

# GENERAL POLICY ON WORKING IN RESEARCH LABORATORIES

## Department of Chemistry, University of Idaho

### **Who is permitted in the laboratory:**

people authorized by the laboratory supervisor, and others whose work requires them to be in the laboratory (e.g., maintenance and safety personnel, custodians)  
for insurance purposes, only UI employees or students, or persons who have obtained special coverage under the university's workers compensation insurance plan  
visitors, when accompanied by the laboratory supervisor or his/her designee  
children are *not* permitted in laboratories, except for UI-approved tours or special programs and with parental consent  
animals are *not* permitted in the building

### **The policy on working alone:**

This depends on the nature of the work being performed. If the work is hazardous, more than one person must be present. If the conditions are moderately hazardous, the faculty or staff in charge of the laboratory should use his/her discretion; however, some type of check procedure must be followed (e.g., phone calls or personal visits at specified time intervals). If the conditions are not hazardous (e.g., dishwashing, computer or instrument work), the person may work alone, with the permission of the laboratory supervisor. The laboratory supervisor must determine the degree of hazard of the work being performed.

More than one person must be present (in the same laboratory or lab suite) when chemical reactions are run, unless otherwise approved by the laboratory supervisor.

Undergraduate students may not work alone in the laboratory, and their work must be approved and supervised by a faculty or staff member.

### **Before starting any experiment:**

Discuss new procedures with your laboratory supervisor.

Learn about the instruments and chemicals you are working with, particularly any potential hazards and what to do in case of a spill or bodily contact.

Ensure that the laboratory has appropriate safety equipment for the type of work being performed.

Determine what personal protection is required, such as splash/impact protective goggles or face shield, respirator, lab coat or apron, and gloves. Know how to operate the eyewash fountains and safety showers.

Know where the fire extinguishers are located, how to use them, and if they are appropriate for extinguishing the types of fires you might have.

Know who to call in case of an accident. Depending on the severity of the accident, this might be Student Health Services (students only), Gritman Medical Center, or emergency response (9-911) if an ambulance or fire truck is required. Inform your supervisor if you have an accident.

Know where the building alarm pull stations are located (near the stairwell doors) in case the safety of the other building occupants is threatened and the building should be evacuated.

### **Once the experiment has started:**

Unattended, overnight, or all-day reactions must be managed properly.

Unattended reactions must be appropriately labeled (your name, brief description of reaction) and must be checked periodically.

Power stirrers, hot plates, heating mantles, water condensers, etc. may run unattended, but fail-safe provisions must be in place or arrangements must be made with a colleague for periodic monitoring of the reaction.