MAKE THE WORKPLACE SAFER
Clinical Laboratory Staff

Three Steps to a Safer Workplace

Active observation and follow-up will go a long way toward making your workplace safer. Follow these three steps:

1. **Identify hazards or "what can hurt you at work."** Walk through areas to look for things that can hurt employees, and monitor whether known hazards have been fixed. If you answer "no" to any of the questions below, follow-up is needed.
2. **Propose solutions.** Assess what changes you can make on your own, and what you need to partner on.
3. **Take action to make sure the problem is resolved.** Use the *Make the Workplace Safer* Tracking Chart at the end of this document.

Step 1: Identify Hazards

NAME	LOCATION	DATE

	Hazard	Yes	No	Comments/Solution Needed
INFECTIOUS DISEASES				
1	Are patient specimens always delivered to the lab in secure containers to prevent leaks?	☐	☐	
2	Do workers use biological safety cabinets whenever working with infectious materials that have a chance of becoming airborne (fungus, influenza, Ebola, etc)?	☐	☐	
3	Do labs that work with airborne hazards have necessary precautions such as controlled access, anterooms, sealed windows, directional airflow, etc.?	☐	☐	
4	Do workers wear latex-safe gloves when they anticipate hand contact with blood, mucous membranes, Other Potentially Infectious Materials (OPIM), non-intact skin, or when handling contaminated items or surfaces?	☐	☐	
5	If splatter is possible, do workers wear protective gear, such as masks, goggles and face shield, moisture barrier gowns or impermeable gown?	☐	☐	

LABOR MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP
Kaiser Permanente and the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions

	Hazard	Yes	No	Comments/Solution Needed
INFECTIOUS DISEASES				
6	Are these kept free of food or drinks: refrigerators, freezers, shelves, cabinets, countertops, and bench tops where blood or OPIM may be present?	☐	☐	
7	Are workers careful not to eat, drink, smoke, apply cosmetics or lip balm, or handle contact lenses in work areas where there is a reasonable likelihood of exposure to blood or OPIM?	☐	☐	
8	Are handwashing facilities conveniently accessible to workers?	☐	☐	
9	Are all workers offered the Hepatitis B vaccination at no cost?	☐	☐	
10	Are annual TB tests given to workers at no cost?	☐	☐	
NEEDLESTICK/SHARPS				
11	Are sharp objects always disposed in specific sharps containers? Are sharps containers nearby (preferably within arm's reach) and replaced before they overfill?	☐	☐	
12	If someone is stuck by a used needle, do they have access to counseling, vaccination, and testing?	☐	☐	
CHEMICALS				
13	Do workers use an exhaust hood when working with toxic, flammable, or explosive material?	☐	☐	
14	Are employees provided with goggles and face shields that can be worn when doing work that could involve accidental splashes to the face or eye?	☐	☐	
15	Are Safety Data Sheets (SDS) available for each chemical?	☐	☐	
16	Do potentially hazardous chemicals have labels with the name of the chemical and hazard warnings?	☐	☐	
17	Are all flammable materials kept in approved safety containers?	☐	☐	
18	Are eye wash facilities and safety showers immediately available if acids or caustics are used in the lab and flushed weekly?	☐	☐	

LABOR MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP
Kaiser Permanente and the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions

	Hazard	Yes	No	Comments/Solution Needed
ERGONOMICS				
20	Are workers able to work without stooping to the floor, twisting, reaching overhead, or bending to the side?	☐	☐	
21	Are workers able to work at a comfortable speed without too many repetitive motions?	☐	☐	
22	Are work surfaces adjustable (not too high or too low)?	☐	☐	
23	Do employees stand on top of cushioned mats when standing for long periods?	☐	☐	
24	Are workers able to use pipettes in a way that does not twist the wrist or strain the hand (for example, avoid pipettes that use the thumb to push the trigger)? Do employees alternate hands or use both hands?	☐	☐	
25	Are workers able to do microscope work without holding their head or neck in uncomfortable positions?	☐	☐	
26	Do employees take breaks when switching between computer keyboarding and pipetting activities?	☐	☐	
SLIPS, TRIPS, FALLS				
27	Are pathways and aisles clear and unobstructed? Are they wide enough for movement of patients, equipment, etc.?	☐	☐	
28	Are spills cleaned up immediately?	☐	☐	
OTHER				
29	Are there any new hazards or other hazards that have not been addressed?	☐	☐	If so, please describe below:

WORKER KNOWLEDGE

Employees should receive health and safety training and orientation when they start employment, whenever a new hazard is identified, and periodically as a refresher on some topics. Examples of knowledge people should have are listed below. **Do workers in the department know:**

	Hazard	Yes	No	Comments/Solution Needed
1	The hazards common to your work, what protective measures are in place, and what safety practices to follow?	☐	☐	
2	The hazards of potentially infectious materials and the precautions to use?	☐	☐	
3	The hazards of chemicals you work with and how to work with them safely?	☐	☐	
4	How to obtain and use a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for chemicals you work with?	☐	☐	
5	What to do in case of a chemical exposure or spill?	☐	☐	
6	How to choose, wear, remove and dispose of protective clothing and equipment?	☐	☐	
7	How to adjust your work area and equipment, and how to move and position your body to avoid ergonomic injuries?	☐	☐	
8	How to recognize and respond to threats and potentially violent people or situations?	☐	☐	
9	What to do in case of an emergency at work?	☐	☐	
10	How to identify safety concerns and whom to report them to?	☐	☐	
11	Any other information or training needed?	☐	☐	If yes, please describe.

MAKE THE WORKPLACE SAFER
FOLLOW-UP & TRACKING CHART

Step 2: Propose Solutions

For any "no" answers, think about solutions or ways to address the problem.

- First, think about ways to remove the hazard. This makes your workplace safer and ensures all workers are protected.
- If that's not possible, think about any policies, procedures or personal protective equipment that is necessary.
- Think about what changes you can make on your own and what changes you need to partner with others (such as other workers, supervisors, facility management) to do.

Write your suggestions for solutions on the "Step 1: Identify Hazards" checklist and on the tracking chart on the next page.

Step 3: Take Action

Report any safety hazards you identify. Use the following chart to track and make sure the problems are resolved.

1. Give a copy of your hazard checklist findings to your supervisor or department manager, your UBT labor co-lead, and your Safety Team representative.
2. Decide who else should receive a copy of your findings, such as members of the UBT or Safety Committee or your shop steward. Make a note of who you gave it to and the date.
3. Follow up after a few weeks. If the problem was not addressed or resolved, think about your next steps.
   + Who should be informed?
   + Who can help you advocate for the needed solution?

LABOR MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP
Kaiser Permanente and the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions

MAKE THE WORKPLACE SAFER **FOLLOW-UP AND TRACKING CHART**

NAME		LOCATION		DATE	

Safety/Health Problem	What solution is needed?	Date reported and to whom	1 month follow up	Next Steps
			☐ Corrected ☐ Is being addressed ☐ Not being addressed ☐ Don't know/Other:	
			☐ Corrected ☐ Is being addressed ☐ Not being addressed ☐ Don't know/Other:	
			☐ Corrected ☐ Is being addressed ☐ Not being addressed ☐ Don't know/Other:	
			☐ Corrected ☐ Is being addressed ☐ Not being addressed ☐ Don't know/Other:	
			☐ Corrected ☐ Is being addressed ☐ Not being addressed ☐ Don't know/Other:	
			☐ Corrected ☐ Is being addressed ☐ Not being addressed ☐ Don't know/Other:	

LABOR MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP
Kaiser Permanente and the Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions