instructional ergonomics video, hazardous waste label reminders, and much more.

As you enjoy this holiday season, please take a moment to review our Winter Holiday Safety Tips to keep you and your loved ones safe. As always, thank you for your continued partnership in keeping the UF community safe.

Regards,
Shailendra Singh

EXCITING GATORTRACS UPDATES IN 2026

EH&S is thrilled to announce major improvements coming to **GatorTRACS**, UF's online laboratory compliance platform.

Launching in the second half of 2026, the new system will feature:

- A user-friendly interface for easier navigation
- Enhanced functionality to streamline compliance tasks
- New modules and tools to support lab safety and administration



GATOR TRACS

These updates were developed using feedback from the UF research community and will make compliance simpler, faster, and more reliable.

What is GatorTRACS?

GatorTRACS is EH&S's cloud-based platform for managing lab inspections, chemical inventories, hazard assessments, and biohazard registrations.

What to Expect

No action is required right now. Beginning in January, Principal Investigators and lab staff will receive monthly email updates, along with invitations to spring town hall meetings for Q&A and demonstrations.

REMINDER: NEW LAB SIGNAGE ENFORCEMENT BEGINS JANUARY 2026

As announced in December 2024, all laboratories are expected to comply with the new lab signage format starting in January 2026. Please note that labs that are not compliant with the updated signage requirements will receive corrective actions during their 2026 annual safety surveys. The new signage ensures accurate hazard communication and aligns with regulatory requirements.

For details on requirements, signage placement, and to download the new template, please visit [our website](#).



LAB SAFETY OVER WINTER BREAK

As we approach the holiday break, here are some things you can do to prepare your lab for a reduced workload or full closure:

- Wind down any ongoing experiments that need to be paused during the holidays.
- Ensure proper storage and segregation of all chemicals in the lab.
- Submit any hazardous waste pick-up requests.
- Properly segregate and provide secondary containment for any hazardous waste that may remain in the lab.
- Power down and unplug any unnecessary equipment.
- If you own a glovebox, ensure it is properly pressurized before your departure.
- Ensure your compressed gases are well stocked for any equipment that needs them.

If you are planning to work over the break, be conscientious of the hazards you will be working with and consider doing minimal hazardous work during this time. If you are working alone, please make arrangements to have other people check in with you periodically.

As a reminder, EH&S offices will be closed during the campus closure period. In the event of an emergency, please call UPD at 352-392-1111.

HOW TO RESPOND TO A FIRE ALARM



It's that time of year again -- EH&S will be conducting annual fire drills throughout January as required by Florida Statute.

When a fire alarm sounds, treat it as a real emergency. Evacuate immediately! Don't wait to confirm if it's a drill. Stay calm, collect your immediate belongings (purse/keys), and use the nearest exit. Avoid elevators, follow posted evacuation routes, and listen for

instructions from emergency personnel.

Once outside, move to your building's designated assembly area and stay clear of entrances to allow emergency responders access. Never re-enter the building until officials declare it safe.

If you encounter smoke while evacuating, stay low to the ground and cover your nose and mouth with a cloth. Your quick, calm response keeps everyone safe!



HOLIDAY SAFETY AT WORK AND HOME

The holidays bring lights, decorations, and celebration, and with that come increased fire risks. Stay festive and safe by following these simple precautions:

- Use UL-certified lights and avoid overloading outlets.
- Keep walkways and exits clear of cords and decorations.
- Discontinue use of damaged wires or overloaded circuits.
- Never leave candles or cooking unattended.
- Charge lithium-ion batteries away from flammable materials.

For more holiday safety tips covering everything from cooking to live decorative trees and winter storm preparedness, visit the National Fire Protection Association's Holiday Safety page.

EH&S wishes you a safe and happy holiday season!

[MORE HOLIDAY FIRE SAFETY TIPS](#)

LAB MANAGER MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The EH&S Lab Manager Mentorship Program connects University of Florida researchers, laboratory professionals, and safety experts with students and early-career scientists seeking guidance in research practices, laboratory management, and regulatory compliance.



This program is open to everyone at UF! Participants represent a range of disciplines and are available to share experience, answer questions, and support

academic and professional development. We also offer monthly Spotlight Talks, covering a wide range of topics pertinent to laboratory professionals. The talk series will begin again in January 2026, taking a brief break for the holidays. We hope to see you there!

MORE INFORMATION ON THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

NEW EH&S COURSES IN MYTRAINING

In 2025, EH&S made updates to several myTraining courses and released a number of new trainings. We are also in the process of updating EH&S courses to improve accessibility according to the [WCAG 2.1 guidelines](#).

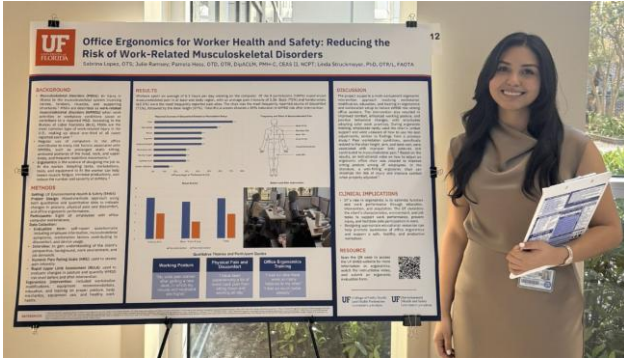
The new and/or updated EH&S courses in myTraining include:

- [EHS400_OLT: Lab Safety Rules](#)
- [EHS401_OLT: Laboratory Hazards](#)
- [EHS402_OLT: Emergency Preparedness](#)
- [EHS814_OLT: Hazard Communication Training](#)
- [EHS830_OLT: Radiation Safety Short Course](#)
- [EHS843_OLT: Respirator Protection: Tight Fit](#)
- [EHS846_OLT: Respirator Protection: N95](#)

Log in to myTraining with your GatorLink ID if you would like to check out the new courses.

ACCESS MYTRAINING

EH&S CAPSTONE STUDENT DEVELOPS INSTRUCTIONAL ERGONOMIC VIDEO



EH&S is proud to announce that Sabrina Lopez, a doctoral Capstone student in Occupational Therapy, has assisted EH&S Coordinator Julie Ramsey over the last semester in expanding ergonomic education in the workplace.

As part of her project, Sabrina developed a new

microlearning video that demonstrates how to properly set up your chair to support comfort, posture, and overall well-being.

Her work translates key ergonomic principles into practical, easy-to-follow guidance that employees can quickly apply in their daily routines. We invite you to check out this new [instructional video](#).

LEARN MORE ABOUT ERGONOMICS

HAZARDOUS WASTE LABEL REMINDERS

EH&S would like to remind everyone of the importance of properly filling out [hazardous waste labels](#) during campus collections. Missing key details like total percentage, hazard boxes, and PI information can delay processing and pickup.

Before requesting hazardous waste pickup, please:

- Ensure that all containers are tightly capped and properly labeled.
- Complete all sections of the waste label, including percentages and hazard checks.
- Write "EH&S p/u" on the container when it's ready for collection.
- Include the current PI name and building & room number which helps our team complete the GatorTRACS form accurately.

HAZARDOUS WASTE		
Waste Hazard (Check all that apply)	Chemical (include all constituents) Total should = 100%, No Abbreviations	Approx. Conc. (%)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FLAMMABLE		
<input type="checkbox"/> OXIDIZER	Ethanol	30
<input type="checkbox"/> CORROSIVE	Water	65
<input type="checkbox"/> REACTIVE	Tris Buffer	4
<input type="checkbox"/> TOXIC	Methionine (3H)	1
P.I. Smith		
Bldg. & Room # DNA/101		
PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY FORM# EHS-CWLB 9/17		

Taking these simple steps keeps waste management safe, compliant, and efficient for everyone.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WASTE ACCUMULATION

SAFETY REMINDERS

Are you closing, vacating, relocating, transferring, or renovating a laboratory? Don't forget to report your lab closeout to EH&S! Notification is required at least thirty days (30) in advance by submitting the online [Lab Closeout Form](#).

Are you planning to purchase lab equipment? Lab appliances such as refrigerators, freezers, 3D printers, heaters, and microwaves need prior approval from EH&S before being purchased. Please use the [Equipment Purchasing Approval Form](#) to submit requests.

Are you generating hazardous waste? Do not fill liquid waste containers completely to the top. *Overfilling can be hazardous to University students, employees, visitors, facilities, and the environment.* Please leave a small amount of head space to allow for expansion of the liquid due to temperature changes (especially during transport).

- 20 L × 15 °C temp increase = as much as 400 mL volume increase for common solvents.
- Best Practices – Leave a 5% void in cans and carboys.
- Best Practices – Only fill 4 L bottles to shoulder.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Jonathan Whalen

Building Code Inspector I
Building Codes Enforcement

EH&S is pleased to spotlight Jonathan Whalen, who recently joined the team as a Building Code Inspector I. Jonathan reviews construction documents, coordinates with project managers and contractors, and conducts inspections across UF facilities to ensure compliance with the Florida Building Code and life-safety standards.

He brings 19 years of MEP design experience in Central Florida, with a background spanning HVAC, plumbing,

CONTACT JONATHAN



CONTACT KEVIN

and electrical design for medical, educational, and commercial projects.

Outside of work, Jonathan enjoys spending time with his family, cooking and smoking BBQ, playing fantasy sports, and learning piano.

Kevin Ross

Research Services Technician
Biological Safety

EH&S is excited to spotlight Kevin Ross, who serves as a Research Services Technician in Biological Safety. Kevin oversees autoclave quality assurance testing and training, as well as lab close-out inspections across campus.

He brings over 35 years of experience in production, research and development, and quality control within the medical device and pharmaceutical industries. Before joining UF, Kevin worked as a Scientist I in quality control microbiology at Thermo Fisher. He holds an Associate of Science in Respiratory Science from Santa Fe College.

In his free time, Kevin enjoys kayaking and home improvement projects.

New Hires

Chuck Cason - *Fire Safety Technician I*
Jonathan Whalen - *Bldg Codes Inspector I*

Promotions

Nicholas Cavallaro - *Lab Safety Program Mngr*
Jennifer Jackson - *ESCO, CLAS*
Dylan Miller - *EH&S Coordinator II*



2025 Graduations

Marisol Alvarez Builla - Master of Science in Health Education & Behavior, University of Florida

John Guerra - Master of Science in Occupational Safety &

Anniversaries

Tiffany Wright - 25 years
Kristen Burns - 5 years
Garth Dixon - 5 years
Christine Lashley - 5 years

Thank you for your years of service at UF!

Health/Environmental Management,
Columbia Southern University

Sabrina Lopez - Doctor of Occupational
Therapy, University of Florida

Josh Muok - Bachelor of Arts in Political
Science, Santa Fe College

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