Health & Safety Network

Start Here! Introductory Health & Safety Resources (2026)

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 IN COLLECTIONS CARE. FAIC Online Course. 2021.
HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR MUSEUM PROFESSIONALS. 2011. C. A. Hawks, et al. (Eds.).
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION SAFETY MANUAL. 2010. SI Office of Safety, Health and Environmental Management.
ARTIST BEWARE: The Hazards in Working with all Art and Craft Materials and the Precautions Every Artist and Craftsperson Should Take. 2005. M. McCann.
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 chemical hazards, safe work practices, and Total Worker Health (e.g. pregnancy, mental health, accessibility and more)

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

HAZARDOUS WASTE: Where on earth should it go? 2013. *AIC News* 38(2), 12-15.

COLLECTION HAZARDS

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

HAZARDS IN COLLECTIONS etool. hazardsincollections.org.uk

ARSENIC AND OLD LACE: Controlling Hazardous Collection Materials. C2CC Webinar, May 2016. www.connectingtocollections.org

CONTAMINATED COLLECTIONS: Preservation, Access, and Use. Proceedings of a symposium held at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC), 2001.

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. 2020. 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)

OCCUPATIONAL ERGONOMICS: Theory and Applications (2nd Edition). 2012. A. Bhattacharya and J. McGlothlin.

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

Have a question or concern about health and safety in your conservation work? Join the **Health & Safety Network Forum** or email: **Health-Safety@culturalheritage.org**

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Laboratory Safety Training Factsheet (2026)

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)**
- Review of **Chemical Safety**, including chemical handling, labeling and storage
- Locations and types of **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
- 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**
- Review of **Evacuation Routes**
- Review and locations of **Safety Data Sheets (SDSs)** and **Hazard Communication Protocols**
- 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)
- Instruction on creating and using a **Job Hazard Analysis (JHA)**
- Review of **radiation use and 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

For more information visit: http://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Health_&_Safety