

University of Pittsburgh Safety Manual	EH&S Guideline Number: 03-026	
Subject: LABORATORY SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS	Effective Date: 03/01/2018 Review Date: 08/17/2026	Page 1 of 2

Laboratory Safety Responsibilities for Principal Investigators

Principal Investigators (PIs) have responsibility for the health and safety of all laboratory personnel working under their authority. PIs may delegate safety duties, but must ensure delegated duties are documented, performed and safety obligations are fulfilled. General safety responsibilities for PIs are identified below.

The term “Laboratory Personnel” is used to include all students, staff, postdoctoral associates, visitors, and other faculty authorized to be in the laboratory for research or academic activity.

1. Risk Assessment and Hazard Identification is a fundamental function for PI’s in any laboratory. PI’s must determine and document safe procedures and necessary controls.
 - 1.1. Standard operating procedures must be documented for all particularly hazardous conditions, equipment, and/or substances.
 - 1.2. Engineering controls must be utilized (e.g. chemical fume hoods, biosafety cabinets, glove boxes, and other containment enclosures) when warranted by knowledgeable operators.
 - 1.3. Each laboratory must maintain a chemical inventory and update the inventory annually.
 - 1.4. Laboratory personnel should have ready access to Safety Data Sheets for each chemical on the inventory.
2. Safe Work Procedures must be ensured by the PI for potentially hazardous operations.
 - 2.1. Appropriate safety precautions must be documented or communicated when working with toxic or hazardous chemicals, high-pressure equipment, biological agents, or radioactive materials.
 - 2.2. The conduct of laboratory personnel and associated research or teaching shall be compliant with safety standards/regulations, and best practices. EH&S is one resource for supporting this responsibility.
 - 2.3. Measures to control hazards and minimize risks to laboratory personnel must be implemented.
 - 2.4. Appropriate personal protective equipment must be provided, maintained, and available at no cost to laboratory personnel.
 - 2.5. Ensure that biological agents, chemical wastes, and radioactive materials are collected and disposed of appropriately.
3. Laboratory security is a responsibility of the PI. The laboratory and the associated chemical and biohazardous materials must be secure from unauthorized access.
4. PIs are required to assure training of laboratory personnel for each work assignment. Supervision of laboratory personnel and their assignments should be at a level commensurate with the education, experience, and competence level. All laboratory-specific training activities should be documented. The University-specific Chemical Safety in the Laboratory training is required before beginning laboratory work at Pitt and every three years thereafter. Additional EH&S trainings may be required. Information on EH&S trainings is available at <https://www.safety.pitt.edu/ehs/training>.

University of Pittsburgh Safety Manual	EH&S Guideline Number: 03-026	
Subject: LABORATORY SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS	Effective Date: 03/01/2018 Review Date: 08/17/2026	Page 2 of 2

5. Communication is a key PI responsibility.

- 5.1. The maintenance of current contact information and hazard signs on lab doors is critical for emergency response.
- 5.2. Appropriate institutional approval for research must be obtained (IACUC, IBC, IRB, etc.).
- 5.3. Any identified emergency situations in a University of Pittsburgh campus building should be communicated by calling 412-624-2121.
- 5.4. Release of hazardous materials beyond capability of laboratory personnel should be reported to EH&S.
- 5.5. Student injury must be reported by following <https://www.ehs.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/docs/01-015StudentInjuryResponse.pdf>.
- 5.6. Any faculty or staff injury must be documented by the supervisor with the injured worker calling 1-800-633-1197.
- 5.7. Investigators leaving the University should complete the Departing Investigators Form (<https://www.orp.pitt.edu/resources/checklist-investigators-leaving-university>) as far in advance as possible.