

SAFETY MATTERS

Creating a Culture of Safety

January 2025



Belated Happy New Year to all. For those with celebrations from November through January, we hope the holiday season was filled with friends and family, and relaxation.

Getting Safe, Staying Safe

Each Team Needs to Have Safety Expertise

A recent set of articles caught our eyes, and we want to share them with you all. (Link at end). Writers Tasmiha Khan and Kiley Mulholland voice excellent points on safety and work culture around safety.



A Routine vs An Ingrained Habit

Your routine for performing an assay or other lab action starts with PPE, but a lab habit is not based on you performing a specific assay or action; Habits are what you've trained yourself to do without thinking, what you will do when encountering an accident of any kind (fire, instrument sample spill, staff slip and fall, etc.). The 21/90 rule is a method for building habits. It suggests that if you do something for 21 days in a row, it will become a habit, and if you continue for 90 days, it will become a permanent part of your lab life.

Fostering Safety, With Confidence and Independence

There is always a large focus in training to show staff what you expect and what your facility requires, but are you confident on staff being able to put that into action? How can you get the training to translate to high-quality outcomes (harm prevention, safety recovery, instrument recovery, etc.)? Safety training is done to lessen incidents and lowers downtimes. If all staff are at the same confidence and knowledge level from training, then each member of staff can reliably depend on other staff members. Building team confidence and reliability with robust training so they know who to go to for help addressing issues.



A learning Needs Assessment for Better Outcomes

- **All labs collect data on internal performance, usually on more than one operational aspect.**
Focuses training based on workplace and staff, not to just meet the safety regulations. Conduct a needs assessment by reviewing SOPs, Chemical inventory, safety reports.
- **Asking what is needed.**
Ensure staff feel safe to ask a question, express an opinion, and report a failure without consequences.
Ask staff how comfortable they are in an event; do they know what to do and do they have the equipment necessary for the desired outcome?
Ask how staff learn best. PowerPoint, quizzes, demonstration, hands on, peer teaching, other?

- **Reviewing feedback on needs**

Allow learning from mistakes by:

Communicating, not just receiving information. Use active listening and provide a response (feedback on the feedback) when possible.

Respecting comments and who has made them, allow others to speak.

Vulnerability; be authentic and share your experiences.

Positivity; acknowledge negatives but don't rant, focus on positives and actionable changes or improvements.

- **Reviewing current performance and outcomes**

Do your CAPAs or safety reports point to a missing training step, missing content?

Are there leading indicators (precursor indicators) that can be identified?

Sometimes quantifiable data isn't there, qualitative data is fine and will still help.

- **Design training based on these assessments.**

These can be classroom, person to person, or safety reenactments.

[Read the full articles here:](#)

November 2024 | Magazine Issue | Lab Manager. (n.d.). Lab Manager Magazine.

<https://www.labmanager.com/magazine/issue/the-blueprint-for-lab-safety-success-19-9>

<https://www.labmanager.com/magazine/issue/the-blueprint-for-lab-safety-success-19-9>

Fostering Safety Expertise on Your Team (p 30)

Integrating Psychological Safety into Laboratory Operations (p 34)

Using Safety Metrics Intelligently (p 39)

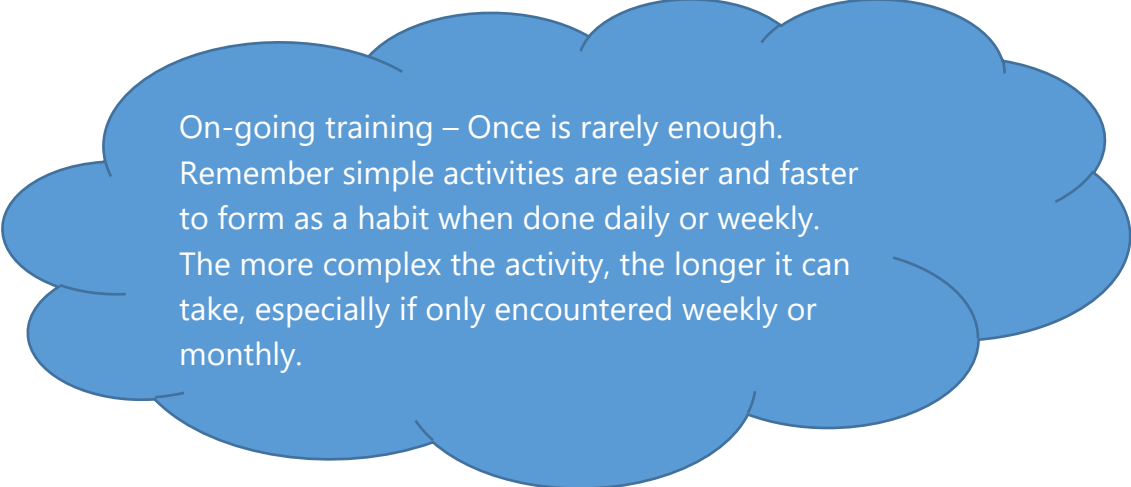
Common Audit Finding

Safety Training

"Annual safety training was not conducted for the period under review."

Section 9. Personnel Safety, Standards for Personnel Safety.

"Safety training, at a minimum addressing the above topics, must be completed before any employee begins working in the laboratory and on a regular basis thereafter (to be determined by laboratory management)."



On-going training – Once is rarely enough. Remember simple activities are easier and faster to form as a habit when done daily or weekly. The more complex the activity, the longer it can take, especially if only encountered weekly or monthly.



Practicing What We Preach

Here at the HPTN LC, trainings are also set annually per policy and administration, and an online system is used to help track the next training dates. The Quarterly QA spot check of training records helps ensure all staff are up to date..

If you have a situation in your workplace that that prevents you from meeting the GCLP Guidelines, feel free to reach out to the HPTN LC staff for guidance at hptnlc-lab@jhmi.edu

Reader Poll Results

Thanks to everyone for responding to the October – December 2024 question. Here are our results:

- All responders worked in labs with 20 or fewer staff members
- 1/3rd of responders stated their facility closes completely for holidays, half stated they operate with reduced staffing, the remaining 1/6th said they maintain full operation during holidays.
- For those labs that reported closing during the holidays, they were split equally between reviewing all safety needs before holiday closures, and, having a staff member go in to check on things.

This Quarter's Reader Poll

This quarter our poll is about Safety Training.

[Jan 2025 Poll Link](#)

Reader Request

Next issue we will be moving onto risk management topics which align with patients, personnel, environment, and risk assessment tools. Send any questions and comments to help direct our conversation.

Volunteers Wanted



We are still seeking volunteers for safety-focused lab interviews.

The LC would like to speak with lab staff and have a short 10 minute/ 5 question interview to learn more about our audience. Interviews or selected quotes may be published in this newsletter.

Please email hptnlc-lab@jhmi.edu with the subject line "Safety Interview" if interested.

Thanks to those who continue to send back messages about our content! We are always happy to incorporate your suggestions and topics into future safety bulletins.

Need more on a specific topic?

Ideas for upcoming subject matter?

Let us know your thoughts and give feedback at:

hptnlc-lab@jhmi.edu