To: Chemistry faculty, staff, and students working in research or teaching laboratories  
From: Kenise Jefferson, Laboratory Facilities Administrator, Chemistry Department  
Re: Laboratory safety  
Date: January 19, 2016

Dear Research Students, Laboratory Student Workers, 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 Barnard Chemistry Department.

As you may know, Barnard College has an agreement with Columbia University Environmental Health & Safety (CU EH&S) to help us coordinate laboratory safety-related activities, including safety training, waste management, chemical spill response, and regular safety surveys.

All research lab workers and also students doing paid prep work in our teaching labs are required to participate in a safety training session, provided through CU EH&S, at least once every two years. This spring, the training session will be held on Friday, January 29, 1:30–3:30 PM, in Altschul 202. It is mandatory that you keep your safety training up to date, and you will not be able to conduct laboratory research or participate in teaching lab prep work without completing safety training at least once every two years. More frequent training is strongly recommended to refresh your knowledge of safety best practices. If you have any questions about whether you should take the safety training this spring, consult with your laboratory supervisor. In the more detailed safety guidelines given later in this memo, you will note additional requirements for working in the lab that are related to the availability of this safety training through CU EH&S.

I also want to let you know that in the event of a chemical spill that exceeds the department’s capability to respond due to volume or hazard level, Barnard Public Safety will coordinate the response with CU EH&S. The emergency line for Public Safety is ext. 88 from a campus phone or (212) 854-3362 from a cell phone. 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 further information about the spill.

Importantly, chemistry faculty and staff will review lab safety information with their research students and teaching lab prep workers on a regular basis, 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.

Research students should conduct a safety review with their faculty mentor of all new procedures used in the laboratory. Students should look up the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for each chemical used in a procedure. The Safety Data Sheets are readily accessible from any on-campus computer via http://ehs.columbia.edu/sds.html. At that site, click on the link “ChemWatch Safety Data Sheets (SDS)-Online Search.” This website is available at Barnard through our agreement with CU EH&S and is an excellent resource for planning the safe conduct of laboratory procedures.

In addition, students must follow certain rules in conducting their research and completing prep work in the teaching labs. 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. Should you have questions about safety procedures or rules, please consult your faculty adviser. We all must work together to maintain a culture of safety and a safe work environment here at the Barnard College Chemistry Department.

**Students:**

1. You must complete the Columbia EH&S training session once every two years to remain eligible to work in a Barnard Chemistry Department research or teaching lab. More frequent attendance at these sessions is strongly encouraged.

2. **In addition** to having completed the CU EH&S training, you are only permitted to work in a Barnard Chemistry Department research lab under one or the other of the following two scenarios:
   (i) a chemistry faculty or staff member who is a C-14 certificate holder** 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 research student who has completed the CU EH&S safety training session and who remains in the laboratory with you while you work and one of the two of you is also a C-14 certificate holder.** Consult with your research adviser to determine which Barnard students are C-14 certificate holders.

   **Eligible students are strongly encouraged to obtain a C-14 certificate through the New York City Fire Department. Your supervisor can provide additional information, and see: http://barnard.edu/summer-research-institute/laboratory-research-safety#fire.**

3. 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.

4. 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, 2, and 3 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.
5. When working in the laboratory, you must wear appropriate attire: safety glasses and lab coat are required; nitrile gloves are strongly recommended; shoes must cover the tops of your feet—open-toed shoes are not permitted.

6. Do not use headphones while in the laboratory.