



THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE Occupational Health Program

Safe Laboratory Practices

1.0 What Are Safe Laboratory Practices?

Safe lab practices are an integral part of conducting quality research while simultaneously minimizing risks to personnel. This can be accomplished by using a combination of engineering controls, wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), following safety protocols, and ensuring familiarity with the hazards associated with work materials.

2.0 Safe Laboratory Practices

- Wash hands thoroughly and frequently throughout the day, especially after removing gloves, before leaving the work area and going to another part of the building, and prior to going home. Rub hands vigorously for at least 15 seconds with soap, rinse thoroughly and dry with a towel or use an air dryer.
- Be familiar with the hazards associated with chemicals that you are using. Locate the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for that particular chemical and follow the recommended precautions to avoid exposure and protect yourself from hazards.
- Be careful to avoid injury with sharp devices (needles, scalpels, etc.) The best practice is to not recap needles. If recapping is absolutely necessary, be sure to use the passive scoop method which does not involve recapping sharps between your dominant and non-dominant hand. University of Tennessee specific policy information can be found here. [Sharp Device Use, Management and Disposal policy link](#)
- You must complete the blood borne pathogen training prior to working with blood borne pathogens.
- Familiarize yourself with your workspace. Make sure to locate the closest eye wash station, safety shower, fire extinguisher, and evacuation routes.
- If a chemical or other hazardous substance is splashed into your eye, proceed immediately to the eye wash station and flush eyes for 15 minutes and report the incident to your supervisor. You may also contact the OHP nurse at 865-755-8924 for further guidance.
- If you receive a laceration, puncture, bite, scratch, or burn to the skin, flush with cool, clean water for 15 minutes, then cover the wound and notify your supervisor.
- Never eat or drink, smoke, use tobacco products, apply cosmetics/lip balm or handle contact lenses in the laboratory.
- Report all injuries as soon as possible. Correct reporting protocol is listed step by step below. **If needed, seek emergency treatment prior to reporting the injury.**

Employee Injury Reporting: All individuals employed by the University of Tennessee, including student employees are required to report injuries incurred while engaged in work activities. It is strongly recommended to report injuries as soon as reasonably possible, and mandatory within 24 hours maximum. Failure to do so may result in a \$500 fine assessed to your department by the Tennessee Division of Claims and Risk Management. Staff are to report the injury to their immediate supervisor, and the University of Tennessee Office of Risk Management by completing the [online injury report form](#). Next, call the OHP nurse at 865-755-8924, then call the CorVel Injury Report Line at 866-245-8588 and select option 2. CorVel is a third-party administrator for The University of Tennessee and they will provide instructions on how and where to seek treatment.

Student Injury Reporting: In the event of a student injury involving animals or while working on an IACUC protocol, students are to report the injury to their PI, and the University of Tennessee Occupational Health Program Nurse (865-755-8924, or via email at bcranmor@utk.edu). **Students should also complete UT Office of Risk Management Incident Report form by clicking on [Incident Report Form Link](#).** The PI and/or the OHP nurse may provide guidance on how and where to seek treatment. Students may always seek treatment through

UT Student Health Center during their normal hours of operation (M-F 8-4:30). The Student Health Center may be contacted prior to arrival by calling 865-974-3135. Students may seek treatment from their primary care provider as well.

3.0 Resources

[UT Occupational Health Program Website Link:](#)

[UT Biosafety Program Website Link:](#)

[UTK Environmental Health & Safety Website Link:](#)

[UTIA Environmental Health & Safety Website Link:](#)

[UT Office of Risk Management Website Link:](#)

Reviewed and Approved 12/9/2024

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bryan Cranmore RN". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the "RN" being more distinct and larger than the rest of the name.

Bryan Cranmore RN, COHN
Occupational Health Nurse