

Portable Electronic Device (PED) Safety Plan

The Research Safety Branch (RSB)
The Division of Safety (DS)

September 2026

What is a Portable Electronic Device (PED)?

- Smart phones and other cell phones (work-issued or personal)
- Tablets (iPads, Surface Pro, Chromebooks, etc.)
- Wearable devices (smart watches, fitness trackers, smart glasses, etc.)
- Headphones, earphones, earbuds, etc.
- Also, includes hardware used for electronic lab notebooks (ELNs)

Objectives of the PED Plan

- No NIH policy or guidelines existed regarding PED usage in work environments and spaces on NIH campuses
- Goal: Provide guidance on the safe use of PEDs in the different research environments at the NIH
- Include research environments where guidance is needed, considering procedures performed and materials used
 - Animal facilities, Clinical, Biological, Chemical, etc.

What are the concerns of portable electronic device usage in research environments?

Contamination

- Depending on the research environment, PPE may be required
- Handling PEDs while wearing PPE may transfer lab contaminants (biological, chemical, and/or radiological agents) to the PEDs, and for those items that leave the lab may transfer said contaminant(s) to an outside or common area.
- Contamination may also be introduced into a lab environment by handling of PEDs while wearing PPE or placing the PEDs on a lab bench or other surface.

What are the concerns of portable electronic device usage in research environments?

Distraction

- When focused on or interacting with a PED, an individual may not be fully aware of their surroundings which can lead to physical harm of self or others
- Examples:
 - Not hearing an alarm or coworkers in the area
 - Running into objects or people, trip/falls
 - Injuries/incidents from being unaware of objects around them (spills, cuts, etc.)
 - Mishandling of equipment, etc.

Research Environments

The following research environments represent the main research environments at the NIH identified for the guidelines.

1. Clinical – Any facility where research with human participants is conducted.
2. Animal – Any facility where research with animal subjects and/or materials is conducted.
3. Biological - Any facility where research with biological material is conducted.
4. Chemical - Any facility where research with chemicals is conducted.
5. Radiological – Any facility where research with radioactive material is conducted.
6. Aseptic Processing and Testing Facilities - Any facility where biological and drug products are present, in a sterile environment.

Establishing a PED Safety Plan

The PED Guidelines and Safety Plan form are now available on myCority for labs and facilities to establish policies for their spaces.

Together these items will help each PI/laboratory/facility assess the risks of their research environment(s) and workplaces, considering procedures conducted and materials used, and establish a safety plan.

Ultimately, all staff are responsible for the safe use of PEDs in their workspaces at the NIH.



First, review the Safety Guidelines for Portable Electronic Devices: [Safety Guidelines for Portable Electronic Devices \(PED\)](#)

Next, access and fill out the Safety Plan: [Home | myCority](#).

Once complete, click 'save' then 'submit'. The form will then be accessible under the 'Questionnaire' → 'Completed' tab.

*Refer to the screenshots on the next two slides.

The safety plan should be printed out and/or saved to the labs' shared drive. All staff that work in the applicable spaces should review the safety plan and guidelines. If changes need to be made, a new form will need to be submitted.



Access the Safety Plan form

NIH National Institutes of Health

Home

My Dashboards

My Tasks

My Records

Event Reports

Create New

New Questionnaire

New Event Reports & Requests

New SEG Unenrollment Authorization

Select a Questionnaire

Portable Electronic Device Safety Plan



Access the Completed Safety Plan

Filter by



Questionnaire



Inspection or Survey



Survey



Action



Task/Investigation



My Dashboards



Event Reports



My Records

Incomplete

Complete



Questionnaire

Due: NOW

Complete Portable Electronic Device Safety Plan

Assigned To: Me

Completed On 09/09/2026



Questionnaire

Due: NOW

Complete AEP Notice

Assigned To: Me

Completed On 05/15/2026

Need Assistance?

For questions regarding the Guidelines and Safety Plan, please reach out to your [Safety and Health Specialists](#).

For operating issues in the myCority system, please reach out to the [Cority Administrators](#).