

BARNARD

BARNARD COLLEGE · COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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To: Chemistry faculty and staff and students conducting laboratory research in the chemistry department
From: Dina Merrer, Chemistry Department Assistant Chair
Re: Laboratory safety
Date: January 12, 2012

Dear Research Students, Faculty, and Staff,

I am writing to remind you of your responsibilities in ensuring the safest environment possible for doing laboratory work here in the Chemistry Department.

As of September 2011, Barnard College established an agreement with our current hazardous waste vendor, Radiac Environmental Services, to respond to emergency spills. These are chemical spills that exceed the department's capability to respond due to volume or hazard level. For spills of this type, Barnard Public Safety will coordinate the response and will contact Radiac. The emergency line for Public Safety is ext. 88. Public Safety should be contacted promptly and given as much information as possible about the spill, including the name of the chemical, estimated quantity spilled, location on campus (building, room number), a general description of the impact of the spill, and contact information for those in the chemistry department who have information about the spill.

I also want to emphasize that chemistry faculty will review lab safety information with their research students on a regular basis, (at least once per semester), including the location and use of fire extinguishers, eye washes, and safety showers. Faculty supervising students should also carefully review the Barnard College Chemical Hygiene Plan, especially the section concerning Responsibilities of Principal Research Investigators. Faculty should provide research students with the information necessary for students to plan and conduct laboratory operations in accordance with the Chemical Hygiene Plan.

In addition, research students must follow certain rules in conducting their research. While these may seem restrictive, they are intended to manage the risks associated with working in the research laboratory. We expect students to abide by these rules. Failure to do so jeopardizes safety and will ultimately result in a student no longer being able to do independent research in the department.

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Students:

1. You are allowed to be in the research lab only if at least one of the following is true:
(i) a chemistry faculty or staff member is on the same floor and you have notified him or her that you will be working in the lab, **or** (ii) you are accompanied by another person who remains in the laboratory with you while you work.
2. Unless your research supervisor is present on the same floor, the laboratories are closed between the hours of 8 PM and 8 AM. You are not to work in the lab or retrieve items from the lab during this time.
3. We encourage you to notify Barnard Security any time you are in the laboratory when other people are less likely to be on the chemistry floors (e.g., 8 AM–8 PM on weekends, 6 PM–8 PM during the week). You must still be in compliance with rules 1 and 2 above, even if you have notified Security, but this will give you an extra margin of safety. Ask Security personnel to check on you during their regular rounds.
4. When working in the laboratory, you must wear appropriate attire: safety glasses and lab coat are required; shoes must cover the tops of your feet—open-toed shoes are not permitted.
5. Do not use headphones while in the laboratory.