

Lab safety questionnaire

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This is an extract from the Checklist for the prevention of accidents in laboratories of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work. The checklist comprises a series of questions to determine whether or not the laboratory conforms to the regulations and methods of best practice. Referring to your school laboratories, answer the questions with YES or NO. In the latter case, remedial action is needed!

LAB SAFETY QUESTIONNAIRE

GENERAL LABORATORY SAFETY	YES	NO
Are students adequately / appropriately informed, trained and supervised to ensure safe work procedures?		
Are storage areas (rooms, refrigerators, freezers, cupboards) where infectious and/or toxic materials are kept labelled accordingly?		
Are all chemicals and biomaterials clearly labelled, including the hazard symbol where appropriate?		
Is the use of laboratory equipment covered by safety instructions?		
Are work surfaces easily cleaned and decontaminated after use?		
Do students know what they have to do to keep themselves and others safe?		
Do students know how to check and spot when something goes wrong, and to whom they should report any problems?		

CHEMICAL SAFETY	YES	NO
Are Material Safety Data Sheets available for all hazardous substances used in the lab?		
Are all chemicals and containers correctly and clearly labelled?		
Do all students wear appropriate personal protective equipment?		
Do students know what to do in case of a chemical emergency or if chemicals are spilt?		
Is the use of pipettes by mouth prohibited?		

BIOLOGICAL SAFETY	YES	NO
Are procedures regarding the use of sharp objects (e.g. needles, syringes, pipettes, scalpels, razors, broken glass, etc.) in place to minimise the risk of cuts, sticks and infection?		
Are waste materials segregated according to hazard type?		

HYGIENE	YES	NO
Is there a hand-washing sink available with liquid soap and paper towels?		
Are there hand-washing instructions for all persons when they finish their work or when they leave the laboratory?		
Is smoking, eating, drinking and the application of cosmetics prohibited in the lab?		

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES	YES	NO
Are safety rules clearly displayed?		
Have plans been drawn up to deal with accidents?		
Are students adequately trained in safety procedures and do staff know how to contact the emergency services?		
Are emergency procedures and emergency phone numbers clearly posted on all laboratory doors?		
Is a first aid kit present and filled with appropriate and up-to-date supplies?		

Is there a trained first-aider available?		
Are hand-washing sinks available?		
Is an eyewash fountain present, functioning and unobstructed?		
Is an emergency shower present, functioning and unobstructed?		
Do students know what to do in the event of an emergency involving dangerous substances and/or biologically hazardous materials?		
Are there appropriate spill kits available to deal with spills/leaks of hazardous substances?		
Is suitable PPE ¹ , especially respiratory equipment, available to protect laboratory and/or maintenance personnel in the event of control measures failing, or to deal with a spillage?		
In the case of biological agents, do the plans specify appropriate decontamination and disinfection procedures?		
Is there relevant fire-fighting equipment readily available and unobstructed?		
Are students familiar with the location of fire-fighting equipment and the action to take in the event of fire?		

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)	YES	NO
Are students protected by lab coats or overalls?		
Are safety goggles and/or face shields available and worn when necessary?		
Are appropriate protective gloves available and worn when necessary?		
Is appropriate respiratory protection available? Is the respiratory protection regularly cleaned and inspected?		
Are students trained on how to use the protective equipment?		
Do students wear fully covered shoes?		
Do students confine long hair and avoid loose clothing?		

HAZARDOUS WASTE	YES	NO
Are waste types segregated and stored correctly?		
Is hazardous waste properly labelled?		
Are infectious waste materials decontaminated before disposal?		

1. PPE = Personal Protective Equipment

