

**EHS & Risk Management
Emergency Management
Campus Fire Marshal
Occupational Safety
Laboratory Safety**

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1 Practice Safe Ladder Use

In a ladder accident, you don't have to fall far to get hurt. Workers injured in falls are usually less than 10 feet above the ladder's base of support. Most ladder injuries associated with falls include slips, loss of footing or the use of an unstable ladder. To learn more about using ladders safely, click on the link to view a 4-minute video, [Practicing Safe Ladder Use](#).

2 Box Cutter Safety

The use of box cutters certainly makes a job easier, but they are a dangerous hand tool. Even though the blade is only partly exposed,

contact with your hand, finger or arm can result in a serious laceration. Many times, this is the case because as you begin to cut the item the blade becomes disengaged from the box, slips, and suddenly causes a hand or arm cut. Therefore, training on the use of box cutters teaches to always cut away from the body.

General Safety Guidelines

- Be sure the hand tool is in good condition. Replace as needed.
- Never modify a box cutter.
- Be sure the blade is secured, not broken, and opens/closes easily.
- Get a replacement blade if it becomes dull. Dull blades require more force and create the potential for injury.
- Wear a cut-resistant glove on the free hand to provide protection.
- When cutting, **always pull**, never push because the blade could break.
- Don't bend or apply side load to blades by using them to open cans, loosen screws, etc.
- Use the cutter for only its intended purpose.
- Depending on the box cutter, never leave a blade in the open position.
- Never bring a cutting tool from home to use at work.
- Be patient cutting through thick materials. Make several passes to assure a clean cut.
- Be familiar with the manufacturer's safety procedures of the box cutter.

3 Golf Carts/ATVs and Pedestrians

Anywhere we look on campus, we see pedestrians and golf carts/ATVs sharing the same space. These close encounters have recently been too close. EHS & Risk Management reminds students, faculty, and staff that safety guidelines are in place to prevent injuries or property damage when operating golf carts/ATVs.

Some safety highlights included in the [Golf Cart & ATV Safety & Use Policy \(MAPP 02.04.12\)](#) are:

- Golf carts and ATVs are to be operated at speeds of no greater than 15 MPH or as safety concerns demand. Operators should always consider the terrain, weather conditions, and existing pedestrian and vehicular traffic, which may affect the ability to operate the Golf Carts and ATVs safely.
- Golf Cart and ATV operators will stop at all "blind intersections" and then proceed with caution.
- Golf Carts and ATVs are to be driven on an improved surface unless a non-improved surface is the only available way to gain access to the specific area where work is being performed. If the Golf Cart or ATV must be on a landscaped area in order to allow a pedestrian(s) the proper right-of-way, the vehicle should be brought to a full stop, then immediately returned to the designated driving surface as soon as the area is clear.
- Golf Carts and ATVs will be operated with the utmost courtesy, care, and consideration for the safety of pedestrians.
- Pedestrians will be always given the right-of-way.

4 Student Laboratory Attire

As we get into the swing of the new semester, it's important to remember the importance of following basic laboratory safety and requiring the same of our students. Suitable laboratory attire for handling hazardous chemical and biological material includes:

- full-length pants,
- closed-toed shoes,
- a full-length shirt,
- gloves suited to the hazardous material that you're working with,
- a lab coat,
- chemical goggles,

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- and hair either short or tied back enough to prevent it from having any risk of contacting an element of your experiment.

These clothing elements, combined with safe laboratory practices, protect every person conducting an experiment from initial exposure upon any contact with a hazardous liquid or solid.

While it can be uncomfortable to police others' clothing choices, in a laboratory, it is to their ultimate benefit. Under the wrong circumstances, and without satisfactory laboratory attire and PPE, [even a simple experiment with a well-understood chemical such as methanol can cause terrible injury.](#)

5 Combustible Dust

As winter grinds on, we are likely to experience further cold events. In those cases, there will be an interest in adding heat sources to our workplaces. This can be valuable for comfort, and even provide necessary manual dexterity for safely handling delicate tasks, but without satisfactory housekeeping, these heat sources may also activate a hidden danger, in [combustible dust](#).

Many materials in our day-to-day lives can catch fire, if subjected to enough heat. As with kindling vs. comparably dry logs, the amount of heat that is 'enough' scales with the mass of the material. Thus, if the material is ground to dust, it can become dramatically more flammable. This effect is augmented by the ease with which a material with a high surface area to volume ratio, such as dust, can be dried out.

6 Health & Safety Manual

Chapter I, Section 4.0, lists Supervisor responsibilities for developing a safety culture within the department. These responsibilities include:

- Promoting safety and loss prevention
- Eliminating or controlling occupational hazards
- Periodically conducting safety and loss control evaluations
- Ensuring employees are adequately trained in safety policies and protocols
- Ensuring employees are provided with appropriate personal protective clothing and equipment for safe job performance
- Conduct an investigation of all work accidents

The importance of a thorough work-accident investigation cannot be stressed enough. Understanding the core reason behind the accident and training on how to prevent it from occurring again allow a safe work environment and reduce workers' compensation insurance premiums.

EHS & Risk Management offers training to all Supervisors on how to conduct a comprehensive work-accident. Please contact [Gary Rash](#) to schedule this training.