



Date: June 7, 2012
To: IC Scientific Directors and Principal Investigators
From: Deputy Director for Intramural Research, NIH
Subject: Summer Students and Laboratory Safety

As we bring hundreds of students to work in NIH laboratories this summer, I want to remind you of your safety responsibilities. One of the most important roles we fill when introducing summer students to NIH laboratories is to demonstrate that safety is an integral part of planning and conducting science. It is this thoughtful planning that allows the NIH to conduct safe science. This summer, please ensure that students have received the required safety training and are fully aware of any laboratory hazards that may be encountered and how to avoid them. Remember that NIH restricts **minors** (persons under the age of 18) from working with some hazards such as human blood, body fluids and pathogens; awake nonhuman primates; or with toxins. Also, minors may not enter certain hazardous areas including:

- Laboratories posted at Biosafety Level 3 or Biosafety Level 4;
- Laboratories posted at Biosafety Level 2 with Biosafety Level 3 Practices;
- Laboratories in which known carcinogens, reproductive toxins or other acutely toxic chemicals are being handled;
- Areas of high radiation or airborne radioactivity (as defined in 10 CFR 20.1003);
- Nonhuman primate holding rooms; and,
- Areas where procedures with awake nonhuman primates are conducted.

For further guidance, see details in [Admittance of Minors into Hazardous Areas](#). Safety training for summer students is important and required. All first time summer students working in labs must take the 'Safe Techniques Advance Research Science' (STARS) hands-on safety training course. Returning summer students are required to take the on-line "Lab Safety Refresher Training". Register at [Safety Training](#). Students planning to work with radioactive materials must also take the "Radiation Safety in the Laboratory" course and be approved by the Division of Radiation Safety. Review the Requirements for Minors Intending to Use Radioactive Materials at [Radiation Safety](#).

Students working with animals, human blood/body fluids or other pathogens, patients, or toxic materials, and those working in Building 10 must receive a medical clearance. Make appointments by calling the Occupational Medical Service at 301-496-4411. If a student needs to be added to an Animal Study Proposal, contact your IC Animal Care and Use Coordinator.

Please ensure that the students in your area wear proper clothing and use appropriate personal protective equipment. At a minimum, in laboratories, closed-toe shoes that cover the top of the foot must be worn; legs must be covered by clothing; and lab coats must be worn when performing laboratory operations. Gloves and eye/face protection appropriate for the work being conducted must be used. I remind everyone that it is our job to set a good example; all research personnel must also follow these simple rules.

Lastly, please closely supervise the students working in your area. They should not work alone and may not work with hazardous materials unless they are directly supervised.

Thank you for helping to make our summer students' NIH experience rewarding and safe.

Michael M. Gottesman, M.D.