Welcome to UW-Oshkosh! Whatever your job title and responsibility, there is a lot of very important health and safety information that you need to know. This guide covers some of the basics. Your supervisor and coworkers can help provide more health and safety information that is specific to your own working area. Another resource for campus-wide safety is the Environmental, Health and Safety Department (EH&S), who work with all aspects of UW-Oshkosh’s campus health and safety.
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About This Guide
As a new UW-Oshkosh employee you will be learning a lot of things pertaining to your new position. We hope that this booklet will be a “really handy” source of basic health and safety information for you during your first days and months at UW-Oshkosh.

This booklet was created for new UW-Oshkosh Classified-Staff Employees, Limited Term Employees (LTE’s), and Student Employees. It contains a little bit of information about a lot of different occupational health and safety issues that you need to know about. Pointers on where to gain more information are scattered throughout this guide.

Please feel free to give us a call anytime – we will do our very best to help you. The general phone number for the Environmental, Health and Safety Department (EH&S) is 424-4484.

Your Right to a Healthy and Safe Workplace
You have a legal right to a healthy and safe place of employment, one that is free from hazards that may cause significant injury, illness or death. As a public sector employee, your right to a healthy and safe workplace is established through specific language within Wisconsin Statutes §101.055. The Wisconsin Statutes are public documents that are available to you online through [http://wisconsin.gov](http://wisconsin.gov) or through any Wisconsin library.

Unlike working for a private-sector employer, the US Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has no legal jurisdiction in State-government workplaces. Instead, the State of Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services’ Safety and Buildings Division is responsible for enforcing the workplace health and safety regulations that apply to State-government employers. The phone number and web address of the WI Department of Safety and Professional Services is listed on the back of this booklet.

A section of the Wisconsin Administrative Code, Chapter SPS 332, contains specific information about the rules that have been adopted and are enforced by the Department of Safety and Professional Services in State-government workplaces. SPS 332 is a public
document that is available to you online through http://wisconsin.gov and also through any Wisconsin library.

Generally, the safety rules and regulations that apply to our work are the exact same rules and regulations enforced by OSHA on private-sector businesses; they are just enforced by a different agency. However, in some specific cases, the public-sector safety rules are more restrictive than OSHA’s rules.

**Job Health and Safety Is a Shared Responsibility**

Making and keeping our jobs healthy and safe requires teamwork between employees, supervisors, upper management, and administrative offices like EH&S.

Every employee is responsible to do their own work in a way that follows work rules and that will not cause injury or illness to themselves or others. Each employee is also responsible for informing their supervisor about any hazards that need attention to prevent incidents.

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring their employees’ work activities (and the facilities used by their employees) are free from hazards that are likely to cause injury or illness. Supervisors must also ensure that all employees are well-informed about and protected from hazards. Supervisors have a primary responsibility to ensure that employees adhere to all work and safety rules.

Upper management, including department directors and campus executives, are responsible to ensure that they provide sufficient resources, direction, oversight, and leadership to the members of their staff on occupational health and safety matters.

EH&S provides direct assistance to supervisors, employees, and executive management to help each fulfill their individual health and safety responsibilities. EH&S has occupational health and safety specialists that can provide expert guidance and other assistance.

**Workplace Health or Safety Concerns**

Staying healthy and safe while working is everyone’s responsibility! Your primary responsibility is to ensure that your own actions do not put yourself or others into harm’s way. You can be
administratively disciplined by your supervisor if you ignore safety rules or work unsafely.

If you notice something in your work area that seems hazardous, report it to your supervisor without delay. Do what you can to eliminate the hazard or take actions to warn others about the hazard until the situation has been resolved. One way to do this is to place a barrier around the hazard and then tell others in the area about the hazard.

If, for some reason, a hazard is not promptly taken care of, you can contact EH&S and ask to speak to a workplace safety specialist or an occupational hygienist. Either of these specialists will be able to provide additional help.

As a final option, you also have a legal right to report the hazard to the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services’ Safety and Buildings Division. Reporting procedures and your legal protections as a public employee are detailed in Wisconsin Statutes §101.055(5) and (8).

**Work-Related Illness or Injury (Worker’s Compensation)**

If you get hurt or sick from something related to your work, get appropriate medical care right away. Except in the case of a life-threatening emergency, you must talk with your supervisor in person or by phone to tell them about your incident before leaving work to get care. Tell your medical care providers that you were injured at work and that they should send any bills to Jodi Anthony, Human Resources UW-Oshkosh, 800 Algoma Blvd. Oshkosh, WI 54901. While you have a right to get treatment from any medical provider that you choose, it is a good idea to see your regular healthcare provider (or another provider in your insurance network) and seek treatment referrals through them. If you decided to be treated by a healthcare provider not covered under the insurance network and your claim is denied, you would be responsible for all medical co-pays or bills.

Within twenty-four hours of the incident you must complete an injury report form to document what happened. The Employee’s
Injury Report and Supervisor Analysis forms can be found at the website address listed below.

If the claim is approved, medical and lost-income expenses arising from work-related injuries and illnesses are paid through the UW’s workers compensation program. Any delays in filing your report can complicate processing of your workers compensation claim. Delays may also lead to delayed payment to you for wages lost due to your incident or to medical providers for their care of your injury or illness.

Complete details on the Workers Compensation procedures can be found on the UW Oshkosh Human Resources website at http://www.uwosh.edu/hr/benefits/workers-compensation. The UW Oshkosh Worker’s Compensation Coordinator, Jodi Anthony, can be contacted directly at 424-2070 or anthonyj@uwosh.edu. Another good source of general information is at: http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/wc/workers/.

Common Injuries at UW-Oshkosh
In total, UW-Oshkosh employs nearly 1750 people. Each year, the Workers Compensation Office receives close to 60 employee injury reports. Roughly half of all injured employees require medical treatment or time away from their normal job assignments.

Based on the last 5 years, the direct cost of injuries to UW-Oshkosh employees is about $200,000 per year, paid by the State of Wisconsin’s workers compensation program. For the fiscal years 2012-2013, workers compensation coverage cost UW-Oshkosh nearly $420,000.

The most common causes of serious injuries to Employees were:

- slips/trips/falls
- being struck by or against other objects
- lifting/moving/restraining loads
- contact with a substance or material that causes injuries.
Having a basic awareness of common injury causes could help you avoid or prevent similar incidents.

Injuries due to slips/trips/falls are most often caused by slipping on icy sidewalks outdoors or on wet floors. Falls on slippery surfaces can often be avoided by wearing weather-appropriate footwear, making good choices while walking to avoid paths that may be slippery, watching where you place your feet, and reporting or cleaning up wet floors. Keeping your work area clean, dry, and orderly will help prevent slip/trip/fall injuries.

Injuries from being struck by or against other objects can sometimes be due to a lack of awareness or preparedness for the hazards presented by a task (such as being struck on the head by a falling object from a high shelf), distractions or inattention while walking (walking into doors or equipment), or being too close to the work of others (or being in someone else’s blind spot).

Injuries due to lifting/moving/restraining loads may be caused by trying to lift or lower too much weight without enough help, lifting or lowering objects using incorrect body postures, trying to hold a shifting load of some sort (such as a tall stack of chairs), faulty moving equipment, new or unusual work procedures, etc.

Injuries due to contact with sharp edges or needles may be caused by:
- failure to anticipate and protect against cuts or needle sticks
- not having or wearing cut-resistant gloves when needed
- improper handling or disposal of knives, scalpels, and syringes.

**Emergency Procedures**

All campus buildings have building-specific evacuation route maps posted on each floor that show the location of exits, egress routes, fire extinguishers, fire alarm pull stations, Areas of Rescue Assistance, accessible exits and in-place tornado shelter areas. Take time to locate and review the evacuation route maps in the building(s) where you work.

The Emergency Procedures Guide for UW-Oshkosh is available online at [http://www.uwosh.edu/emergency](http://www.uwosh.edu/emergency). This important document provides simple steps that employees should take under
emergency circumstances. Please read and get familiar with the Emergency Procedures Guide now, because you probably will not have time during an actual emergency! Physical copies of the Emergency Procedures Guide are available from University Police (424-1216), Administrative Services/Risk Management department (424-1009) or Integrated Marketing and Communications (424-2442).

**Activation of Building Fire Alarm Systems**

All buildings at UW-Oshkosh are equipped with fire alarm systems that provide both audible and visual notification to evacuate the building. The audible alarms are speakers located throughout the building. Visual alarm devices are strobes that flash during an alarm condition.

Anytime a fire alarm sounds, take any personal belongings that are immediately accessible to you (such as coat, purse, briefcase, backpack, car keys) and immediately leave the building. Do not stay in the building to collect your personal belongings. On your way out of the building, shut any doors that you pass through, as this may help reduce fire spread as well as smoke damage in the event of a real fire.

Once outside, move to your building assembly point. If you do not know where you're building assembly point is, ask your supervisor or co-workers. Assembly points provide a place where building occupants can gather to determine whether or not everyone in their group has made it out of the building safely.

**Winter Safety**

Here in Oshkosh, winter weather usually lasts four to six months and we get plenty of the white stuff! Falls on icy surfaces can happen in the blink of an eye. Many UW-Oshkosh employees suffer very painful injuries each year as a result of slips and falls on icy surfaces. You can likely avoid most slips and falls by anticipating icy conditions, wearing weather-appropriate footwear when outdoors, watching where you place your feet, and making good choices when choosing your path of travel.

If you can avoid walking over icy surfaces, avoid it! However, if you happen to be walking along and suddenly realize the walkway
beneath you is icy, walk like a duck! Shorten your stride, keep both knees slightly bent, keep your arms close to your midsection (hold your hands together in front of you, if need be. With the main purpose of keeping your arms from flailing around) and use carefully-placed steps to make your way to safety.

If you do fall, do not try to catch yourself by extending your arms – you are more likely to break your arm or strain your neck or back. Drop whatever may be in your hands and pull your arms in tight to your body. If you can, try to roll to your side while falling and protect your head. This can help lessen the impact on your spine and keep your head from hitting the pavement. If you are injured, get medical care right away. If you fall while on campus property on the way in to work or on the way out, report the injury to your supervisor right away. You will need to complete an injury report form for the Workers Compensation Office.

Weather-appropriate footwear during the winter is a shoe or boot with a deep-grooved tread pattern on the sole and a slight, but well-defined heel. Wearing sneakers, cowboy boots, flip-flops (seriously), flats, or high heels on your walk to work during winter is a bad gamble. Wearing the afore mentioned footwear increases your chances of experiencing a painful fall to the cold, wet, snowy, and HARD pavement! During the winter, wear your winter shoes or boots for your walk to work and change shoes once you get inside, if winter footwear is not your preferred style for the day.

**General Housekeeping**

Good housekeeping practices can prevent injuries. Storage areas, aisles and walkways must be kept clear and clean. Materials should be safely piled and stacked. Electrical cords, welding leads, hoses, etc. should be placed so that they do not create tripping hazards.

Refuse material and piles need to be removed as soon as possible. Spills must be cleaned up immediately. Spills of hazardous materials need to be contained and reported immediately to your supervisor.

Do not block or restrict access to emergency equipment such as exits, fire extinguishers or emergency showers/eye wash units.
Electrical Safety
When electricity flows through an electrical cord (such as to a power-strip or an extension cord), it generates heat. If the wire is covered by a rug or other materials that keep it from cooling down, its insulation can catch on fire, or the heat may cause other materials to catch on fire. Do not cover electrical wires with rugs or other materials.

If the insulation on a cord gets damaged, it can cause a shock hazard to anyone that might come into contact with it. Do not use equipment with damaged electrical cords; damaged cords must be replaced. Electrical tape can be used to cover minor surface nicks in cord sheaths/covers, but any damage that penetrates the cover and exposes the insulated wires within the cord requires that the cord be replaced before the equipment is used.

Extension cords are for temporary use only – a few days or weeks at most, and only as needed. Extended use is a violation of fire code and increases the risk of fire or electrocution.

For other electrical safety questions or concerns, talk with your supervisor or contact EH&S for assistance (424-4484).

Fire Safety
The following list provides information about the most frequent fire safety issues and code violations that occur on campus along with guidance to help keep your work area fire-safe.

- Candles, incense, etc. - fohgeddaboudit! 😊 With few exceptions, it is illegal to have lit candles, burning incense, or other fire or ember producing materials in University buildings. This includes cigarettes, cigars and pipes.
- Ceiling clearance – We cannot store materials within 18” of the plane of any sprinkler heads or, if the building does not have sprinklers, within 24” of the plane of the ceiling.
- Extension cords – Extension cords can only be used for temporary wiring and cannot be substituted for permanent wiring. The cords cannot be attached to structures or be extended through walls, ceilings, floors, under or through doors or floor coverings. Extension cords cannot be plugged into one another or into power strips.
- Fire doors - Fire doors need to be kept in the "closed" position or held open by an approved device, such as a magnetic hold-open that is controlled by the fire alarm system. Door stops, wedges, and other non-approved hold-open devices are prohibited.

- Laboratory emergency information card – Each laboratory is required to maintain an up-to-date laboratory emergency “door card” that provides information about the lab’s chemical inventory and who to contact in an emergency.

- Blocked doors or halls – We must keep all exit paths clear at least 44” wide for exit to the public way (sidewalk, parking lot).

- Fueled equipment and liquefied propane gas (LPG) use and storage in buildings - Fueled equipment includes things such as snow blowers, outboard boat motors, leaf blowers, lawn-care equipment, portable generators, mopeds, and cooking equipment. Unless the fuel tanks are completely empty, this equipment cannot be stored, operated, or repaired within a building. LPG cylinders for gas grills, fork-lifts, street sweepers, etc. cannot be stored in any UW building. The cylinders must be removed and stored outdoors at the end of each day.

Additional fire hazards that should be reported to your building manager when noticed include:

- Missing ceiling panels. A missing panel might interfere with proper operation of the fire alarm or sprinkler system.

- The floor has to be kept clear for 36” from the front of all electrical panels/breaker boxes.

- Exit signs must be properly lighted to make sure they can be seen in the dark or under smoky conditions. Report burned out exit lights to your supervisor.

If you have questions or notice a hazard, contact your building manager or call EH&S for assistance (424-4484).

**Hazardous Chemicals**

One of the more fundamental and broadly-applicable workplace safety requirements that you need to know about is Hazard Communication (HazCom), also called Right-to-Know. HazCom requires that your supervisor provide you with essential information about chemicals hazards in the workplace before you first work with them. Hazardous chemicals include paints, solvents, cleaners, waxes,
welding rods, glues, and most other solids, liquids and gases that are used for work tasks.

Pesticides and prescription drugs are specifically excluded from the HazCom program because they are covered under other, very strict, rules. Foods and cosmetics are also excluded from this program.

Your supervisor is required to maintain Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for the hazardous chemicals present in your work area. MSDS are documents produced by chemical manufacturers that provide detailed information about the hazards of each hazardous chemical, as well as how to protect yourself from exposure.

MSDS can be kept in paper or electronic files, but they must be readily accessible and available to you throughout your work shift. Ask your supervisor about the location of the MSDS for your work area and take time to read through the MSDS for the products you use or with which you may have contact while working.

Before working with hazardous chemicals, you must receive training on the hazards of the substances to which you may be exposed, as well as what labeling systems are in use at UW-Oshkosh, how to handle emergencies, and how to protect yourself from exposure. This training can be done by your supervisor or a lead worker through conversation on the job, or you may attend a special training course soon after you start work with the UW-Oshkosh.

If you have any questions or concerns about the HazCom program, contact your supervisor or call EH&S for assistance (424-4484).

**Ergonomics**

Our goal is to help to provide a safe environment that minimizes potential injuries, decreases cumulative trauma disorders and workers' compensation expenses, increases productivity, and ensures a healthier work environment.

- Be alert for and avoid situations that can cause repeated strains to the arms, hands, back, and neck.
- Try to maintain a neutral hand or arm position while doing any task.
• Report to your supervisor any situations that may cause a repeated strain or stress to your body.
• Avoid situations that may create strains or muscle pulls due to force or position required to complete the task.
• In order to reduce the possibility of strains, prepare your body by stretching or participating in simple warm-up activities early in your shift.

Lifting Guidelines
• Lift with your legs, not your back.
• Keep the load close to your body.
• Move your feet to turn and never twist your body while lifting.
• Think about your foot position when lifting an object to ensure your feet are safe if the load falls.
• Get help with heavy or bulky loads.
• Be alert for pinch points and watch your hand position.
• Maintain communication with anyone helping you lift.
• Be alert when carrying long objects that may strike a person or equipment.

For additional information about ergonomics, contact your supervisor or call EH&S for assistance (424-4484). You can also find lots of additional information about back safety, office ergonomics, and other ergonomic topics through the occupational health links on the EH&S website.

Office Ergonomics
Be Comfortable at your work station
• Back Safety
• Microbreaks
• Eyestrain
• Introduction to MSDS

Safety Message Signal Words
There are three words used to communicate important safety messages on signs, labels and tags: Danger, Warning, and Caution. When you see these words, pay close attention to the message.
Danger is used to signify a major-hazard condition that presents an immediate and serious threat of death or injury to employees. Example: “Danger: Confined Space – Permit Required For Entry”.

Caution is use to signify a minor-hazard condition where a potential hazard or unsafe practice may result in employee injury. Example: “Caution: Safety glasses required in this area”

Warning is used to signify a hazard condition between Caution and Danger. Warning indicates a potentially hazardous situation which, if not avoided, could result in death or serious injury. Example: “Warning: Watch for forklift traffic”

Not all hazards in your work area may be clearly identified with a sign, label or tag. If you become aware of a hazard that needs identification to prevent injuries, post a hand-lettered sign or tag and then tell your supervisor about it so a more permanent sign can be put in place to warn others.
SPECIAL HEALTH & SAFETY TOPICS

Animals
If you work with live animals or their tissues, you need to be aware of risks of physical injuries, allergies, and zoonotic diseases that can pass between animals and humans. These risks are minimized by consistent use of proper technique for handling live animals, their caging and bedding, and their tissue samples (including blood, feces, urine, hair, etc.). Proper technique involves training in appropriate use of equipment and lab etiquette. Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), and appropriate footwear is important for protecting yourself from injury or illness when working with animals.

Prior to working with animals, you must participate in an animal certification class, which includes a special occupational health and safety training “overview” course for animal users. Along with the training course, you must complete an “animal risk questionnaire”, which will be reviewed by an occupational health medical professional. Depending on your duties, you may have to participate in further specialized training after the “overview” course and prior to any contact with animals. You may be required to have “fit testing” of PPEs.

Prior to working with animals, you must have had a tetanus shot within the past 10 years. Immunizations are provided to students through Student Health Services or to employees by their own healthcare provider. For more information, contact Leah Mann, Laboratory Animal Manager (mannle@uwosh.edu).

Asbestos
Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous mineral that has been mined, refined, and put into over 3000 different products including many building products and pieces of equipment which are common in the workplace. Because of its many functional properties and low cost, asbestos has been used for a wide range of building materials such as roofing, ceiling and floor tiles, pipe and joint insulation, adhesives and caulks, plaster and drywall systems, fire doors, and asbestos cement products to name just a few. It can also be found in equipment such as laboratory bench tops, fume hoods, electrical wire and cables, gaskets, chalk boards, brakes, and heat shields.
When asbestos-containing materials are damaged or disturbed by repair, remodeling or demolition activities, microscopic fibers may become airborne and can be inhaled into the lungs, where they may cause significant health problems, including lung cancer, asbestosis, or mesothelioma. Some of these illnesses can take many years to develop after the initial exposure.

A majority of campus buildings have had accessible building materials subjected to asbestos testing. Only properly equipped and certified personnel can disturb asbestos-containing materials. Before any work is done which could disturb a building material it must either be presumed to be asbestos and then removed (abated), or subject to sampling by a certified asbestos inspector and analyzed by an accredited laboratory to determine if asbestos is present.

Under hazard communication (HazCom) rules you have a right to information about the content of the materials with which you work or may be exposed. If you have questions about the content of building materials you are going to work with or notice damaged building materials that may contain asbestos, contact your supervisor or call EH&S for assistance (424-4484).

**Biosafety in Biological Research Labs**

Some research conducted in UW-Oshkosh laboratories involves use or manipulation of biological systems, tissues, cells, and organisms. Generally, and due to the extensive safety precautions that are required for work in these special areas, if you do not enter areas where biological work is performed, you should have virtually no risk of exposure.

At entry points to areas where biological work is performed, a sign will be posted that indicates the level of safety precautions needed to enter the lab, such as “BSL-2”. Access to Biosafety Level 2 labs is strictly controlled for safety purposes and anyone who enters these areas must complete specialized training to learn about the hazards within the area, safe work practices and emergency procedures. If you have a need to enter a BSL-2 area, contact your supervisor to request authorization and training.
If you have an incident that results in an exposure, notify your supervisor and seek immediate medical attention, in the appropriate order. Biological safety hoods, first aid supplies, eyewash stations, and showers can be found in most labs utilizing hazardous biological materials. Follow the protocols for reporting Injuries and Illness found on page 4 Work-Related Illness or Injury Error! Bookmark not defined.

Bloodborne Pathogens
The bloodborne pathogens program (BBP) is an occupational health and safety program to protect employees who may be exposed to human blood or other potentially infectious materials (OPIM) while at work. Blood or OPIM can contain disease-causing viruses such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and HIV.

Exposures can be direct or indirect. A direct exposure is one in which blood or OPIM from one person passes into another person, such as in the case of a first aid responder that gets an injured person’s blood into their eye or into an open cut on the responder’s hand.

An indirect exposure is one in which blood or OPIM from one person passes into another person through some other object, such as in the case of a needle-stick, in which the blood or OPIM of a patient enters the body of a care-giver through an accidental needle-stick to the caregiver after administering a shot.

Both direct and indirect exposures are hazardous and require immediate medical attention.

Employees who perform jobs that may encounter human blood or OPIM are trained how to use Universal Precautions to prevent exposure, how to handle an exposure emergency, and procedures and protocols contained in the campus’ Bloodborne Pathogens Program. If you are in one of these jobs, your supervisor may provide the training or you might be directed to attend a special training course.

All employees who perform jobs that may encounter human blood or OPIM can elect to receive free Hepatitis B vaccinations, if they have
not previously received the shot series. If you are offered the shots and decline them, you must sign an official “Declination Form”, which UW-Oshkosh is required to keep on-file.

If you have additional questions about BBP, please talk with your supervisor. You can also contact your supervisor or call EH&S for assistance (424-4484).

**Chemical Exposures**
The health risk from a chemical exposure is generally dependent upon two things: the amount of the chemical that gets into your body and the way your body reacts to the exposure. Chemicals can enter the body through inhalation, absorption through skin or mucous membranes, ingestion, or injection.

There are several ways to control exposure to hazardous substances used in your work including eliminating use of the hazardous product, substituting a less hazardous product, using exhaust ventilation at the point of use, modifying your work practices, or (as a last resort) using personal protective equipment such as respirators, gloves, goggles, etc.

To prevent accidental poisoning by ingesting chemicals, never eat, drink, smoke, or apply cosmetics in areas where chemicals are used and always wash your hands with soap and water after working in an area where chemicals are used, and before going on break or to the toilet.

If you have questions or concerns about chemical exposures, talk with your supervisor and co-workers. You can also call EH&S for assistance (424-4484). In most cases, we can make a visit to your work area to conduct an exposure evaluation and provide recommendations.

**Confined Spaces**
A “confined space” is a space that is large enough to contain your entire body, has limited means of entry or exit (usually requiring you to use your hands in some way to climb up, down, or over obstacles to enter the space), and is not designed for continuous human occupancy. These areas, such as silos, tanks, pits, large pipes or
ductwork, tunnels, etc. can pose deadly hazards to unprepared or unaware entrants.

Employees that must do work inside these areas complete extensive initial and annual training on how to safely enter and work in confined spaces, as well as how to handle emergencies while in a confined space.

Confined spaces are required by law to be identified and secured to prevent unauthorized entry, but we know from experience that many confined spaces are not labeled. Never enter a confined space for any reason unless you have attended the required training courses within the past 12 months and unless you are strictly following all of the requirements of the confined space entry regulations.

Contact your supervisor if you have questions. You can also call EH&S for assistance (424-4484).

**Eyewash and Safety Showers**
Safety showers and eyewash stations are required wherever hazardous substances are used that can cause immediate and permanent damage to your eyes or skin. Any delay in getting a large amount of clean water on the exposed body part will increase the extent of injury and tissue damage.

Examples of hazardous substances that can cause immediate damage to eyes and skin include most strong acids (concrete cleaner, muriatic acid, porcelain cleaners, battery acid, photographic fixer, etc.) and most strong bases (“caustic soda”, some low-odor paint strippers, drain openers, grill cleaners, etc.). Because the eyewash or shower is emergency equipment, the access path must be kept clear and the unit has to be regularly flushed to keep rust and microbial contamination out of the lines. To keep the water supply clean and ready for emergency use, the unit should be operated for 1 full minute each week or before working in an area where hazardous chemicals are used. Be sure to contain any water that flows out of the unit or ensure that it goes directly to a drain!

Correct any obstructed eyewash or safety showers or report them to your supervisor without delay...any storage or debris that restricts
access might make a minor splash become a major problem for someone that needs to use the eyewash in a hurry.

**Fall Protection**

Some jobs at UW-Oshkosh involve working on or around surfaces where there is a potential for falling to a lower level, such as might be seen at loading docks, equipment platforms, rooftops, catwalks, on top of vehicles or large equipment, or around skylights or pits. While all types of falls are hazardous, falls to lower levels are particularly dangerous.

Safety regulations require use of guardrails or personal fall arrest systems anytime there is a risk of falling 6 feet or more. The rules are slightly different for construction sites: fall protection must be used anytime there is a fall potential of 4 feet or more on a construction site.

Guardrails have to be substantially constructed according to very strict requirements. More information and assistance is available through EH&S.

The most common personal fall arrest system is a full-body harness, a shock absorbing lanyard, and an approved anchor point, but there are a variety of different systems used to accommodate different work scenarios.

If you notice a fall hazard in your work area that is not protected by a guardrail, report it to your supervisor. If a guardrail cannot be put in place for some reason, workers will need to use fall protection when working near the hazard. You can also call EH&S for assistance (424-4484), for more information or assistance.

**Hazardous Waste**

Nearly everything we do leaves behind some kind of waste. UW-Oshkosh generates solid waste (garbage) as well as hazardous wastes. Hazardous waste is a waste with properties that make it dangerous or potentially harmful to human health or the environment and it is not reusable.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates all of this waste under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).
Excess or unwanted chemical stocks that are still useable are not really wastes. Others on campus may be able to put some of these surplus materials to use in their areas. When EH&S removes a chemical from your department or lab, they first determine if it is a hazardous waste. If not, then EH&S determines if other campus departments or labs might have a use for it. Chemicals designated for redistribution are then advertised to other campus departments for free delivery.

If you have hazardous waste, surplus or unwanted chemicals, contact Greg Potratz for assistance potratzg@uwosh.edu. If you have questions, contact (424-1488) and ask to speak to a hazardous waste specialist.

**Holiday Decorations**

If you or your co-workers choose to brighten up your work area with holiday decorations, make sure your decorating does not lead to trouble! The following are a few hints and tips to keep it safe. For more information, call EH&S for assistance (424-4484).

- All electrical decorations must have a label stating that the device is “UL Listed”.
- Do not wind electrical decorations around metal objects.
- Make sure all light strands and electrical cords are free of cuts, crimps, cracks or repairs. Never use a “three-prong-to-two-prong” plug adapter to by-pass a grounded plug. Keep all electrical cords out of traffic areas, and not under rugs, through doorways or taped to the floor.
- Use battery-powered tea-lights when a candle-light effect is desired. As at all other times of the year, State law prohibits the use of lighted candles, incense, and other fire or ember-producing materials in University buildings.
- Make sure seasonal decorations do not block, hide or obscure safety equipment such as fire alarm strobe lights or horns, safety signage or evacuation plans, fire extinguishers, safety showers or eyewash units.
- Injuries due to falls are a major holiday hazard: if you need to hang something higher than you can safely reach, use a properly-
sized ladder and not a chair, desk, or box. Make sure you know how to safely use a ladder.

- If your plans involve holiday greenery, trees, or wreaths, use artificial decorations only. Cut greenery gets extremely flammable as it dries while on display and it is not allowed.

**Indoor Air Quality**

Indoor air quality, or IAQ, refers to the indoor working environment on campus. Where building ventilation systems are unable to keep indoor working areas within certain measurements these areas are sometimes referred to as having “poor indoor air quality”.

In general, an area with “good” indoor air quality will have air temperatures between 73°F and 79°F in the summer or between 68°F and 75°F in the winter, relative humidity levels between 30% and 60%, carbon dioxide levels below 1075 ppm, carbon monoxide levels lower than 9 ppm, and no obvious drafts or offensive odors.

IAQ concerns frequently peak on campus in late spring and early autumn, as the heating and cooling systems are changing over for the new season. Air temperatures during these change-over periods are frequently uncomfortable and poorly regulated, especially in older facilities. Relative humidity levels can get very low in some buildings on campus during the heating season, leading to eye and throat irritation due to the dryness of the air. Fortunately, our facilities maintenance staff is very aware of what makes good IAQ and they work hard to keep things in good shape for building occupants.

For any indoor air quality issue, please call EH&S for assistance (424-4484). EH&S will evaluate the situation and may take some measurements to help figure out whether additional action is needed. They will frequently ask for occupants to keep a simple log sheet of when problems are noticed to help identify any patterns or other clues as to what may be happening in the building that may be causing occupants to be dissatisfied with their area’s IAQ.

**Laboratory Safety**

If you work in or around laboratories containing hazardous chemicals, you need to be aware of the Chemical Hygiene Plan (CHP) that is required for each lab. A CHP provides specific information about the hazards presented by laboratory tasks and processes as
well as how lab employees can control exposures and respond to laboratory emergencies.

Employees that work in a lab must receive specific training about their laboratory’s Chemical Hygiene Plan. This training may be performed by someone who works in the lab, or you may be required to attend a special training course.

Each laboratory is required to maintain an **up-to-date laboratory emergency “door card”** that provides information about the lab’s chemical inventory and who to contact in an emergency.

If you have health and safety questions about a laboratory, you should feel free to ask the Principle Investigator or the Laboratory Manager for more information about the lab’s CHP. You can also call Evan Schwalbe (424-4484) or Greg Potratz (424-1488).

**Ladder Safety**

Falls from ladders of any size can be deadly. In 2006, a contractor working at UW-Madison died when an incident caused the worker to fall from a 6’ stepladder.

If you have a need to use a ladder, make sure that you use the right ladder for the job, that it is in good shape, and that you use the ladder properly. A short ladder or a ladder of the wrong type or weight rating can be a recipe for disaster. Talk with your supervisor or contact a EH&S (424-4484) for more information or assistance.

Unless you weigh less than 150 pounds with all of your tools and gear, do not use a lightweight aluminum stepladder for anything: they simply are not strong enough to safely and reliably support you. Wooden stepladders must be completely free from cracks, splits, splinters, or bowing, and cannot be repaired. Fiberglass stepladders are generally the most appropriate choice for most jobs. Damaged ladders should be completely removed from service with a “CAUTION - DO NOT USE” tag attached to its rungs so it can be physically destroyed and then discarded.

Never stand on the top surface or the highest step of a stepladder! A fall will cause you to do a head-dive to the ground, which could paralyze or kill you. When using a step ladder, position it on a firm,
level base and open the legs to the full position allowing the spreaders to lock in place. As two final warnings, never use a stepladder like a straight ladder (without the legs spread and locked) and never work from a ladder in front of doors unless the doors are positively locked and blocked to prevent them from being opened while you are on the ladder.

Extension ladders used to access a rooftop or other high surface must be set up so that the top extends 3 feet above the surface, so that you have something to hold onto while moving from the ladder to the surface and then back to the ladder. Never step on the top three rungs of an extension ladder. Always tie or strap the ladder at the top and bottom to prevent it from slipping or tipping over. When setting up a ladder, the base must be placed on a firm, level surface that will not allow the ladder to shift during use.

Extension ladders have to be set so that the base of the ladder is 1 foot away from the wall for every 4 feet in height. For example, if a ladder is set with its top rails resting against a wall at 16’ from the ground, the base must be 4’ away from the base of the wall. If the top were resting at 20’ from the ground, the base must be 5’ away from the base of the wall. This 1-to-4 rule will get the ladder set at the correct angle to help prevent tip-overs.

Always face the ladder when climbing, maintain 3-points of contact and keep your belly-button within the side rails. Do not carry stuff in your hands while climbing a ladder: use a hand line to lift your materials up to your working position if what you need at the top does not fit in a tool belt.

**Lead**

Lead is a toxic heavy metal that has long been used in paint formulations for commercial and residential buildings as well as many other products. Lead paint is now banned for residential buildings, but it is still available for commercial uses.

Most new paint at UW-Oshkosh does not contain lead, but some of the old paint does, and there is no way to know which paint has lead in it without special testing. It is safest to assume that all paint, particularly in buildings built prior to 1978, may contain lead. EH&S
tests samples of paint suspected to contain lead and help prevent exposure.

Exposure to lead most often occurs by inhalation of lead fumes from hot processes or by inadvertently swallowing lead-contaminated dusts. Very high exposures to lead, such as from inhaling lead fumes from torching lead paint or through work with molten lead, can cause death.

Other health effects of lead exposure include decreased mental function, reproductive problems (in both men and women), high blood pressure, hypertension, nerve disorders, memory and concentration problems, as well as muscle and joint pain.

Harmful exposures to lead can be created when lead-based paint is improperly removed from surfaces by dry scraping, sanding, demolition, or open-flame burning. High concentrations of airborne lead particles can also result from lead dust from outdoor sources, including contaminated soil tracked inside, lead painted friction surfaces such as window frames or doors, and use of lead in certain indoor activities such as soldering and stained-glass making.

Removal of lead paint has to be done according to very strict rules which include special training, air monitoring, personal protective equipment, work practices, and recordkeeping.

If you have questions or concerns about the materials in your area or want information about the content of building materials you work with, please call EH&S for assistance (424-4484).

**Mold in Indoor Environments**

People and environmental molds, fungi, and bacteria (“microbials”) go way back...all the way to the very beginning of our existence. Nearly everywhere that people are, so too are other microbials, and that is a good thing, most of the time! However, in some situations – such as when a substantial water leak, flood, or sewer backup saturates porous building materials and these materials are not removed or completely dried within 48-hours – some microbials can begin to multiply vigorously enough to begin to impact indoor working environments.
While there are no legal requirements concerning mold or microbial contamination in indoor working environments, a best practice that we try to maintain at the University is to promptly dry or remove saturated building materials in order to prevent microbial growth and to remove any visible microbial growth from indoor surfaces in work areas.

Air sampling for microbials is frequently requested, but usually is not necessary. In almost all cases where mold growth is considered to be a problem, air sampling usually just confirms information that can otherwise be readily determined through a simple visual inspection.

If you want to try to minimize your exposure to microbials while at work, you can do a few things that might help: eliminate all live potted plants within your office or work area, do not use portable humidifiers, and eliminate excess paper, rugs, carpeting, and other porous decorations from your working environment. Portable air cleaners that provide HEPA filtration of air can help remove some dust from an office environment if the filters are routinely changed. Annual filter changes are usually sufficient in most indoor working environments on campus. Do not use electrical “ionizers”, as these can generate hazardous concentrations of ozone, an air contaminant.

If you have a compromised immune system or medically documented mold allergies, you may experience increased sensitivity to ambient molds nearly everywhere at and away from work. If you need an accommodation to enable you to continue to work, contact your UW Oshkosh ADA Coordinator for Faculty and Staff. More information on the accommodation process at UW-Oshkosh is at http://www.uwosh.edu/ada-employees/home.html

For more information about mold or microbials in your working environment, call EH&S for assistance (424-4484).

**Noise**

Noise-related hearing loss has been listed as a major workplace concern in the United States for more than 25 years. Luckily, most of the jobs at the UW-Oshkosh are usually pretty quiet. However, there are some jobs that involve exposure to a LOT of noise, such as animal
handlers, groundkeepers, carpenters, custodians, welders, steamfitters, and several others.

If you work with noisy equipment or in noisy areas, you may need to wear ear plugs or ear muffs that will provide protection from excess noise. As a general guide, if you have to shout to be understood by a person standing close enough that you can touch them with your thumb, the noise levels are probably hazardous and hearing protectors should be worn. In some cases, your supervisor may need to schedule you for some special training and an annual hearing test.

You should talk with your supervisor about any noisy jobs or areas to be sure about whether you need to wear hearing protection. You can also call EH&S for assistance (424-4484). The occupational hygienist can visit your work area and take noise measurements and provide protection advice.

**Occupational Medicine**
The University offers a wide range of health services designed to protect your health at work. Examples include medical evaluations and exams, vaccinations, and hearing tests. What services you are eligible for depend on the type of work you do and what kind of exposures you may have. For example, if you are required to wear a respirator, you are eligible for medical evaluation and fit testing. Types of exposures for which health services are offered include high noise, respirator use, animal care, asbestos work, and research activity. To learn more about occupational health services call EH&S for assistance (424-4484), and ask to speak with the Campus Safety Officer.

**Outdoor Work**
When you work outside, you are exposed to a different set of hazards than someone that works inside a building: hot weather, cold weather, icy sidewalks, lightning, wasps and bees, squirrels feasting in garbage cans, stray animals, spiders, dead limbs over work areas, West Nile disease from mosquitoes, Lyme disease from deer ticks, poison ivy, blister-causing wild parsnip plants, sunburns, skin cancer, buried gas and electrical lines, thorny plants, fall hazards, overhead power lines, and lots of high-level noise from motorized equipment!
As with other hazards, one of the keys to staying safe is to be aware of the risks. Talk with your supervisor about the outdoor hazards of your job and ensure you have the right PPE and training to stay safe. You can also call EH&S for assistance (424-4484), and ask to speak with the Campus Safety Officer.

**Personal Protective Equipment**

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is intended to protect you from workplace hazards you may be exposed to if the exposure cannot be eliminated or controlled by other means. PPE is selected based on an assessment of your job tasks and the potential hazards associated with your work. It may include eye, face, head, hands, body, feet, ears/hearing, and your respiratory system.

Training is required to ensure the proper use and care of PPE. The training may be provided by your supervisor, a vendor, or by EH&S.

When required, PPE is provided at no cost to the employee, with the exception of hard-toe shoes which are reimbursed to the employee on a basis determined by your work arrangement. Outerwear, such as a winter coat, is generally the employee’s personal responsibility. Your work unit is responsible for providing all necessary PPE for all employees, including student employees and Limited Term Employees (LTEs), at no cost and before performing any work requiring PPE use.

If prescription safety glasses are required contact your supervisor for Safety Glasses Policy Information. You must have a current prescription and authorization from your supervisor to receive the glasses.

**Powered Industrial Trucks**
Prior to an employee operating a powered industrial truck (except for training purposes), the employer shall ensure that each operator has successfully completed the training required.

Training shall consist of a combination of formal instruction (e.g., lecture, discussion, interactive computer learning, video tape, written material), practical training (demonstrations performed by the trainer and practical exercises performed by the trainee), and evaluation of the operator's performance in the workplace.

The employer shall certify that each operator has been trained and evaluated as required.

**Refresher training and evaluation.**

An evaluation of each powered industrial truck operator's performance shall be conducted at least once every three years.

Contact Daniel Strey @ 424-7008 or strey@uwosh.edu

**Radioactive Materials Laboratories**

A radioactive materials laboratory is one in which radioactive materials are used and stored. In all cases these rooms must be identified with a “caution radioactive materials” sign, and must be locked when specially trained ‘radiation workers’ are not present.

Under no circumstances may a non-radiation worker handle, or have access to, radioactive materials. Contact Evan Schwalbe (424-4484) in advance if you need to perform any service in designated radioactive materials laboratories or rooms. Only trained radiation workers may handle radioactive waste.
Reproductive Hazards
Though not common, there are some risks that could be encountered which could affect fertility or the fetal health of expectant parents. Examples include lead, radiation, anesthetic gases and infectious agents.

If you are pregnant or trying to conceive, you should inventory possible risks associated at home and work. EH&S has several resources available to ensure your fetal safety, including Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and Safety Data Sheets (SDS). These can be found at: http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/reproductivehazards/ for further information you can call EH&S (424-4484).

Respiratory Protection
If you do work that creates or releases airborne dusts, fumes, mists, gases, or vapors, you may need to wear respiratory protection to prevent the contaminants from getting into your body through your respiratory system. Respirators used for protection might be as simple as a filtering face piece (dustmask), or as complicated as a Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). Whatever it may be, wearing a respirator for comfort or for personal protection must be done carefully and according to the rules.

Contact your supervisor to talk about any jobs for which you may need to wear a respirator. If you do need to wear a respirator, your supervisor or EH&S will give you more information about respirator use requirements.

Scissor Lifts and Genie Lifts
Scissor lifts and “Genie” lifts are used to lift a person high in the air for work on overhead fixtures. The advantages of these devices over extension ladders are the vertical reach and ability to reach areas that are difficult or impossible with ladders. Another major advantage of these lifts is worker safety and comfort. All work is performed from a flat surface inside of a basket or platform with protective rails around the worker.

These devices require operators to complete special training. Do not use scissors lifts or Genie lifts unless you have completed the training. Never use these devices outdoors on sloped ground or in
windy conditions. For more information, please contact your supervisor or call EH&S for assistance (424-4484).

**Vehicle Use and Operation**

The use of state-owned vehicles is for official state business. If an employee wishes to travel with his or her family or combine business with personal travel, the employee must use his or her own vehicle.

University faculty/staff members must submit a Vehicle Use Agreement Form to the Fleet Vehicle Office so their driving record can be verified with the Motor Vehicle Department in Madison. Those with out-of-state licenses must submit a notarized affidavit. Forms are available from the Fleet Vehicle Office or online.

If your department wishes to have students drive university vehicles, they are required to have a Student Driver Authorization form on file. Their driving records will be verified with the Motor Vehicle Department in Madison. Students with out-of-state licenses must also submit a notarized affidavit. Both forms are available in the Fleet Vehicle Office or online and must be submitted annually.

Information on driver quality standards and the vehicle use rules are online at [http://www.uwosh.edu/fleet/vehicle-usage/policies-procedures/?searchterm=vehicle use rules](http://www.uwosh.edu/fleet/vehicle-usage/policies-procedures/?searchterm=vehicle use rules).

Once you are authorized, you can use vehicles as needed for work. Risk Management will run monthly checks of your driving record for the duration of your employment. However, you must ensure that your operation is always safe and in compliance with the rules of the road and campus policies. You are personally responsible for any and all traffic or parking tickets that you receive. If you have an incident that will cause a negative change to your driving record, such as receiving a citation for speeding, impaired driving (DUI/OWI), or an at-fault accident, you must tell your supervisor about the incident before operating any vehicle for UW business. Your supervisor will then be required to inform the Risk Management Office.

State law requires that seatbelts must be worn by everyone in a vehicle at all times while a vehicle is in motion. Texting while in control of a moving vehicle is illegal and greatly increases your chances of getting into an accident – just don’t do it. Using cellphones, music players, or other electronic devices while driving
distracts your attention away from the road, and distracted driving is never a good thing while piloting 2,000 pounds of wheeled steel through busy streets (or even along empty highways)!

**Welding / Hot Work**

“Hot work” is a term used to describe a task or operation that generates heat, sparks, or an open flame; such as welding, cutting, grinding, soldering, torch applied roofing, heat guns and similar activities. Welders and others who are responsible for hot work operations may be required to attend a special class to learn about hot work safety procedures. At a bare minimum, hot work operators must always keep combustible materials at least 35 feet away, keep a fire extinguisher readily available, make sure the jobsite has a hot work permit posted, and maintain a fire watch for at least 30 minutes after all hot work operations have ended.

If hot work operations are performed within an area where you are present, you need to know that most hot work processes release large amounts of hazardous air contaminants (which may include lead, manganese, hexavalent chromium (known to cause cancer), nickel, and other hazardous air contaminants). Electric arc welding also generates hazardous ultraviolet (UV) radiation that can permanently damage your eyesight. Never look directly at a welding arc, except through a welder’s helmet. Proper personal protective equipment and good ventilation is required for hot work processes. If you are not properly equipped to be in a hot work area, relocate to a different work area.

Contact your supervisor or call EH&S for assistance (424-4484) for more information about hot work.
Really Handy Non-Emergency Phone Numbers

*All listed numbers are in area code 920*

EH&S Animal Safety Specialist: 424-1102
EH&S Chemical Hygiene Officer: 424-1488
EH&S Campus Safety Officer Main Desk: 424-4484
EH&S Workplace Safety Coordinator: 424-4484
UW-Oshkosh Disability Accommodation Coordinator: 424-2070
UW-Oshkosh Risk Management Office: 424-0410
UW-Oshkosh Workers Compensation Office: 424-2070
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Police Department: 424-1212

Really Handy Web Links

*Current as of date of printing (see front cover)*

EH&S Website: [http://www.uwosh.edu/safety](http://www.uwosh.edu/safety)


Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA): [http://osha.gov](http://osha.gov)

WI Department of Safety and Professional Services, Public Employee Safety and Health Enforcement: [http://dspb.wi.gov/sb/SB-PublicSectorSafetyProgram.html](http://dspb.wi.gov/sb/SB-PublicSectorSafetyProgram.html)