

Safety in the Laboratory

Category: Safety

Updated: July 2022



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Though written in the masculine form for convenience's sake, this document is intended for men and women alike. In this document, "student" may be replaced by "postdoctoral fellow" or "visiting student" (in singular or plural); "studies" by "training" or "visit" (in all their forms).

1. Policy

The policy of the Weizmann Institute of Science (henceforth: "**The Institute**") is uncompromising insofar as the matter concerns the well-being and safety of all the people on campus; this includes members of the science faculty, post-doctoral fellows, students, the research support staff, and the administrative staff. Therefore, the entire Institute population must conduct itself with complete responsibility and by all safety rules, regulations, guidelines, and instructions in the research laboratories and whenever operating chemical, biological, and radioactive materials and research devices.

2. Sources of information and counseling


Full specifications regarding the safety instructions and rules of caution in the lab and guidelines on how to act when a safety incident occurs can be found on the Institute's Safety Unit website. In case of an accident, it is obligatory to contact the Institute's emergency hotline at 08-9342999. In any situation in which a student is not sure about safety matters and issues, or in the case of a safety-related accident in which he was involved, he has the option of contacting any of the following entities:

- 2.1. The student's Head of the Research Group (henceforth: "**the PI**")
- 2.2. Departmental "Safety warden" (hereafter: "**the warden**")
- 2.3. The Safety Unit (hereafter: "**the Unit**")

3. Obligation to stay updated

3.1. General

Every student (rotation students and visiting students included) must obtain from his PI information and updates on the potential safety hazards in the laboratory.

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3.2. **Responsibility**

The PI is responsible for implementing safety rules and regulations in his group. All questions and complaints should be directed to the PI, the Warden, or directly to the Safety Unit.

4. **Safety training**

4.1. **Obligation**

According to the Institute's procedures and safety regulations, every student is obliged to undergo safety training at three levels before starting his work in a laboratory according to the following specifications:

4.1.1. **At the research group level**

Read the group's annual safety program (ASP) and sign a pledge to comply with the program's guidelines. The PI (or the lab manager) has the program, which contains individual guidelines for all the risks and safety hazards in the laboratory.

4.1.2. **At the scientific department level**

Schedule training with the warden. The training will focus on the safety rules required by the scientific department to which the student belongs.

4.1.3. **At the Institute level**

Verify receiving from the Unit an invitation to a safety course under its auspices. The course will cover all of the risks at the Institute and the tools required to prevent exposure to hazardous chemical and biological materials, radiation, fire, ergonomics, and rules of conduct during routine times and in emergencies.

4.2. **Obligation**

It is within the authority of the Feinberg Graduate School (henceforth: the "FGS") to prohibit a student from entering any laboratory until he has undergone the appropriate safety training. Permission to enter a laboratory again will be granted contingent upon the decision of the Safety Committee or the Unit.

4.3. **Enforcement**

The Institute's Safety Unit monitors student participation in safety training and the safety course. A student who does not attend the training sessions will receive a letter from the Safety Committee, which will make the student's continued activity in the lab contingent upon fulfilling the requirements. The FGS will assist in enforcing this obligation to undergo safety training and full compliance with the safety rules. Students who violate this obligation and compliance may be expelled from their studies or training at the Institute.

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4.4. Manner and time of the course

4.4.1. M.Sc. student

Must complete the mandatory safety course during the orientation week at the beginning of his first year of studies.

4.4.2. Ph.D. student

Must complete the mandatory safety training when summoned to do so by the unit. The Unit conducts three training sessions per month, and it is incumbent upon the student to attend the one to which he was summoned.

4.4.3. Postdoctoral fellow

Must complete the mandatory safety training when summoned to do so by the Unit. The Unit conducts three training sessions per month, and it is incumbent upon the student to attend the one to which he was summoned.


4.4.4. Visiting student

Must complete the mandatory safety training when summoned to do so by the Unit. The Unit conducts three training sessions per month, and it is incumbent upon the student to attend the one to which he was summoned.

5. General summary/essence of safety rules

The following is a summary of the laboratory safety rules. This summary does **not** include all of the procedures, protocols, and guidelines that apply to all research faculty members, including students and postdoctoral fellows at the Institute:

- 5.1. It is mandatory to wear a lab coat.
- 5.2. It is mandatory to wear closed shoes.
- 5.3. It is mandatory to use gloves appropriate for the type of hazard (e.g., chemicals, contagious materials, heat or cold, etc.).
- 5.4. It is mandatory to wear safety goggles as needed.
- 5.5. It is mandatory to receive training on the hazards unique to the relevant laboratory.
- 5.6. Eating or drinking in the lab is strictly prohibited (dining is permitted only in rooms dedicated for that purpose).
- 5.7. It is strictly forbidden to smoke in the lab.
- 5.8. It is mandatory to report immediately any safety-related incident or accident to the PI and the Institute's emergency hotline: 08-9342999.

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6. Periodic checkups by an occupational physician

6.1. Authority and responsibility

According to the laws of the State of Israel, the Unit is responsible for determining who must undergo periodic medical checkups and tests (henceforth: "**the Checkups**") by an occupational physician. It is within the authority of the FGS to prohibit a student who had not undergone the required Checkups or neglected to appear for the Checkups to which he had been summoned.

6.2. The involvement of the Feinberg Graduate School

The FGS is neither authorized nor entitled to intervene in safety matters. Nonetheless, a student's refusal to comply with the Unit's directives (including in the case of medical Checkups) may constitute grounds for the authorized safety entities at the Institute to prohibit him from entering a research laboratory. This prohibition may result in the termination of the student's studies altogether. It should be emphasized that the FGS will ultimately support the decisions of the Safety Committee or the Unit.