Volume 5 | Issue 2

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY Newsletter

MESSAGE FROM THE SENIOR DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues,

As we move into the summer season, I am pleased to share several important EH&S updates and highlights. For the third year in a row, the UF EH&S department has been recognized by CSHEMA, receiving three Innovation Awards for UF safety programs. These awards are given for distinction of an institution's efforts in developing safety culture, enhancing resources, and implementing a comprehensive EH&S marketing and communication program.

As we continue our progress to modernize the current EH&S web platform (GatorTRACS), we are entering the next phase of CampusOptics implementation, which includes transferring chemical inventory, integrating safety training, setting up PI dashboards and pilot testing with a small group of labs. After this pilot phase, labs will begin transitioning to CampusOptics in July.

This newsletter also covers various important topics including hurricane lab preparation, eye protection in labs, firework safety tips, lab door closing requirements, proper chemical labels, hawk safety tips, sharps safety, and much more. I encourage you to review this edition and take advantage of the resources and updates provided.

Enjoy your summer break with your family and friends, and many thanks for all your efforts in keeping the UF community safe.

Regards,
Shailendra Singh

EH&S WINS THREE 2026 CSHEMA AWARDS

For the third year in a row, the University of Florida has been recognized by the Campus Safety, Health, and Environmental Management Association (CSHEMA). This year, UF EH&S has won three prestigious CSHEMA awards in the Large School category:

- **Comprehensive EH&S Marketing and Communication Program Award:** Recognizing our department's overall excellence in marketing and communication efforts.

- **Resources Enhancement Innovation Award** (Fluorescent Light Retrofit at UF's Waste Management Facility): Honoring initiatives that reduce costs, improve environmental outcomes, or advance sustainability.
- **Safety Culture Innovation Award** (Environmental, Health & Safety Officer – ESCO Program): Celebrating institutional practices that promote a strong culture of safety among faculty, staff, and students.

These accomplishments highlight our ongoing commitment to developing impactful safety programs and fostering strong engagement across the UF community. Many thanks to the entire EH&S team, ESCOs, and our valued stakeholders for their dedication, teamwork, and commitment to advancing safety.

All of the CSHEMA award recipients will be honored at the 73rd Annual CSHEMA Conference this July in Austin, Texas and will have the opportunity to present these programs at the conference next year.

CAMPUS OPTICS TRANSITION UPDATE

We are entering the next phase of implementing CampusOptics, which will replace Gator TRACS, to improve our research safety management programs. This phase includes pilot testing with a small group of volunteer labs to help ensure a smooth and successful transition for the broader research community.

Following the pilot phase, labs will begin transitioning to CampusOptics in stages beginning in July. The full rollout is expected to occur over approximately 3–5 months, with CampusOptics anticipated to be fully implemented across UF by the end of the calendar year.

This phased approach will allow us to refine processes and provide support throughout implementation to help minimize disruption and create the best possible user experience. Additional details about transition phases, training opportunities, and important next steps will be shared in the coming weeks. Please watch for email updates and visit the EH&S website for the latest information and resources.

VIEW ALL UDPATES

HURRICANE LAB PREP

In preparation for the upcoming hurricane season, EH&S Research Services would like to remind all lab users to be prepared to shut down their labs as needed. To assist with this process, we have put together a checklist of common items that should be addressed prior to any weather-related emergency shutdown.

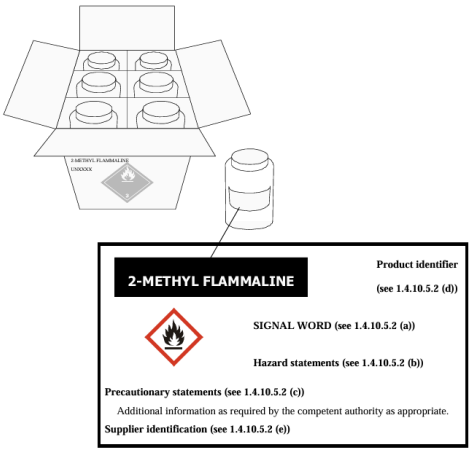
Please take a moment to review the **Hurricane Checklist for Laboratories**. This document can be printed or downloaded and used as a handy guide to prep labs when an imminent hurricane

impact is announced. Also, for labs utilizing glove boxes, please check out the **Glove Box Hurricane Preparation Guide**.

HURRICANE CHECKLIST FOR LABORATORIES

CHEMICAL LABELS

Proper labeling is one of the most important basic controls in lab safety and quality management because it directly affects worker protection, compliance and a culture of safety. Proper labeling also improves inventory and organization, supports emergency response and enhances communication among lab personnel.



A good chemical label typically includes:

- Product Identifier (name)
- Pictogram (GHS symbols)
- Hazard Statements/Signal Word (e.g., Danger)
- Precautionary Information
- Supplier Information

For more information on OSHA's revised Hazard Communication Standard (HCS), please visit the OSHA website.

LEARN MORE ABOUT PROPER LABELING

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON EYE PROTECTION

Did you know that EH&S's eye protection requirement for labs is based on the federal OSHA Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Standard? This institutional requirement is intended to protect employees and students from preventable eye injuries in the workplace and research environments in addition to complying with federal regulations.

To help our community better understand the importance of this requirement, EH&S has posted additional

resources and information on the “why” behind the requirement on **our website**. We also encourage you to review the attached one-page flyer, which highlights key elements of the OSHA PPE Standard and eye protection expectations.

EYE PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS

4TH OF JULY SAFETY TIPS

As you enjoy 4th of July festivities, EH&S encourages everyone to make safety a priority. Fireworks can pose significant risks, and each year thousands of people are injured by amateur use of professional-grade, homemade, or illegal fireworks. Even seemingly harmless items such as sparklers and small firecrackers can cause serious burns, eye injuries and fires.

The National Safety Council recommends attending public fireworks displays conducted by trained professionals rather than using fireworks at home. In Florida, fireworks that explode or launch into the air are not legal for consumer use, although certain exemptions may apply.

If you choose to use consumer fireworks, keep the following safety tips in mind:

- Always wear protective eyewear.
- Only light one device at a time and back away quickly.
- Use outdoors, away from people, buildings, and flammable materials.
- Keep a bucket of water nearby and soak used fireworks before disposal.
- Never hold or relight malfunctioning fireworks.

MORE INFO ON FIREWORKS SAFETY

WHY MUST LAB DOORS REMAIN CLOSED?

You may have been asked by safety professionals to keep your lab doors closed. But do you know why this is so important? Keeping lab doors closed is a critical safety practice that supports laboratory ventilation, fire protection & life safety, and biocontainment measures. Below are three key reasons why closed lab doors matter:

- **Airflow & Safety**: Labs rely on negative pressure to keep fumes and particles from escaping into hallways. Open doors disrupt this system.
- **Fire Protection**: Lab doors are fire-rated and part of the building’s fire safety design, and they should never be propped open.
- **Containment & Security**: Closed (and locked when unoccupied) doors help meet biosafety requirements and control access.

Keeping lab doors closed is a simple step that protects you, your colleagues, and the building.

SHARPS SAFETY

Needlestick injuries can expose you to serious health risks. Always wear gloves and goggles when handling blood or tissue, and dispose of needles in a sharps container immediately after use. Use safety-engineered devices like retractable needles, and avoid recapping whenever possible. Never pass needles hand to hand. Instead, use a tray to transfer them safely. View the **Sharp Waste Disposal Guide** for more details.

In addition, staying up to date on annual Bloodborne Pathogens training provides an excellent refresher on how to optimize safety when handling blood. Register for the course in myTraining.

TAKE THE BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS COURSE

LOOK OUT FOR HAWKS

This is the time of year when young hawks are learning to fly. You may see them on the ground, especially around Norman Hall. If you do, please don't approach. The parents are usually nearby and can become protective.

Hawks are federally protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, so it's important to give them space and let them be.

- Keep a safe distance and stay aware of your surroundings.
- Don't handle or interfere with the birds.
- Allow them to continue their natural learning process undisturbed.

Giving them space helps keep both you and the hawks safe.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

CONTACT MAYRA

Mayra Bernabe-De Leon, M.Ed.
Administrative Specialist II
Environmental Health & Safety

EH&S is thrilled to welcome Mayra Bernabe-De Leon as our new Administrative Specialist II.

Mayra plays a key role in supporting the division's daily operations by overseeing administrative duties and providing high-level support to the Senior Director and four Associate Directors. She also assists the Business Affairs Human Resources team with personnel matters, helping coordinate interviews and hires, maintaining division-wide personnel records, and tracking occupational health exam compliance for EH&S employees.

In her free time, Mayra enjoys reading, baking, solo traveling, supporting local businesses, and trying new DIY projects.

New Hires

Mayra Bernabe-De Leon - *Admin Specialist II*

Marsha Joseph - *Risk & Insurance Cdr I*

Jordan Thom - *Health Physicist II*

Fabian (Wren) Sanabria - *Fume Hood Tech*

Anniversaries

Jeremy Dickerson - 5 years

Kiet Quach - 25 years

Promotions

Daniel Nunez - *Research Regulatory Analyst II*

Dan Hickey - *Building Code Inspector II*

Gabriella Chester - *Environ Hlth & Safety Cdr II*

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