



ASSIST

AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL SCIENCE
INFORMATION SUPPORT FOR
TEACHERS AND TECHNICIANS

Published on ASSIST (<https://assist.asta.edu.au>)

[Home](#) > [Lab safety/guidelines](#)

Lab safety/guidelines

Posted by Anonymous on Mon, 2016-10-24 12:22

Lab safety/guidelines: Is there any legislation that states that you need to have a first aid kit available in each Science Lab, that chemical store rooms need to be ventilated and that food (even if it is for experiments) should not be stored in chemical store rooms? are there differences based on state? In this situation I am interested in federal and NT legislation.

Voting:



No votes yet

Year Level:

7
8
9
10

Senior Secondary

Laboratory Technicians:

Laboratory Technicians

Showing 1-1 of 1 Responses

Lab safety/guidelines

Submitted by sat on 01 November 2016

First aid kits for science:

Legislation states that workplaces have a duty to provide first aid, however it is not prescriptive as there are so many different factors to consider depending upon the type of workplace. There is no legislation that states you need to have a first aid kit available in each science laboratory.

Safe Work Australia has developed a model Code of Practice for First aid in the workplace. Section 3.1 considers the location of first aid kits and states:

In the event of a serious injury or illness, quick access to the kit is vital. First aid kits should be kept in a prominent, accessible location and able to be retrieved promptly. Access should also be ensured in security-controlled workplaces. First aid kits should be located close to areas where there is a higher risk of injury or illness. For example, a school with a science laboratory or carpentry workshop should have first aid kits located in these areas. If the workplace occupies several floors in a multi-storey building, at least one kit should be located on every second floor. Emergency floor plans displayed in the workplace should include the location of first aid kits.¹

A risk management approach in conjunction with school policy is required to tailor and meet the legal requirements to provide the first aid needs of your specific environment. This includes the number and type of first aid kits required as well as their contents. When assessing your workplace, consideration should be given to the nature of the work, the type of hazards that exist, the location and size of workplace and the number and type of persons involved. It is recommended that you consult your school sector to determine the policies and procedures for your jurisdiction.

Science ASSIST recommends that there be at least one first aid kit in each science area. Where a number of science laboratories are located adjacent to a preparation room, it may be deemed appropriate to have a first aid kit in the central preparation area to service the science area.

Here are links to some existing school guidance material on first aid requirements:

- 'First aid needs', Victoria Department Education and Training website, <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/firstaidneeds.aspx> (November 2014)
- 'Major first aid kits', Victoria Department Education and Training website, <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/Pages/firstaidkit.aspx> (September 2014)
- 'First aid', Queensland Government Policy and Procedure Register website, <https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/managing-first-aid-in-the-workplace-procedure> (Link Updated August 2022)
- UK Department for Education and Employment. n.d. *Guidance on first aid for schools*, GOV.UK website, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/fil... (Accessed October 2016)

Chemical store rooms should be ventilated such that the air quality does not expose a worker to airborne contaminants above the workplace exposure standards². The Australian

Standards for safety in laboratories addresses the ventilation requirements of chemical store rooms³.

Science ASSIST has previously answered a number of questions regarding this topic. In particular see

Ventilation in corrosive cupboard regarding ventilation of chemical storage cabinets

Laboratory ventilation regarding laboratory ventilation

Chemical Store: regarding chemical store ventilation

Chemical Storage regarding extractor fan requirements for ventilation of chemical store

Food and drink for human consumption should not be handled, prepared, stored or consumed in the laboratory. Furthermore "*refrigerators, freezers, ovens, microwave ovens used in the laboratory should be labelled to prohibit their use for food or drink for personal consumption*"⁴. Any food that has been used in an activity in the science laboratory should not be consumed. Science ASSIST has previously answered two questions regarding this topic see:

Eating in Labs?

PC1 laboratory rules and eating in classrooms

Foodstuffs brought into science for science activities: Science ASSIST recommends that non-hazardous common household goods that are used as reagents in science practicals or in preparation tasks be labelled as laboratory reagents, so that they are not inadvertently used for human consumption. We suggest including on the label the words "Laboratory Reagent" and/or the precautionary statement "Not to be taken".

It is also recommended that these common household items be transferred into suitable glass or plastic containers if to be stored, particularly if they are purchased in paper bags, boxes or in plastic bags that are prone to deteriorate over time. Combustible substances, such as paper bags or cardboard boxes should not be stored in the chemical store along with oxidising agents. If these household goods are repackaged and relabelled, they can be stored in chemical store rooms segregated from incompatible chemicals.

Science ASSIST has previously answered questions related to this see:

GHS labelling regarding labelling common household goods

School Chemical Register regarding dealing with consumer goods such as whiteboard markers

Variation between states and territories: Whilst there may be different legislation adopted in each state and territory the intent is similar to provide a safe workplace and most are based upon a risk management approach rather than a prescriptive set of regulations. Educational facilities have an additional duty of care to provide a safe learning environment for their students. It is important that you consult your state regulator for relevant legislation. (See

below for some suggested links)

Where the model WHS legislation has been adopted, generally the model Code of Practice for First aid in the workplace has also been adopted⁵. To see the current status of each jurisdiction's progress in implementing these laws see 'Jurisdictional progress on the model Work Health and Safety laws', Safework Australia website, <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/model-whs-laws/pages/jurisdictional-progress-whs-laws> (July 2016)

As at October 2016 Victoria has not implemented the model WHS and WA currently has a public consultation in process. In the meantime the following First Aid documents apply in these states:

Vic: Worksafe Victoria. 2008. *Compliance code. First aid in the workplace*, Worksafe Victoria website, <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/compliance-code-first-aid-work...> (Link updated August 2022).

WA: Commission for Occupational Safety and Health. 2002. *Codes of Practice – First aid facilities and services; Workplace amenities and facilities, Personal protective clothing and equipment*, WA Department of Commerce website, https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/atoms/files/code_first_aid_0.pdf

With regard to the NT documentation see:

NT: NT Worksafe. n.d. *First aid in the workplace – Code of Practice*, NT Worksafe website, http://www.worksafe.nt.gov.au/forms-resources/Documents/first_aid_cop.pdf (Accessed October 2016)

References:

¹ Safe Work Australia. 2016. *Model Code of Practice for First Aid in the workplace*. Safework Australia website, <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-codes-practice/model-code...> (Link updated August 2022).

² 'Workplace exposure standards for airborne contaminants (2019)', Safework Australia website, <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/workplace-exposure-standards-ai...> (Link updated August 2022).

³ Standards Australia Ltd/Standards New Zealand. 2004. *AS/NZS 2243.10:2004 Safety in Laboratories, Part 10 'Storage of chemicals'*, Standards Australia: Sydney. p.26

Standards Australia Ltd/Standards New Zealand. 2004. *AS1940:2004 Storage and Handling of Flammable and Combustible substances*, Standards Australia: Sydney. pp.45-50

⁴ This extract from Standards Australia Ltd/Standards New Zealand. 2005. *AS/NSZ 2243.1:2005, Safety in laboratories, Part 1: Planning and operational aspects* p21, is reproduced with permission from SAI Global Ltd under Licence 1407-c117

⁵ CCH Australia Ltd *Australian Laboratory Safety Manual*, 9-170 References for First Aid (23 April 2013)

Source URL: <https://assist.asta.edu.au/question/4113/lab-safetyguidelines>