

# The Safety Net

Eastern Virginia Medical School's Environmental Health and Safety Newsletter  
[https://myportal.evms.edu/research/safety/environmental\\_health\\_and\\_safety](https://myportal.evms.edu/research/safety/environmental_health_and_safety)

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## Special Interest Articles:

- Earth Day 2024
- Faulty Lab Equipment Tagging
- Fit Test Fee Increase

## Individual Highlights:

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## Respiratory Protection Escalation Procedure

PEH&S notifies individuals that they are due to start the process for fit testing through the SciShield automated system. In each EVMS Medical Group (MG) clinical department, an employee is designated as a Group Manager within SciShield. Students are also managed similarly. Clinical Fit Testers are trained to fit test employees for the convenience of the department, and all employees shall be notified of their ability to be fit tested at EH&S by scheduling an appointment. Each Group Manager is responsible for tracking the compliance of their group members through the respiratory protection process (training, medical clearance, and respirator fit testing). EH&S shall run a regular report to determine delinquencies for each MG and student group and notify individuals of these delinquencies. Enforcement for non-compliant individuals shall be handled as follows:

**Students:** Reported to the Director of Student Rights and Responsibilities, and EH&S shall track follow-up accordingly.

**Employees** (faculty, staff, residents/fellows):

- First Notification to:
  - Employee
  - cc to: group manager, supervisor, or residency coordinator (as applicable)
- Second Notification (forward prior email)::
  - Employee
  - cc to: group manager, department manager or administrator, or GME Program Director (as applicable)
  - cc to: MG Compliance Officer (for non-resident/fellow employees only)
  - Assistant MG Quality Officer (for non-resident/fellow employees only)
- Third Notification (forward prior email)::
  - Employee
  - Cc to: Chair/Department Head or Vice Dean of GME, HR Generalist, and Associate Vice President of Compliance and Legal Services
  - cc to: MG Compliance Officer and MG CEO (for non-resident/fellow employees only)

## Earth Day 2024

Earth Day's theme for 2024 is "Planet vs. Plastics." This emphasizes the commitment to directly address the plastic waste problem. The aim is a 60% reduction in plastic production by 2040.

To achieve a 60% reduction, [EARTHDAY.ORG](https://www.earthday.org)'s goals are: (1) promoting widespread public awareness of the damage done by plastic to human, animal, and all biodiversity's health and demanding more research be conducted on its health implications, including the release of any and all information regarding its effects to the public; (2) rapidly phasing out all single use plastics by 2030 and achieving this phase out commitment in the United Nations Treaty on Plastic Pollution in 2024; (3) demanding policies ending the scourge of fast fashion and the vast amount of plastic it produces and uses; and (4) investing in innovative technologies and materials to build a plastic-free world.<sup>1</sup>



Plastics extend beyond an imminent environmental issue; they present a threat to human. As plastics break down into microplastics, they release toxic chemicals into our food and water sources and circulate through the air we breathe. Plastic production now has grown to more than 380 million tons per year. More plastic has been produced in the last ten years than in the entire 20th century, and the industry plans to grow explosively for the indefinite future.

To learn more about Planet vs. Plastics and join the movement for a plastic-free future, please visit: [Earth Day 2024](https://www.earthday.org). To educate yourself on the impacts of plastic on human health, check out the [Plastics Health Research Module](#) and EARTHDAY.ORG's [Earth Hub](#) for all fact sheets, toolkits, press releases, and articles.

<sup>1</sup>EARTHDAY.ORG. (2024). Planet vs. Plastics Global Theme for Earth Day 2024. Retrieved April 3, 2024, from <https://www.earthday.org/planet-vsplastics/>

### Fit Test Fee Changes

EH&S is not funded for the supplies or other costs associated with performing this service, thus cost-recovery is necessary. Beginning **April 01, 2024**, the respirator fit testing cost will be increased to **\$10.00** per person. This reflects the rising costs of materials, supplies and equipment maintenance that are used for this service.

Be aware, EH&S will charge departments for "no show" appointments and "turn away" tests. OSHA requires men to be clean shaven in order to wear a respirator and all to be medically cleared before being fit tested. Therefore, students and employees will be turned away when arriving for their fit test appointment if (1) they arrive with facial hair and/or (2) if their prerequisites are not complete. Fit test prerequisites are the Respiratory Protection training course located on the [SciShield](#) site and the [Medical Questionnaire](#) completed and cleared by Occupational Health.

We encourage you to plan for this increase in the upcoming budget cycle. If you have any questions about the EVMS Respiratory Protection Program, please contact Kristi Olivar at 757.446.7928.

## Faulty Laboratory Equipment Tagging SOP

EVMS administration has instituted a marking procedure for malfunctioning and broken laboratory equipment. These procedures cover the following:

- High-temperature equipment (e.g., ovens, incubators, hotplates, etc.)
- High-pressure equipment (e.g., autoclaves, compressed gas cylinders, etc.)
- High-speed equipment (e.g. centrifuges)
- Equipment used with hazardous materials (e.g., biosafety cabinets, cell sorters, etc.)
- Others as deemed necessary

If you have malfunctioning equipment in your lab, follow the below procedures.

### Reporting Faulty Equipment

1. Equipment users shall routinely conduct equipment inspections.
  - a. EVMS requires Biosafety cabinets and ultra-centrifuges to have annual certification inspections.
  - b. All other equipment inspections are the responsibility of the laboratory Principal Investigator (PI).
2. If laboratory equipment is potentially faulty or malfunctioning, it shall be immediately taken out of service by the user of it.
3. The user shall report it to both the Principal Investigator and EH&S immediately.

### Tag Equipment

1. Upon being informed of faulty lab equipment, EH&S shall attach a physical tag to the equipment stating:
  - a. "Do Not Use."
  - b. "Repair Required Before Tag Removal."
  - c. Date the tag was placed.
  - d. "Contact EH&S Before Removal"
  - e. EH&S contact information.

Note: if the PI has this equipment listed in the SciShield platform, EH&S will change its status to "Out of Service."

### Follow-up

1. EH&S will verify equipment statuses at the time of laboratory inspection.
2. When a repair or decision to dispose of faulty equipment has been made, the PI must contact EH&S to remove the tag.
3. EH&S shall update the equipment Status in SciShield as appropriate.

For questions, please contact EH&S at [ehs@evms.edu](mailto:ehs@evms.edu).



## Ask the S.O.B.

**Q:** Dear S.O.B.,

I've been told I shouldn't wear gloves in the hallways. However, I have to transport samples up to the core lab and into other lab rooms. If I can't wear gloves in the common areas, how can I transport our samples?

- Nye Trial



*Safety Office Boy to the rescue!*

**A:** Dear Nye,

You are correct; gloves should not be worn outside of the laboratory. If you must transport outside of your immediate lab space:

- Wear gloves to put samples into secondary container(s) an/or on a cart
- Remove and dispose of your gloves
- Walk the contained samples to the new location, bringing a new pair of gloves with you
- Put on new gloves to handle the samples in the new location; dispose of these gloves before leaving the new location

If you have a question for the S.O.B., send an email to [ehs@evms.edu](mailto:ehs@evms.edu).

## Notes from the Office

### *EH&S Training Courses.*

Course	Date/Time	Location
Chemical Hygiene Plan	April 18, 2024 9:30 AM -12:30 PM	Lewis Hall 2162
	May 23, 2024 9:30 AM -12:30 PM	Lewis Hall 1184
	June 6, 2024 9:30 AM -12:30 PM	Lewis Hall 2162
Radiation Safety in the Laboratory	Contact EH&S	
Biosafety in the Laboratory Biological Materials Shipping Autoclave Safety Training OHSP Training Respiratory Protection	Available on SciShield!	<a href="https://evms.scishield.com/">https://evms.scishield.com/</a>
HAZCOM Bloodborne Pathogens Biological Materials Shipping (Clinical)	Available on Blackboard!	<a href="https://evms.blackboard.com/">https://evms.blackboard.com/</a>