

School science programs are integral in the development of young minds and important in the mastering of skills and disciplines which will serve students throughout their lives. The training and reference materials required to ensure a safer laboratory experience are scattered through countless and sometimes obscure sources. These circumstances make it extremely difficult and complicated to achieve a consistent and diligent level of safety in the school laboratory with set protocols and responses. All science programs have inherent dangers. In an environment where students are in contact with chemicals, electricity, water, unfamiliar pieces of equipment, open flames and a variety of biological materials, the potential for an accident needs to be apparent to everyone. These potential hazards can be readily addressed with the proper attention, safety training, instruction and prudent practice, and progressive discipline. It comes down to AAA—Awareness, Assessment, and Action!

Safety and health should be an integral part of the planning, preparation and implementation of any science program. The simple fact is that school laboratories can and must be made safer environments for our students and teachers. This should be accomplished, not simply for the practical and economical reasons of avoiding litigation, but for the moral and ethical obligations to the students we instruct and the staff who instruct them. It is prudent practice. By developing safety programs and procedures, we serve all these purposes. In doing so we ensure that scientific inquiry remains a valuable and fulfilling aspect of the educational experience.

This manual was created with those goals in mind. It was developed with the benefit of a dedication built on experience and observation within the science education community. It is written with an understanding and familiarity of the legal safety requirements and better professional safety practices vital to the proper administration of any school science program.

The purpose of this manual is to provide the guidelines, procedures, and references to raise the standard of science safety. It will help make school laboratories / classrooms the secure and safer environments we are obligated to make them, both for the sake of our students and staff and for the scientific experience itself.

Science IS – INQUIRY...Safely®



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