Unsafe practices in the laboratory can result in the potential exposure to hazardous materials or serious injuries. Prior to beginning work every laboratory employee must know the potential hazards of the material with which they will work, identify and use appropriate personal protection and implement specific laboratory practices to prevent exposure. It is expected that every laboratory worker follow and practice safe procedures at all times to ensure a safe laboratory environment.

The Principal Investigator (PI) has the primary responsibility for all aspects of health and safety in their laboratories. However, the PI may delegate day-to-day safety program implementation and oversight to an individual designee named as Laboratory Safety Coordinator (LSC) or Laboratory Manager (LM). This designee, along with the PI, then becomes responsible for day-to-day oversight of safety in the laboratory.

Role of Laboratory Safety Coordinator or Laboratory Manager

The LSC or LM serves an important function in the overall structure of safety at the institution and plays a crucial role in creating a full culture of safety. The following are key requirements of the role of LSC or LM.

- The PI must determine and identify the specific responsibilities that he/she is delegating to the LSC or LM, and delegate them in writing.
- The PI must ensure that the LSC or LM function is delegated to another person should the incumbent leave and inform Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) of the new LSC or LM designee.
- The PI must clearly inform all individuals working in his/her laboratory that the LSC or LM has been given responsibility and authority to represent the PI in matters related to the role of EHS and oversight of the health and safety in the laboratory. ***This includes the LSC or LM ability to review and suspend any laboratory operations that he/she believes to be unsafe or in violation of the institutional requirements and work with the OEHS to make the necessary correction or improvement***
- LSC or LM must be knowledgeable in laboratory operations and relevant safety requirements and will serve as the primary laboratory contact for issues related to Chemical Hygiene, Biological and Radioactive materials.

The PI and designated LSC or LM are responsible for implementing applicable policies and directives and taking other action, as required, assuring that personnel and operations they supervise comply with applicable requirements. These include:

- Taking positive action to determine and reduce, to as low as reasonably achievable, the accidents and incidents associated with their operations.
- Informing employees of the safety hazards associated with their work.
- Instructing employees in safe work methods.
- Keeping individuals performing specific tasks apprised of the most recent procedures and trained in implementation.

- Ensuring that work is performed in a safe manner and in accordance with regulatory and institutional requirements.
- Working with EHS to determine best safe practices and procedures.
- Working with EHS to ensure that all members of the laboratory complete their required training in a timely manner.
- Ensuring that all deficiencies identified by EHS or other regulatory inspectors are addressed and corrected within the time required.
- Ensuring that the laboratory has adopted, completed and made lab-specific the Chemical Hygiene Plan, Exposure Control Plan and Biosafety Manual as applicable.
- Ensuring that the laboratory has access to MSDS.
- Ensuring that the chemical inventories are completed and updated as necessary.
- Ensuring that hazardous materials are disposed appropriately.
- Ensuring that all Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for all laboratory procedures are approved by the appropriate LSC and are current; that SOPs include appropriate safety instructions such as personal protective equipment to be used, special precautions for any infectious agents or highly hazardous chemicals, instructions to perform procedures with appropriate safety equipment such as a fume hood, biological safety cabinet or sealed centrifuge.
- Training personnel on agent specific hazards; appropriate laboratory safety procedures and techniques; safe use and operations of all equipment; recognizing other hazards in the workplace; and dealing with emergencies including potential exposure, accidents or spills.
- EHS will work with the LSC or LM to develop tools including training materials, safety updates or other pertinent information for the laboratories. It is the shared responsibility of the LSC or LM (along with the PI) to ensure that all workers in the laboratory read, understand, and comply with those materials.
- Ensuring that all equipment (i.e. fume hood, biosafety cabinet, centrifuge, etc.) are appropriately maintained, tested or certified.
- Informing the PI and/or EHS of any incidents or problems that need attention.