Start Here! Introductory Health & Safety Resources (2020)

Individuals should consider their own health and safety and that of those around them to be equally as important as the health and safety of the collections in their care. The Health & Safety Network provides educational and technical information to increase knowledge of safety hazards and general health issues related to the conservation profession. This list of resources gives a general overview on health and safety issues specific to conservators.

**GENERAL RESOURCES**

- **HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR MUSEUM PROFESSIONALS.** 2011. C. A. Hawks, et al. (Eds.).
- **THE ARTIST’S COMPLETE HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDE.** M. Rossol.
- **ARTS, CRAFTS & THEATER SAFETY (ACTS) www.artscraftstheatersafety.org**

**HEALTH & SAFETY NETWORK WIKI**

www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Health_&_Safety

Quickly access resources by the Network and consulting safety and healthcare professionals on conservation-specific topics such as reproductive health, chemical hazards and safe work practices

- **AIC News Articles**
- **Links to Technical Resources**
- **Handouts, Brochures and Charts**
- **Printable GHS Secondary Labels**
- **In-depth Guides**
- **Respirator Fit Testing**

**CHEMICAL HAZARDS**

Proper handling, storage and disposal of chemicals protects everyone entering a laboratory or studio space.

- **PRUDENT PRACTICES IN THE LABORATORY: Handling and Management of Chemical Hazards.** 2011. National Research Council. dels.nas.edu
- **NIOSH POCKET GUIDE TO CHEMICAL HAZARDS.** www.cdc.gov/niosh/npg
- **HAZARD COMMUNICATION STANDARD: Labels and Pictograms.** OSHA Brief 3636. www.osha.gov

**COLLECTION HAZARDS**

Inherent and acquired hazards can be found throughout cultural institutions and their collections, posing significant risk to caretakers and the public. Conservators should know how to identify and mitigate these risks.

- **HAZARDS IN COLLECTIONS etool.** hazardsincollections.org.uk
- **COLLECTION-BASED HAZARDS (Chapter 24).** 2010. Smithsonian Institution Safety Manual

**PERSONAL PROTECTION & WORK PRACTICES**

Work hazards should be minimized through work practices, engineering controls and personal protection. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) refers to gear, garments or equipment used to protect from injury or exposure. PPE only protects the worker wearing it, not bystanders, so it is best to remove the hazard through safer methods or materials whenever possible.

- **TAKING TIME TO VENT: Understanding Extraction and Exhaust.** 2016. AIC News 41(5), 1, 3-10.
- **QUICK SELECTION GUIDE TO CHEMICAL PROTECTIVE CLOTHING.** 2014. K. Forsberg et al.
- **PPE CHEMICAL SELECTION GUIDE** (Health & Safety Network Chart for Selecting Appropriate PPE for Chemical Use)
- **A CONSERVATOR’S GUIDE TO RESPIRATORY PROTECTION** (Health & Safety Network Guide)
- **STAND UP AND STRETCH!** (Health & Safety Network PowerPoint of Ergonomic Exercises for Conservators)

Visit for an online version with live links: http://bit.ly/2IXxsP

Have a question or concern about health and safety in your conservation work? Health-Safety@culturalheritage.org
As conservators begin school and start new internships and jobs, the Health & Safety Network would like to remind you about the importance of laboratory and workplace safety training. Safety training is not just good sense—it is required for all employers.

**Who should have safety training?**

Anyone who works in the conservation lab or studio should receive workspace-specific safety training in addition to safety training provided by the overall institution, unless they are under direct and constant supervision of someone with safety training every moment they are working. This includes new as well as current full- and part-time conservation employees, contractors, volunteers, interns and anyone else who may have contact with hazardous materials or situations within the space such as custodians and art handlers.

**How often should safety training be conducted?**

Individuals should review their safety training annually or whenever new safety policies are implemented. Anyone newly entering the lab or studio should receive training as soon as possible.

**What should be included in safety training?**

- Review and location of the [Chemical Hygiene Plan (CHP)](http://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Health_&_Safety)
- Review of [Chemical Safety](http://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Health_&_Safety), including chemical handling, labeling and storage
- Review of hazardous materials handling and waste disposal
- Locations and use of first aid kits, eye washes and showers
- Review and location of the [Disaster & Emergency Plans](http://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Health_&_Safety)
- Review of [Evacuation Routes](http://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Health_&_Safety)
- Review of use of fume extraction and ventilation (including respirators, if used)
- Contact information for persons responsible for safety protocols and emergency response (for the lab, institution and city)
- Review of any lab and institution specific safety plans (such as handling pesticide residues or ladder/scaffolding use)
- Review of [radiation use and safety](http://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Health_&_Safety) (if used)

**Employer/Supervisor Responsibilities**

- Create a work environment where workers feel comfortable and confident in performing tasks safely and reporting safety concerns
- Provide safety training for all workers in the lab or studio
- Implement, review and maintain all safety documents (CHP, SDS, Disaster Plan)
- Enforce safety protocols
- Maintain relationships with and request information from appropriate safety professionals
- Ensure workspace and equipment meets all city, state and OSHA safety guidelines
- Provide annual fit testing for respirators if they are used

**Worker Responsibilities**

- Be proactive in your own health and safety
- Participate in employer provided safety training
- Follow safety protocols
- Promptly inform supervisor of all safety concerns
- Request safety training if it is not provided to you