



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY
Newsletter

MESSAGE FROM THE SENIOR DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues,

We are excited to share several updates regarding university safety and lab management programs as we prepare for a digital transition. Progress continues on the GatorTRACS modernization, with data migration currently underway for the launch of Campus Optics platform in late 2026. To ensure a seamless transition, we request all the labs review and verify their chemical inventories in GatorTRACS by April 24.

Many thanks to everyone, especially our ESCOs, volunteers and attendees who helped us celebrate a successful Lab Safety Awareness Week (Feb 9th-13th) that engaged nearly 300 participants and recognized 22 prize winners in various colleges. Safety compliance remains a top priority following recent EPA inspection that revealed hazardous waste labeling as a common safety concern in some of the research labs on campus. It is critical that every waste container has a hazard waste sticker with proper waste determination and applicable hazard checkbox selected.

Additionally, we are implementing the new EPA requirements for DCM use in research labs, including exposure-control plan, recordkeeping, and periodic exposure monitoring. Lab personnel should also view our brief video on eye protection to understand the essential safety compliance for wet labs. Finally, as you manage your daily routines, please utilize our resources for preventing heat stress during outdoor tasks and adopting “Active Recovery” habits to reduce physical discomfort in the office.



Many thanks for all your support in keeping the UF community safe.

Regards,
Shailendra Singh

GATORTRACS MODERNIZATION UPDATE



GATOR TRACS

EH&S continues to make progress on the transition from GatorTRACS to **Campus Optics**, the university's future research safety management platform. Data migration is currently underway, and the new system is expected to launch in the second half of 2026. Training opportunities for lab personnel are planned for later this spring, with dates to be announced soon.

To help ensure a smooth transition, labs are asked to review and update their chemical inventories in GatorTRACS. Please confirm that:

- Chemical or compound names are accurate
- CAS Number and Manufacturer fields are complete
- Room locations reflect current storage areas
- The inventory matches what is physically present in the lab

Updating your GatorTRACS records now will help ensure a clean and accurate migration to Campus Optics.

Please complete your inventory review by April 24.



EH&S will continue to provide monthly email updates with timelines, training opportunities, and next steps. More information is available on the EH&S website.

[VIEW ALL UPDATES](#)

EH&S LAB SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK

EH&S proudly celebrated **Lab Safety Awareness Week** (February 9th–13th) with a dynamic series of 12 events across UF's Main Campus. Students, faculty and staff had the opportunity to connect with EH&S team members, explore hands-on safety demonstrations and test their knowledge through interactive activities.

Participants also had the chance to win exciting prizes, including meal vouchers and UF Bookstore merchandise generously donated by UF Business Services, as well as Gator Basketball tickets donated by the Stephen C. O'Connell Center.

This year's celebration brought together 287 participants—a fantastic turnout that highlights our community's strong commitment to creating and maintaining safe research environments. Thank you to everyone who attended, volunteered, or contributed to making Lab Safety Awareness Week a success!

Prize Winners from various colleges are Vinay Malut, Dr. Regilda Romero, Dr. Caoyuanhui, Mark Potter, Caden Schmidt, Dr. Marek Schwendt, Dr. Lori Knackstedt, Rithika Mathew, Sarah Green, Gabrielle Willis, Hailey Kovacs, Amy Meacham, Annie Bzoch, Lana Fagman, Nicole Adams, Harsh Khanna, Veronica Ramos, Dr. Artem Nemudryi, and Aarushi Pant.

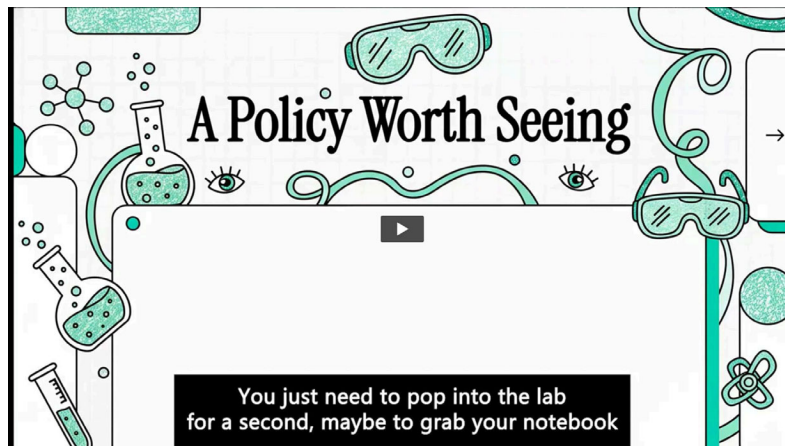


LAB SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK

Prize Winners



**EYE PROTECTION REQUIREMENT
FOR UF WET LABS**



Eye protection is required for entry into all UF wet labs. This brief 5-minute video highlights *why* this rule is essential and the regulatory framework behind it.

You can find additional guidance on eye protection and other PPE on the [EH&S website](#).

LEARN MORE ABOUT PPE

HAZARDOUS WASTE DETERMINATION PROCESS

During the most recent EPA/DEP inspection, hazardous waste labeling was identified as a common safety concern in some of the research labs on campus as the appropriate hazard checkboxes were not selected on the waste labels.

To keep our campus safe and compliant, remember that every container of laboratory waste must undergo a proper hazardous waste determination before it enters the satellite accumulation area. Correctly identifying all applicable hazards is essential not only for regulatory compliance, but also for the safety of anyone who handles, transports, or manages the waste.

When labeling your container, be sure to check all relevant hazard boxes on the UF Hazardous Waste sticker. Accurate labeling ensures the waste is managed properly from the moment it is generated.

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/L 9/17

LEARN MORE ABOUT HAZARDOUS WASTE

DICHLOROMETHANE USE UPDATE



EH&S would like to remind all laboratory users that the EPA has strengthened regulatory oversight of Methylene Chloride (Dichloromethane/DCM) use under a final rule issued in April 2024.

The rule restricts most commercial uses of DCM and requires laboratories to document substitution efforts, maintain exposure-control plans, and conduct periodic exposure monitoring for anyone who may be exposed. Detailed recordkeeping and implementation of a Workplace Chemical Protection Program are

also required to ensure compliance.

For requirements, registration, and full program information, please visit the UF DCM Program webpage.

MORE INFORMATION ON DCM AT UF

UF HOSTS AAUS DIVING SAFETY PROGRAM ORIENTATION

UF's Diving Science and Safety Program, led by Diving Safety Officer Cheryl Thacker, hosted its semi-annual **American Academy of Underwater Sciences (AAUS) Diving Safety Program Orientation** on March 1, 2026. The event brought together 22 participants representing 10 different AAUS Diving Safety Programs, along with five presenters, all serving as Diving Safety Officers from institutions across the region.

The orientation covered core topics in scientific diving, including the history of scientific diving, the role and responsibilities of the Diving Safety Officer, and the structure of scientific diving programs and the AAUS Office. Two focused presentations addressed risk management, one from the perspective of institutional scientific diving programs and one specific to the Diving Safety Officer role.

UF EH&S thanks all participants and presenters for contributing to a productive and informative session that supports safe and compliant scientific diving across AAUS programs.



MORE INFORMATION ON BOATING & DIVE SAFETY

CSHEMA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS OPEN THROUGH MARCH 31

The Campus Safety, Health, and Environmental Management Association (CSHEMA) is now accepting applications for the **Dr. Fay Thompson Scholarship**, a \$3,000 award designed to support undergraduate students pursuing careers in environmental health, occupational health and safety, and related disciplines. The scholarship also includes a waiver to attend the

CSHEMA Annual Conference, offering students valuable networking and professional development opportunities.

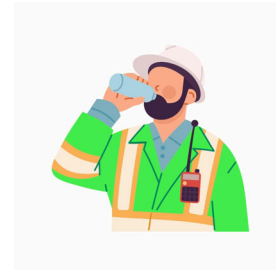
The program is open to full-time undergraduates enrolled in majors aligned with EH&S career paths such as environmental science, fire protection, industrial hygiene, industrial engineering, health physics, occupational health, or safety.

Applications are being accepted through March 31, and students are encouraged to apply early. For more information about eligibility and how to apply, visit the CSHEMA scholarship webpage.

APPLY BY MARCH 31

PREVENT HEAT STRESS IN OUTDOOR WORK

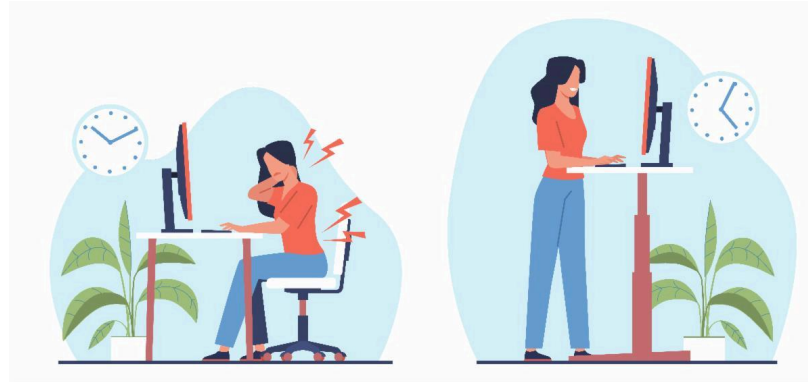
Heat stress is a serious hazard for anyone working outdoors. Early warning signs, such as dizziness, headache, nausea, or heavy sweating, signal that the body is struggling to cool itself. Without quick action, these symptoms can escalate to heat exhaustion or even life-threatening heat stroke.



Hot, humid weather, strenuous work, and wearing PPE all increase heat buildup. To stay safe, workers should drink water regularly (before feeling thirsty), take shaded breaks, wear lightweight clothing and sunscreen, and schedule demanding tasks during cooler parts of the day. Rotating tasks and watching for symptoms in coworkers can also help prevent heat-related illness.

HEAT STRESS POLICY

REDUCE DISCOMFORT IN OFFICE WORK



Many employees transitioning from active, movement-heavy routines to 40-hour desk roles experience a type of “postural shock” known as detraining. This shift can lead to stiffness, discomfort, and even the return of old sports injuries as the body loses its previous conditioning.

To help prevent these issues, adopt an Active Recovery mindset during the workday. Set a 20-minute timer as a reminder to stand, stretch, or walk briefly to keep joints and muscles engaged. Proper workstation setup also plays an important role. Ensure your chair provides sufficient back support, and consider using a standing desk converter to vary your posture throughout the day.

If your workstation feels uncomfortable or poorly matched to your frame, visit our website to request a professional ergonomic evaluation.

ERGONOMICS EVALUATION INFORMATION

ERIN BREWER'S LEGACY

We are deeply saddened to share the passing of Erin Brewer on January 31, 2026. Erin joined the University of Florida on February 17, 2023, as an EH&S Insurance & Risk Specialist within Occupational Safety and Risk Management and later advanced to the role of Risk Manager in mid-2024. In her role, Erin was instrumental in managing and servicing UF’s insurance programs, policies, and claims; supporting FEMA disaster recovery efforts; collaborating with state adjusters on litigation and mediation matters; and training employees on coverage and risk-related topics, among many other contributions. She brought with her a strong background as a

Licensed Commercial Agent, Account Administrator, and Claims Adjuster, along with her Florida 220 P&C Agent License.

Erin was known not only for her professionalism and expertise, but also for her kindness and genuine care for others. When she helped you, she made you feel like you were the only one that mattered. Outside of work, she cherished time with her family, enjoyed music and reading, and had a passion for travel and trying new things. Erin's contributions to the University and the impact she made on those around her will not be forgotten, and she will be deeply missed.



STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Meagan Difilippo

Receptionist
Business Office, EH&S

EH&S is excited to spotlight Meagan Difilippo, who recently joined the Business Office as a Receptionist. Meagan supports the department by answering and directing calls and processing pest management service orders, helping ensure smooth daily operations across EH&S.

Meagan holds a bachelor's degree in History from the University of Florida and previously worked for nearly three years as a legal assistant with Rywant, Alvarez, Jones, Russo & Guyton P.A. in Gainesville.

CONTACT MEAGAN

Outside of work, Meagan enjoys crocheting and reading.

New Hires

Meagan Difilippo - *Receptionist*
Zachary Stump - *Hazardous Mat. Specialist II*

Promotions

Lesley Hines - *Asst. Radiation Safety Officer*
Jennifer Jackson - *ESCO, CLAS*
Greg Banks - *Risk & Insurance Coordinator*

Anniversaries

Linda Patrick - 5 years
Jamieson McMahon - 10 years

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