



MEMORANDUM

Date: December 5, 2019

To: Principal Investigators, Lab Managers and Supervisors, and Research Staff

From: Randolph Hall/Vice-President for Research
Deona Willes/Director, EH&S

Subject: Laboratory Safety during Winter Recess

In preparation for the upcoming Winter Closure, we are providing guidance to Principal Investigators (PIs), managers and supervisors with staff, and/or students working in laboratories and other campus facilities. During the closure, DPS and the Los Angeles Fire Department will maintain normal response capability. All accidents, fires, hazardous materials spills, or other incidents, regardless of size, should immediately be reported to DPS at (213) 740-4321. Serious injuries must also be reported within 8 hours to EH&S at (323) 442-2200. EH&S will continue to monitor serious injury reports 24 hours a day, seven days a week during the Holiday Break.

While ongoing research often continues beyond normal business hours and after regularly scheduled closure times, ***under no circumstances should research staff and/or students work alone on experimental procedures involving hazardous chemicals, biohazardous materials, or high physical hazards.*** During the past years, a number of minor incidents and near-misses have been reported in USC laboratories and have highlighted the real risks associated with many laboratory activities. Therefore, it is especially critical that researchers take extra precautions during off-hours or periods of campus closure when the number of individuals present in laboratories is greatly diminished. In all cases, appropriate lab coats and other personal protective equipment (PPE) should be utilized in accordance with the USC PPE Standards.

While it is always preferable for research staff and/or students to work with a colleague, exceptions may be made for ***low-risk*** research activities if the PI/Supervisor verifies that each research staff member or student fully understands emergency and standard operating procedures, has access to and utilizes all required PPE, and has ready access to an effective communication system that consists of a two-way radio, telephone or cellular phone with adequate reception.

In addition, all required emergency equipment (e.g., first aid kit, emergency showers/eyewash, fire extinguishers, etc.) must be checked and operating properly. In all cases, staff and/or students should work only under conditions where the availability of emergency aid is compatible with the risk. Each PI/Supervisor should review the work assignment and define the emergency aid compatible with the work assignment or request guidance from EH&S, as necessary.

Thank you in advance for your efforts to fully prepare for the upcoming closure and to take the necessary steps to ensure the health and safety of all laboratory personnel.