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## Common Laboratory Violations

I joined the IUPUI Office of Environmental Health & Safety in October 2008 as a Laboratory Safety Technician. One of my duties is to survey laboratories as part of our chemical-lab safety team. Each year our team of Laboratory Safety Technicians surveys nearly 1200 labs using a checklist containing nearly two hundred items (*click [here](#) to see the checklist*).

Here are the top 5 violations that I have seen over the years in order of increasing frequency of occurrence. As David Letterman says "Number 5 is..."

Number 5: *The storage of food, drink or food utensils in labs.*



This is an unsafe practice & violates OSHA standards as well as the IUPUI Chemical Hygiene Plan and IUPUI Policy. Please click [here](#) to see more reasons why you should not consume or store any food or drink products in your laboratory.

Number 4: *Failure to complete required safety training*



Laboratory Safety Training is required for all IUPUI employees who work inside of a laboratory. This training is required by OSHA and provides an understanding of general laboratory safety practices and policies that must be followed when working in the laboratory. This training is offered online via the new E-train system which is discussed in this edition of lab notes as well as in a classroom setting on the second Monday of every month from 9:30am-11:30am in Lockefield Village room 4401. There are also specific safety training modules available through E Train that must be taken if you are working with the hazards discussed in the training. For more information on the online training we have available please click [here](#).

### Number 3: *Gloves in the hallways*



We are still seeing people wearing gloves in hallways and public spaces. Gloves should never be worn on both hands outside the laboratory where contaminated gloves could come in contact with doors and other common surfaces. This was discussed in an article published in the Summer 2012 edition of lab notes by Lee Stone which can be viewed [here](#).

### Number 2: *Unlabeled Containers*

All containers in the laboratory must be appropriately labeled with the name of the contents. The label must include the written name of the chemical. Abbreviations and chemical structures should not be substituted for the complete chemical name which can easily be found on the Material Safety Data Sheet. It is also good laboratory practice to write the date received and the date opened on all stock chemicals. The IUPUI Chemical Hygiene Plan, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Laboratory Standard and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) all require proper labeling of all laboratory chemicals, secondary containers and waste jugs. Secondary containers shall be labeled by the individual that fills the container. I discussed this in an article I wrote in the Spring 2011 edition of Lab Notes which can be viewed [here](#).



Drum Roll Please.. and the most common violation I find in laboratories is: *Improper Chemical Segregation*.



There are 6 groups of chemicals that we should segregate our chemicals into: acids, bases, oxidizers, flammables, poisons and non-reactives. The correct way to store your chemicals is by grouping chemicals according to hazard class and then storing each group of chemicals in separate areas so that accidental mixing cannot occur should the containers break, leak or off gas.

The incorrect way is seen in the above photograph taken of chemical storage underneath a fume hood with all hazard classes mixed together. This creates a very dangerous situation. Lee Stone discusses chemical segregation in detail in the Fall 2008 edition of Lab Notes which even includes a chemical segregation chart. To view his article please click [here](#).

A safe laboratory requires all of us working together, so please make sure none of these violations exist in your laboratory.

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*Lab Notes is a quarterly publication by the IUPUI Office of Environmental Health and Safety. Lab Notes is designed, edited and published by K. Lee Stone.*

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