Selection and Use of Laboratory Gloves:

Proper protective gloves should always be worn when working with chemical, biological, or radioactive hazards. The proper gloves will protect the skin from hazardous materials, infection or burns due to chemical exposure. Nitrile gloves provide the best comprehensive chemical protection while latex surgical gloves provide little to no protection from most chemicals.

Gloves, including those that have only come in contact with non-hazardous materials, should be removed PRIOR to handling water faucets, utility/door handles or other surfaces likely to be touched with bare hands, including elevator buttons. This will avoid contaminating these items with chemical, biological, or radioactive hazards. Gloves should also be removed PRIOR to leaving the laboratory and should NOT be worn in the hallways or elevators. Signs have recently been posted by all elevators in the SCS reminding users to not wear laboratory gloves in the elevators.
Working with Hydrofluoric Acid:

Hydrofluoric Acid (HF) poses unique dangers distinct from other acids (HCl, H2SO4, etc.) due to the fact that HF readily absorbs through the skin, which can damage underlying tissue, and ultimately lead to decalcification of the bones. Unlike other acids, exposure to dilute (<50%) HF does not usually become apparent until several hours after exposure. This delayed response time is due to the fact that exposure to HF does not produce a burning sensation on the skin and users are often times not aware that they have been exposed to HF. HF and HF vapor can also cause severe burns to the eyes, which can lead to permanent damage or blindness. HF can also irritate/damage the respiratory tract, mouth, throat, or gastrointestinal tract if inhaled or ingested. These routes of entry into the body can ultimately be fatal. It is important to remember that HF is extremely hazardous and potentially fatal at ANY concentration. Any suspected HF acid exposure should be considered a medical emergency.

For further information about HF storage, handling, use, and first aid treatment, consult the SCS Hydrofluoric Acid Use Policy. The policy can be found at: http://safety.scs.uiuc.edu/docs/HF_Policy.pdf

Updated SCS Safety Website:

Did you know the SCS has a brand new safety website? The website can be accessed at: http://safety.scs.uiuc.edu/

At the site you can find SCS safety staff contact information, external safety resources, as well as SCS safety resources. Various SCS safety policies, injury reporting forms, and the SCS Chemical Hygiene Plan can also be found at this site. A link to the UIUC Chemical Waste Management Guide is on the new site as well. The site is more user friendly than the previous site and has a fresh, new design. Questions, comments, or suggestions about the site can be sent to eduvall@uiuc.edu

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Is there a safety topic you would like covered in a future newsletter? Have any comments or suggestions? Send an email to eduvall@uiuc.edu