

Hazardous Material Areas: Safe Access by Non-Lab Personnel

Introduction

People who have facility related tasks—repair, renovation, design, custodial—all may need to enter areas where hazardous operations occur. These operations may involve the use of chemicals, biological materials and radiation, as well as the use of animals for research. To help you protect yourself, the people who work at the university and the university's property, please read this sheet and follow the requirements it describes.

The Hazard Door Sign

There are signs outside of hazardous materials areas indicating the nature of the hazard within. Nearly all have a sign like this:

This door sign is used to indicate a great many different types of hazards.



CHEMICAL HAZARDS

First and most easily noticeable are the diamond-shaped placards, like you would see on trucks. These indicate various types of chemical hazards, such as “corrosive”, “flammable” or “irritant”. When a lab is unattended, there should NEVER be any of these hazards left out where people can casually contact them. It is important never to put your hands (or head!) into a fume hood, where such chemicals may in fact be in use unattended.

RADIATION HAZARDS

You may see one of two phrases on the door sign referring to radiation.

CMU Radiation Safety Training Required for Entry

This means that you must have “**Ancillary Training**” to enter the room for any reason. Contact EH&S at 8-8405 to receive this training.

Radiation Emitting Device Present

This means there is an X-ray or similar piece of equipment present. Safeguards are in place to prevent visitors from being exposed to these items, though care should be taken to avoid touching them.

LASER HAZARDS

The door sign may indicate the presence of a laser in the laboratory. Lasers may **NEVER** be left running when the lab is unattended, so there should be no hazard to be concerned of to a visitor. For certain high powered lasers, there will also be a lighted sign over the door when the laser is actually operating. **NEVER** enter the room when this light is illuminated.

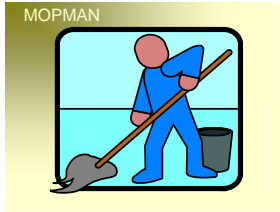
OTHER HAZARDS

The door sign may indicate other types of hazards such as the presence of biological materials or hazardous waste. These materials must be stored in sealed containers when not in use and should pose no additional hazard to visitors above what would exist for chemical hazards, as described above.

Our Mission:

Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) is committed to providing health and safety services that protect the University community and the environment.

Non-Lab Workers in Hazardous Materials Areas



MOPMAN

When you see this sign, it indicates that the laboratory is safe for occupancy or entry by facility personnel, provided typical, basic precautions are performed. These include not handling any chemical or other hazardous materials, not disturbing any laboratory equipment unless that is the purpose of your visit (i.e., repair of fume hood.)

ANIMAL HANDLING AREAS

There are a number of areas on campus where animals are used for research purposes. Potential problems not only include effects the animals can have on workers, but also effects workers can have on animals.

The effects animals can produce in workers are typically exacerbation of allergic reactions, as well as the possibility (however unlikely) of an animal borne illness. If you know you have allergies, you may wish to request another task that will not place you in animal handling areas. Also, you will want to be aware of other related hazards in such areas, including chemical and machinery hazards.

It is also important for you to know that YOU may be able to cause harm to research animals. (They are generally very valuable and represent possibly years of work by one or more researcher.)

As a result, it is essential that you contact the facility manager before you need to enter any animal area. They will indicate the necessary precautions and practices you will need to follow to be allowed admittance.

If you do not know the name of the facility manager, contact EH&S for assistance.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

In addition to the hazards of the materials and items present in the areas in question, there is also a need to be aware of some environmental hazards associated with some of the work you may be doing in these spaces.

- **Asbestos Hazards**

Asbestos materials are often present as pipe insulation, floor tiles, lab bench tops and the interior of fume hoods. Most of you are required to receive Asbestos Awareness training offered by the University each year and should know how to detect these problems. **NEVER** enter an area where asbestos abatement is occurring (a sign will denote these areas and there will be plastic barriers outside of the area as well.)

- **Lead Hazards**

Lead-containing paint chips can present a hazard when they are scraped, sanded or ground. If you must work in an area where you may disturb peeling paint, please contact EH&S. We can test the chip for lead content and advise the proper follow-up if the material is lead-containing.

In the event of any questions regarding the safety of the areas you will need to work in, please feel free to contact:

Environmental Health & Safety
FMSB 3rd Floor and Mellon Institute 313
412-268-8182