



EHS QUARTERLY

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PREPARING LABORATORIES FOR THE WINTER BREAK

Next week, many laboratory workers will be leaving campus for winter break and taking well-deserved time off from laboratory activities. If your laboratory will be taking a break, please review the following before you leave to help prevent incidents from occurring while you are away:

- Ensure that all experiments have been properly stopped and shut down. For any processes that **MUST** continue while you are away, please [email EHS](#) or call 412-268-8182.
- Perform a walkthrough of your laboratory to ensure that all containers, including hazardous waste containers, are tightly closed and sealed. Check the materials in your storage cabinets as well.
- Pull down fume hood sashes to about an inch from the bottom. This will help save energy and also retain hazardous material fumes should a bottle or container break within the hood.
- Close all windows to keep the cold air out and prevent the pipes from freezing.

Thank you in advance for your efforts to fully prepare for the upcoming winter break and to take the necessary steps to ensure the health and safety of all laboratory personnel and the entire community. ♦

LABORATORY HOUSEKEEPING

Many laboratories take the winter break to perform housekeeping. EHS strongly encourages this activity, but there are some safety practices you must keep in mind while performing laboratory housekeeping.

Not this:



But this:



1. Dispose of any old, unneeded and un-useable chemicals through the hazardous waste program.
2. Dispose of unneeded equipment, glassware, boxes, papers, catalogs, etc.
3. Put all equipment, glassware and chemicals in the proper places.
4. Clear out items stored under safety showers or blocking eye wash stations. Find a permanent, alternative place for the items.
5. Clean out dirty sinks.
6. Find out if anyone will be working alone with hazardous materials during the break. These individuals must complete and submit a ["Permission to Work Alone" form](#) in order for the work to occur.
7. Resolve in the New Year to tidy up your laboratory every week. ♦

CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY COVID-19 WEBSITE

The [COVID-19 website](#) is the university's official website for COVID-19 information. It provides information for the university community including students, faculty, researchers and staff about the evolving coronavirus pandemic. The information includes links to [health and wellness information](#), [frequently asked questions](#), [the COVID-19 Dashboard](#) and [COVID-19 communications](#).

The university has compiled this useful information to help you protect yourself based on CDC updates and guidance. Refer to the website often to get the latest information on how to protect yourself and the community. ♦

FLU VACCINE

Getting the flu vaccine every year is the best way to prevent infection with influenza. Flu vaccines are usually available in the fall each year.

With both the flu and COVID-19 circulating this season, getting a flu vaccine is more important than ever. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused shortages of hospital beds, ICU beds and ventilators even outside of flu season. During flu season, hospitals may again face shortages, limiting their ability to care for people who are seriously ill with the flu, COVID-19 or both.

People can get COVID-19 and the flu at the same time. A recent [study](#) showed people who had COVID-19 and influenza B were sicker than those who had COVID-19 alone.

Also, COVID-19 and the flu have similar symptoms like fever, chills, fatigue, body aches and coughs. People who get the flu may think they have COVID-19, which could lead to a COVID-19 test and quarantine until the test result comes back, resulting in more days out of work. It could also lead to testing shortages.

Though there is no vaccine for COVID-19, the flu vaccine is a safe and effective way to prevent contracting the flu and spreading it to others during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are many convenient options for getting a flu vaccine. Refer to the Human Resources [Flu Vaccination Program](#) webpage for flu vaccine related resources available to the CMU community. ♦



SUFFERING FROM “COVID FATIGUE”?

We've been living with the novel coronavirus for months, and the spread of COVID-19 is still going strong in many areas around the U.S. and the world. As the pandemic wears on, it's understandable that many of us are getting tired and suffering from “COVID fatigue”- feeling overwhelmed, tired or frustrated about everything related to coronavirus.

While “COVID fatigue” is a natural response to this stressful situation, we need to fight “COVID fatigue” by committing to keeping our loved ones, our communities and ourselves safe while also taking care of our mental health. Here's how:

Remember COVID-19 safety basics and make sure you are practicing them correctly.

- Wear a mask. Make sure your mask fits over your mouth and nose. If your mouth or nose aren't covered, then the risk of transmission is increased.
- Practice physical distancing. Think of 6 feet as a minimum distance – leave as much space as possible between yourself and others to minimize transmission risk.
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds using soap and water. If you don't have access to soap and water, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

Exercise - Experts say exercise is the best thing we can do for coping with COVID-19. Exercise releases endorphins, which relieve stress and boost our sense of pleasure. Exercise also channels out adrenaline when frustration builds up. Even a simple walk can help.

Talk about your frustrations - Finding someone – family, friend or professional – to talk to about your frustrations and anxieties is extremely helpful.

Practice mindfulness and gratitude - Try being in the moment, breathing, looking around and expressing gratitude for what you have.

Be compassionate with yourself - Don't expect perfection and don't wallow in mistakes or missed chances. Nobody prepared us for getting through COVID-19. It is completely fine if you don't always know what to do. No one does.

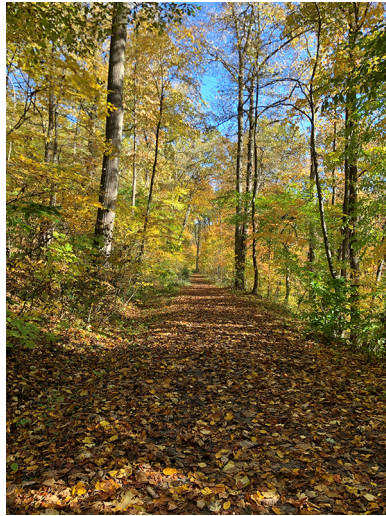
Find things to look forward to - It could be walking with a friend, repeats of your favorite TV series or gathering a group of friends for a virtual trivia night. Even the smallest things can be fun to look forward to in the middle of uncertainty.

Stay physically distant, not socially distant - Use technology to stay in touch with friends and family while keeping a safe physical distance. Even though it may not be a substitute for the real thing, it's more important than ever that we stay socially connected.

Look back, but carefully - Don't look all the way back to last summer but think about the past few months and how far you've come. Look at all the things you've been through and how resilient you and your community have become.

It's important to remember that COVID-19 will not last forever, but in the meantime, don't let “COVID fatigue” prevent you from keeping yourself and others physically and mentally healthy. ♦

FALL EXERCISING SAFETY TIPS



To combat the stress of working from home or being cooped up in our offices, many of us have sought the outdoors as an escape. The fall season is a great time to be outdoors. The colorful leaves, pumpkin-spiced fragrances and caramel apples are some of autumn's most appreciated features. What is not appreciated, however, is the heightened chance of falling, especially on piled up, slippery leaves.

Fallen leaves can create an injury-prone scene when left to gather and blow across walking surfaces among wet, cooler temperatures.

Surfaces become slick and problem areas like cracks in sidewalks or holes in parking lots become covered and masked to anyone walking by making slips, trips and falls one of the top causes of unintentional injury this season. It is imperative to follow these fall safety tips to prevent slips, trips and falls during this colorful time:

- Avoid leaf piles. You never know what might be hidden beneath them. All you have to do is take one step into the pile, and you could be slipping on an unknown object. If you see a pile of leaves, simply walk around it, even if it takes you longer to do so. Allow more time to get to your destination.
- Watch the ground in the direction we are headed. Remain alert at all times. It's important to keep your head up and look in front of you—about 10 to 20 feet ahead so that you can keep an eye out for any partially hidden obstacles like uneven surfaces, protruding objects, potholes, cracks in the sidewalk or road, rocks, tree roots or branches in your way.
- Wear seasonally-appropriate footwear with good traction for slick surfaces.
- Adjust your cadence by taking more frequent, smaller steps.
- If it is slippery out there, slow down! Going slower minimizes the amount of friction you need to react to hazards or changes in terrain.
- Keep your hands free to help you stay balanced on slippery surfaces.
- If beginning to slip, try not to put all the pressure on hands or wrists to break a fall.

Nature often slows down in the fall and prepares to rest in many regions. However, the mild weather leads some of us to increase our outdoor activities. As with any activity, there are always precautions you can take to enjoy your outdoor exercise while keeping an eye on your safety! ◆

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Evan Orowetz joined Carnegie Mellon University in August 2020 as a Fire Safety Specialist. Evan comes to us from the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Division of Safety Inspection, where he performed fire and life safety inspections for all of the hospitals, nursing homes and surgery centers in Southwestern Pennsylvania. He also brings prior experience as a safety manager, fire protection equipment technician, firefighter and emergency medical technician.

Evan completed his associate's degree in Fire Science at the Community College of Allegheny County where he now serves on the program advisory board. He also possesses numerous national certifications as a Fire Inspector, Fire Plans Examiner, Fire and Life Safety Educator, Fire Instructor and Fire Officer. He is currently

working on finishing a bachelor's degree program in Fire and Safety Engineering Technology from the University of Cincinnati and hopes to complete a master's degree in the future. Please join us in welcoming Evan to the Carnegie Mellon University community. ◆

EHS WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We encourage all members of the Carnegie Mellon University community to submit safety improvement ideas that enhance your personal safety on campus or the safety of the greater community. Your participation will help raise safety awareness in our community! Please submit your safety concerns and ideas to: safety@andrew.cmu.edu.



In addition, if you have any suggestions for the next newsletter, please submit your ideas to Mary Sickles at: msickles@andrew.cmu.edu. ◆

SEE SOMETHING? SAY SOMETHING!

Help ensure the safety and well-being of the CMU community by calling:
University Police: 412-268-2323
Ethics Hotline: 1-877-700-7050 ◆

