Facilities Workers: Performing Work in University Laboratories
University laboratories are engaged in a wide range of research activities which includes student-centered laboratory assignments, grant related research, and basic scientific research.

Laboratory work may include the use of hazardous chemicals, x-rays, and the use of radioactive materials.

Facilities employees, by the nature of their jobs, are assigned periodically to perform repair work or custodial work inside laboratories. Accordingly, they need to be aware of the hazards involved in performing their work inside laboratories.
Principal Investigator

- Each laboratory has a Principal Investigator assigned to it who is responsible for the laboratory activities (including the safety of research personnel, employees, and visitors). A sign should be mounted on the outside the entrance to the lab providing the name, telephone number and office location of the Principal Investigator responsible for this lab.

- No work can be performed in University Laboratories without the permission of the Principal Investigator responsible for the lab.
Eye Protection

- When you enter a UD laboratory, safety glasses have to be worn at all times whether or not actual research activity is taking place. There are no exceptions.
- There should be sign mounted outside the entrance to the lab which indicates that safety glasses must be worn inside.
- If the sign is missing, the safety glasses must be worn anyway.
Eating and drinking in laboratories is prohibited.

Because of the literally thousands of chemical compounds that may be found in laboratories, extreme caution needs to be taken to prevent accidental ingestion of these chemicals from the personnel performing work in the laboratory.

If you find evidence of eating and drinking in laboratories, please inform the Principal Investigator who is responsible for the particular laboratory so that they take appropriate action to maintain the safety of the personnel working in the lab.
Spills

- During the course of your work, if you encounter a liquid or powder, do not touch it or attempt to clean it up. Many chemicals are similar in appearance (color and texture).

- It is not your job to identify what the liquids or powders...leave that to the laboratory professionals.

1. You should leave the laboratory area immediately.

2. Report the spill to the appropriate Principal Investigator who is responsible for the laboratory. If you have any question about the guidance that you receive from the PI, consult your manager or OHS before performing work.
If during the course of your work, you accidentally break a piece of laboratory equipment or spill a container with chemical compounds, report the incident to the Principal Investigator responsible for the laboratory.

Do not attempt to clean up or repair the piece of equipment without informing the PI responsible for the laboratory.
The maintenance employee must obtain permission from the Principal Investigator responsible for the lab before they perform work in the lab.

The issuance of the service request in itself does not constitute permission for the mechanic/technician to perform the required repairs inside the laboratory. The Principal Investigator knows what research activities are being conducted and is able to explain the appropriate precautions to the maintenance employees assigned to the repair job inside the lab.
Some repairs may require the shutdown of electrical or other services which may affect the safety of the employees inside the laboratory. Examples include:

- Lab exhaust hoods
- Laboratory plumbing
- Safety showers/eye wash stations
- Lighting

The Principal Investigator needs to be aware of the repair activities so that the maintenance personnel and the lab personnel are both protected.
Custodial Work

Before custodial work is performed in a lab, the Custodial Technician should meet the Principal Investigator responsible for the lab and explain any specialized procedures that are required before performing custodial work in the lab.

Once the custodial technician has been apprised of the correct procedures for performing their routine custodial work within the lab, they may continue to perform their routine custodial duties on an ongoing basis.