



Date: June 6, 2018
To: IC Scientific Directors and Principal Investigators
From: Deputy Director for Intramural Research, NIH
Subject: Summer Students and Laboratory Safety

Again this summer, we bring hundreds of students to work in NIH laboratories for training in biomedical research. I want to remind you of your safety responsibilities. One of the most important roles we fill when introducing summer students to NIH laboratories is to demonstrate that safety is an integral part of planning and conducting science. The following are important safety requirements you must follow when hosting a student this summer:

- A. Supervisors must assure that students are provided with and consistently and appropriately use personal protective equipment. The use of gloves appropriate for the research being conducted and protective eyewear is a requirement, as is wearing long pants, closed-toe shoes, and a laboratory coat while working in the laboratory and/or near hazardous substances. Open-toed shoes, sandals, shorts, and other apparel that leave skin exposed are not appropriate in the laboratory and may not be worn at any time. Additionally, laboratory coats must not be worn outside the laboratory.
- B. You must supervise students directly and at all times when they are working with any potentially hazardous materials.
- C. All students/trainees must be appointed under an appropriate hiring authority, NIH training authority, or special volunteer authority, and have in place the necessary appointment documents that address protections under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act and the Federal Tort Claims Act. Personal and professional service contracts are not appropriate mechanisms.
- D. All students must receive safety training relevant to the laboratory procedures they will be performing. This is the responsibility of the PI. The NIH Division of Occupational Health and Safety (301-496-2960) offers general laboratory safety training (<https://www.safetytraining.nih.gov>) which is mandatory for all students.
- E. Supervisors must provide and document specific safety training related to the work the student will do.

Remember that NIH restricts minors (persons under the age of 18 years) from working with some hazards such as human blood, body fluids and pathogens; awake nonhuman primates; or with toxins. For further guidance, see details in Manual Chapter 3015 [Admittance of Minors to Hazardous Areas](#).

We are all responsible for giving these young people a safe and rewarding scientific experience at the NIH. The first step is to set a good example with regard to safety. PIs are directly responsible for following these rules and assuring that students are appropriately hired, trained, supervised, and dressed for the laboratory.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael M. Gottesman, M.D.".

Michael M. Gottesman, M.D.
Deputy Director for Intramural Research