

# Safety Statement

## Virginia Tech Chemistry Department

This safety statement was prepared by the Chemistry Department Safety Committee and approved by the Department Chairperson on October 24, 2006.

1. Laboratory safety, chemical hygiene, and environmental responsibility are central objectives of the Chemistry Department. It is in the nature of chemistry research that working in the laboratory engenders specific hazards to the individual and to the environment. The Chemistry Department will be vigorous in its goal of eliminating all accidents while recognizing that prevention and response measures are equally important factors in ensuring the safest possible workplace.
2. Because safety is a universal departmental objective, all personnel should make it "their business" to recognize hazards and to notify their coworkers and superiors of unsafe conditions or practices, wherever they may occur.
3. All personnel in the Department must receive certification from the Health and Safety Office of the University before they may work in laboratories. In practice, this means that new personnel should enroll in the first available safety training course upon their arrival. Personnel who have not yet received certification must work under the direct and constant supervision of duly certified personnel.
4. Graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and all senior personnel have, at minimum, baccalaureate degrees in chemistry or allied fields. We expect that these individuals should already have operational levels of knowledge about laboratory safety, waste handling, and chemical hygiene.
5. Unsafe laboratory practices, whether intentional or not, are unacceptable. Especially, unsafe practices that are flagrant, repeated, or resulting from carelessness or a cavalier attitude toward safety will not be tolerated.
6. There are consequences for acting in a manner that does not comply with documented training or departmental policies. These consequences are established at the discretion of the Safety Committee, acting on behalf of the Department Chair and in consultation with the individual's supervisor. Specific sanctions may range from verbal warnings to dismissal from the Department.