



Date: 6.6.19

To: IC Scientific Directors and Principal Investigators

From: Deputy Director for Intramural Research, NIH

Subject: Summer Students and Laboratory Safety

Each summer we bring hundreds of students to work in NIH laboratories for training in biomedical research. I want to remind you that your role as mentor for these young and aspiring scientists includes important safety responsibilities. Demonstrating that safety is an integral part of planning and conducting research will give students a strong foundation for building a successful and safe career in the sciences. The following are important safety requirements you must follow when hosting a student in the laboratory environment:

- A. Supervisors must provide students with personal protective equipment and ensure it is consistently and appropriately used. The use of gloves appropriate for the research being conducted and protective eyewear is a requirement, as are wearing long pants, closed-toe shoes, and a lab 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 a properly executed special volunteer agreement that provides the student with 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) 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 into Hazardous Areas](#).

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael M. Gottesman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

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