



# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY Newsletter

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear colleagues,

On behalf of the members of the EH&S division, I would like to thank everyone who attended or helped celebrate this year's October Safety Month. We partnered with our state/local public safety agencies (State Fire Marshal, Gainesville Fire Rescue and Red Cross) and campus stakeholders to host safety events at the College of Engineering, Reitz Union, Department of Chemistry, and Health Science Center. Additionally, we participated in the Benefits and Wellness Fair at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium. All the events were well received and were appreciated by the campus community.



In addition, we successfully relocated half of the bat colony (~350,000 bats) to their new house as part of the bat relocation project. This story was covered by the [local news](#). Now, we are excited to distribute this last newsletter issue of 2022 which covers a range of health and safety topics including holiday safety tips, training updates, injury/incident reporting, research leader recognition and staff spotlights. Enjoy the holiday season with your family and friends in a safe and healthy environment. Thank you for all your support in keeping the UF community safe.

Happy Holidays!

Regards,  
Shailendra Singh

---

## CHEMICAL & RADIOACTIVE WASTE PICKUP

### Staffing shortages may delay chemical and radioactive waste collection

Turnaround time for chemical and radioactive waste collection usually averages between 5-7 business days, but due to staffing shortages, collection times are being impacted. Under federal and state regulations, waste held in satellite accumulation areas may remain at the point of generation as long as it is packaged and labeled properly and has not reached the volume limit of 55 gallons. If you are approaching the 55-gallon volume limit, contact [Hazardous Waste Management](#), and **we will expedite your request** Consider **postponing your waste pick-up request** if you have only a small volume of waste. This will help us to best allocate our currently limited staffing resources.





# Safety Month



**Did you know that Fire Prevention Week, Chemistry Week, and Biosafety and Biosecurity Awareness are all observed in October?**

To celebrate October Safety Month, UF EH&S hosted several interactive events and collaborated with local partners and campus stakeholders. Week one included outreach for the UF Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering with a multidisciplinary event at the New Engineering Building (NEB). For week two, we partnered with UFPD, Gainesville Fire Rescue, the American Red Cross, the State Fire Marshal, and others for a tabling event at the Reitz Union. Week three brought us Chemist Safety Day hosted by Lab Safety at the Department of Chemistry. The final week focused on biosafety with interactive waste segregation and glove removal activities at the Health Science Center.

---

# HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

The holidays are a time when we get together to celebrate with friends and family. Unfortunately, these celebrations can quickly become filled with loss and devastation if safety is not the top priority.



Whether you partake in the celebration of a local holiday or a special cultural tradition, carefully consider the safety guidelines in the following areas:

- Candles
- Live Christmas trees
- Lights
- Holiday decorations
- Fireworks
- Space heaters
- Cooking

Download our [Winter Holiday Safety Tips](#) for more information.

## SAFETY TIPS

---

# DO NOT FEED STRAY ANIMALS

The feeding of stray animals is prohibited on UF campus. Your good intentions and actions of feeding the animals can ultimately endanger the health and safety of others or even yourself.

Stray animals such as raccoons, squirrels, and feral cats can be attracted to garbage cans, pet food, bird seed and gardens for an easy meal. Once accustomed to being fed, they can become conditioned to associate humans with food and may lose their fear of humans and become aggressive. Since these animals have the potential to carry various diseases, this poses a threat to both the human and animal population on campus.



Any questions or wildlife complaints should be directed to [EH&S Pest Management Services](#) at 352-392-1591 or UPD at 352-392-1111.

## FEEDING WILD ANIMAL POLICY

---

# SAFETY REMINDERS

**Are you closing, vacating, relocating, transferring, or renovating a laboratory?**  
Notification to EH&S is required **thirty days (30) in advance**. Please [report lab closeout](#).

**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.

# UPCOMING CHANGES TO TRAININGS

## Updates to the Biomedical Waste training are coming in 2023

Here's what to expect:

- We will no longer offer the combined Bloodborne Pathogens/Biomedical Waste course. Instead, **users will need to complete Biomedical Waste (EHS851) and Bloodborne Pathogens (EHS850) separately.** There will also no longer be a separate BBP training for clinical staff. Users at off-site facilities (areas not located on Main Campus) must take the **EHS854 version** of the Biomedical Waste training or verify the requirement through the site-specific biomedical waste coordinator.
- Although there are no changes to how biomedical waste is handled on Main Campus, the new training module will highlight requirements and **best practices for handling non-biomedical, biological waste.** A guide on how to handle this type of waste can be [found here](#).
- In addition to all needles (regardless of contamination status), **any sharp item contaminated with biomedical waste must be disposed of as sharp biomedical waste** using the appropriate sharps container.



The new training courses will be launched in early 2023 and departments can request dedicated in-person training sessions by emailing the Biosafety Office ([bsa@ehs.ufl.edu](mailto:bsa@ehs.ufl.edu)). Additionally, **updated waste handling posters and guides are available** on our [website](#).

## Updates to the Laser Safety training

The updated **Laser Safety (EHS833)** training will need to be taken by all laser users. Expect an email notification from the EH&S Radiation and Laser Safety program once the training is launched.

# UPCOMING LIVE TRAININGS

**Gator TRACS Tutorial** - review how to set up your LATCH roster, complete the annual hazard assessment, view and track personnel training, view inspection reports and close or reassign corrective actions. Register on [myTraining](#) for one of the following sessions:

- January 12<sup>th</sup> @ 3 PM
- February 8<sup>th</sup> @ 11 AM
- March 21<sup>st</sup> @ 10 AM



**New PI Meet and Greet** - become well acquainted with UF procedures and resources to conduct research. This meet a greet is available every first Thursday of each month at 10:00 am in the EH&S Conference Room (also available via Zoom). Register via email for the following sessions:

- January 5<sup>th</sup> @ 10 AM
- February 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 10 AM
- March 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 10 AM

## SAFETY STARS

Effective housekeeping can help control or eliminate hazards. Housekeeping is not just cleanliness but also includes keeping areas neat and orderly, maintaining halls and floors free of slip and trip hazards, and removing waste materials and other fire hazards from work areas. It also requires paying attention to details like the layout of the whole space, aisle marking, the adequacy of storage facilities, ease of access to emergency equipment like safety showers, eyewash stations, fire extinguishers, and maintenance.



**EH&S would like to recognize Dr. Sharyn Passeretti** for demonstrating excellent housekeeping at the teaching lab in the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition. Thank you for helping us maintain a strong safety culture.

[DR. PASSERETTI IFAS PROFILE](#)

## LEADERS IN RESEARCH SAFETY THE PASSION FOR SAFETY

We would like to welcome **Dr. Austin Evans** who recently joined the UF Chemistry Department. During his participation at EH&S's New PI Meet and Greet, Dr. Evans shared his passion for safety and proactively working towards establishing a culture of safety in his lab early on.



In the past month, Dr. Evans has engaged with various EH&S offices (Building Codes, Industrial Hygiene, Lab Safety and Hazardous Waste) to ensure compliance with all applicable regulations as he launches his research at UF.

Dr. Evans has also demonstrated superior involvement with his lab staff to ensure that they are well trained in the skills needed to conduct research operations safely.

We encourage all Principal Investigators to follow Dr. Evan's lead and collaborate with the research operations and compliance offices at UF. If you are a new PI who needs assistance, please don't hesitate to contact EH&S.

[DR. EVANS RESEARCH GROUP](#)

# CHANGES TO THE OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE PROGRAM

Starting January 2023, **UF is partnering with CareSpot to perform pre-employment health physicals.** This change in the Occupational Medicine (Occ Med) Program will impact new UF employees, as well as existing employees transferring to new positions, that require a health assessment based on essential functions of the job.



The Occ Med clinic on campus will continue to support the program by providing paperwork clearances and recommendations on health assessments required to perform job duties. Health assessment results will continue to remain viewable in myUFL, and vaccinations will continue to be administered through the campus Occ Med clinic.

For locations outside of the Gainesville area and around the state, the process for substitution physicals will remain the same. In the coming weeks, EH&S will be holding scheduled information sessions to communicate the details of these changes and how they may best support your area during this transition. **Please reach out to Tara Hetsler, [thetsler@ehs.ufl.edu](mailto:thetsler@ehs.ufl.edu), Occupational Medicine Program Coordinator, to schedule an information session.**

## BUSINESS AFFAIRS ADMINISTRATIVE MEMO

# INJURY/INCIDENT REPORTING

Supervisors are required by EH&S and Florida Statute to report all employee injuries. Compliance can be met by submitting the [Injury/Incident Report form](#) to EH&S.

To ensure that an employee receives appropriate medical care, **AmeriSys**, the State of Florida's medical case management vendor, must also be notified of any work-related medical emergency as soon as possible by calling **1-800-455-2079**. In the event of a life-threatening medical emergency, always call 911 first and then report the incident to Amerisys. Treatment for any non-life-threatening work-related injury or illness must be sought at a medical facility.



Once AmeriSys has been contacted, submit the online Injury/Incident Report form to EH&S as soon as possible.

## INJURY/INCIDENT FORM

# STAFF SPOTLIGHT



[CONTACT](#)

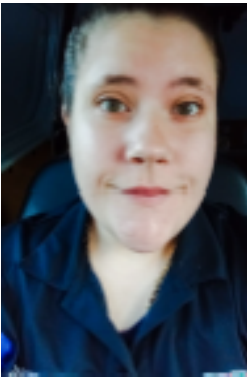
## Kristene Taylor

Program Assistant  
Research Services and Safety

EH&S would like to spotlight our Research Services Program Assistant, Kristene Taylor.

In this position, Kristene supports the Research Services group by serving as the primary Gator TRACS Administrator. Additionally, she manages onboarding new PIs, oversees lab closeout process, and assists Lab and Biosafety with administrative tasks as needed. Kristene has a degree in Marine Biology from Florida Atlantic University and has worked for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Loxahatchee River District prior to joining UF.

Outside of work, Kristene volunteers at the Museum of Natural History. This past spring she assisted with the collection of fossils at the Montbrook site for the Vertebrate Paleontology Collection.



[CONTACT](#)

## Rebecca Irwin

Fire Safety Technician  
Facility Support Services

We are excited to welcome Rebecca Irwin as our new Fire Safety Technician.

Rebecca comes to EH&S with a solid knowledge base of UF Facilities, as the former Team Lead in the UF Custodial Department. In her current role, Rebecca will conduct building inspections throughout UF's Main Campus. Rebecca's primary role is in servicing fire extinguishers to ensure that they will function properly in the moment of need.

Rebecca's hobbies include playing the piano, drawing, and gardening. She adopted her cat, Moose, from the UF Veterinary Hospital, and has an adorable dog named Kairi.

---

# EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

Please join in congratulating EH&S Dive Safety Officer, Cheryl Thacker as she was inducted into the Women Divers Hall of Fame on November 1, 2022.



**Thank you for your many years of service at UF!**

Steve Ladendorf - 20 years  
Kindra Kelly-Quagliana - 10 years  
Chris Overend - 5 years  
Eric Brunn - 5 years  
Cindy Mercado - 5 years

---

## NEW HIRES & PROMOTIONS

### Welcome

Rebecca Irwin - *Fire Safety Technician*  
Chip Howe - *Building Code Inspector*  
Joshua Williamson - *Fire/Fume Hood Technician*  
Manuel Sanchez - *Hazardous Waste Assistant* Robert  
Vaughn - *Radio Communications Inspector*

### Congratulations

David Page - *Research Services Technician*

---

Follow Us on social media and help promote #UFSafetyCulture

