

Policy No. 2-64

Subject: Safety in Instructional Science Laboratories

Last Revised: 06/21/2023

Historical Status:

Division	Policy Manager	Administrative Supervisor	Reference
Instruction and Student Services	Academic Deans	Vice President of Instruction and Student Services	

I. POLICY

It is the policy of Virginia Highlands Community College (VHCC) to identify and implement best practices for safety in the College's science laboratories.

II. PERTINENT INFORMATION

- A. This policy provides for the safety and welfare of VHCC students.
- B. The following programs have been identified as science laboratories at VHCC:
 - 1. Anatomy & Physiology
 - 2. Cadaver Lab
 - 3. Chemistry
 - 4. Environmental Science
 - 5. General Biology
 - 6. Geology
 - 7. Microbiology
 - 8. Physics
- C. There are no regulatory requirements for a higher education institution to maintain a chemical inventory. However, in response to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recommendations, VHCC identifies and implements best practices with regard to science laboratory safety.

III. DEFINITIONS

IV. GENERAL GUIDELINES

- A. Students will be supervised at all times while science laboratory assignments are in progress.
- B. Any additional operating time must be supervised by the faculty member or safety designee.
- C. If the faculty member or safety designee must leave the laboratory for any reason, students will stop working.

V. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

- A. The College President has the authority and delegates to the Vice President of Instruction and Student Services the responsibility to establish procedures to meet the requirements of this policy.

APPENDIX

VI. RELATED STANDARDS, LEGAL CITATIONS, OR SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- A. National Research Council publication “Prudent Practices in the Laboratory: Handling and Management of Chemical Hazards”
B. SACSCOC Standard 13.8
C. U.S. Code of Federal Regulations Section 29
D. VCCS Policy 10.7 – High Risk Instructional Programs Incident and Accident Reporting and Lab Safety.

VII. OPERATING REQUIREMENTS

- A. Faculty or safety designee will stay current in science laboratory safety procedures for all laboratory materials and equipment used in laboratories for which they are responsible.
1. Science laboratories will be maintained in a clean and organized manner at all times;
 2. Documentation of equipment inspections for all science laboratory equipment will be maintained; and
 3. Safety signage will be properly displayed in all laboratories.
- B. Faculty or safety designee maintain familiarity with all emergency equipment in science laboratories for which they are responsible.
- C. Faculty or safety designee will develop and maintain science laboratory safety manuals, laboratory safety handouts or direct safety instructions for laboratories in which they are responsible. The safety manuals, laboratory safety handouts or direct safety instructions should include:
1. Rules for classroom and lab behavior; and
 2. Procedures for science laboratory safety.
- D. Faculty or safety designee will ensure science laboratory safety information is clearly communicated with students.
1. An updated copy of the safety manual, laboratory safety handouts or direct safety instructions will be provided to students.
 2. Students will sign an assumption of risk form indicating that they have been informed of safety practices.
- E. Faculty or safety designee will enforce safety practices in science laboratories for which they are responsible.
- F. Faculty or safety designee will maintain Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for all hazardous chemicals in the laboratory for which they are responsible.
- G. Faculty or safety designee will maintain proper labeling of containers in the laboratory for which they are responsible.

H. Faculty or safety designee will be responsible for management of biological and chemical waste in the laboratory for which they are responsible.