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EOHS GUIDELINE: 13-003

SUBJECT: Food and Drink in Laboratories

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2013

**GUIDELINE STATEMENT:** All employees, faculty, students and other lab occupants or visitors are required to adhere to the guidelines established below with respect to the prohibition of food and drink in labs.

**PURPOSE OF GUIDELINE:** To maintain a safe academic and research environment; to ensure research integrity; and to comply with applicable health and safety regulations.

**APPLICABILITY OF THE GUIDELINE:** This guideline applies to all University of Akron faculty, staff, students, visiting minors and their sponsors as well as all guests and visitors.

**GUIDELINES/PROTOCOL:** Eating, drinking, chewing gum, applying cosmetics, taking medications, or similar activities in laboratories may result in the accidental ingestion of hazardous materials (chemical, radiological, biological). Therefore, these activities are strictly prohibited from all University Science laboratory spaces. Such activities are permitted in an area (*defined as a room with floor to ceiling walls and a closed door*) separated from the laboratory space. If a separate area can only be accessed by going through the laboratory, then only covered food or beverage items may be transported through the laboratory. These requirements help to prevent the ingestion of hazardous materials, which can occur by touching one's mouth with contaminated hands, eating with contaminated utensils, eating from a container that is contaminated, or eating food that has accidentally come into contact with hazardous materials.

In order to reduce the likelihood of ingestion of hazardous materials, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have incorporated "*No Food or Drink*" language into various regulations and safety manuals.

Besides prohibiting eating, drinking, chewing gum, applying cosmetics, taking medications, and other similar activities, there are additional actions or best practices that must be taken to help prevent exposure or ingestion of hazardous material(s):

- Wash your hands before handling anything (cigarettes, chewing gum, and food), which goes into your mouth. Wash your hands when you leave the laboratory.
- Use the water fountains for a drink--not a laboratory faucet.
- Remove gloves and wash your hands before using the water fountain or bathroom.
- Never use chemicals (salt, sugar, *etc.*) from the laboratory or stockroom on food.
- Never use laboratory glassware, as a food or drink container.

- Never store food or drink in a laboratory refrigerator or ice machine.
- Never consume ice from a laboratory ice machine.

REGULATORY REFERENCE(s):

OSHA Laboratory Standard ([29 C.F.R. 1910.1450, Appendix A](#))

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**CONTACTS:**

Questions related to this Protocol:

- Director of Environmental Occupational Health and Safety (EOHS):330-972-2810 or [tillerd@uakron.edu](mailto:tillerd@uakron.edu)

**DEFINITIONS:**

- Laboratory: means any building or part of a building used or intended to be used for scientific or technical work and that may be hazardous, including research, quality control, testing, teaching or analysis.

Attachments: None

Reviewed and Approved by: Vice President of Facilities and Capital Planning  
Vice President of Campus Safety  
Office of the Provost  
Vice President for Research  
Office of General Counsel  
Environmental Occupational Health and Safety