

UAB SAFETY SHORT

Chemical Security At UAB

Colleges and universities regularly purchase and store chemicals to conduct important research in chemistry, medicine and various other fields. Unfortunately, many of these chemicals have the potential to be intentionally diverted, released, or otherwise misused. Some of the dual-use technologies and equipment that are needed for research could also be put to nefarious uses. The term “dual-use” is applied to a substance/equipment that can be used for both beneficial and harmful purposes.

The Department of Homeland Security has created a list of “Chemicals of Interest” (<https://www.dhs.gov/publication/cfats-coi-list>) that mandate monitoring and reporting by the users. (<https://www.dhs.gov/publication/cfats-coi-list>) that mandate monitoring and reporting by the users.

It is very important to secure and carefully track all the chemicals and equipment on campus and monitor who has access to them at all times. There are steps that can be taken by laboratories to reduce the risk of theft/diversion/misuse of chemicals/small equipment, or their use in nefarious activities.

- Personnel who order chemicals must be verified as trustworthy people. The number of people authorized to purchase chemicals should be limited. Unauthorized purchases and/or deliveries must be reported immediately.
- Review and maintain an accurate chemical inventory
 - Identify the toxic and dual use chemicals.
 - Keep the only ones that are absolutely necessary and dispose off the rest thru EHS
 - Reduce amounts as low as possible if disposal is not an option
- Ensure that chemicals are stored in a secured area
- Limit the number of laboratory personnel who have access to dual-use agents and toxic chemicals. Restrict access to those who don't have a legitimate need.
- Be familiar with and encourage supervisors to be familiar with the chemicals and volumes being used by students/technicians/researchers. Be aware of all on-going syntheses having the potential to prepare toxic or controlled substances.
- Periodically and carefully review laboratory access controls
- Maintain a log of who has accessed secure areas
- Remain alert and aware of the possibility of removal of chemicals for illicit purposes and report such activity to authorities – UAB Police 4-3535; EHS 4-2487
- Develop a formal policy prohibiting the use of laboratory facilities or materials without the consent of the principal investigator or laboratory supervisor.
- Properly train all laboratory personnel who have access to these substances on:
 - Safety risks, what to do in an emergency or security breach, and how to recognize threats.
 - Situational awareness (e.g., knowing who is in the laboratory, identifying suspicious activity);
 - Reporting of suspicious behavior, theft, or vandalism