



## Laboratory Safety Committee

### Food and Drink Policy in Research Laboratories

#### Purpose

The use of food, drink, gum chewing, or similar activities within laboratories where hazardous materials, chemicals, or biological materials are in use, can result in their accidental ingestion. Prudent laboratory practice seeks to minimize this route of exposure. Each department that works with hazardous materials in teaching and/or research at Northern Illinois University must take steps to safeguard students, faculty, and staff from exposure to hazardous materials.

#### Policy

Consumption and storage of food and drink is prohibited in research areas where animals, hazardous materials, human tissues, or radiological materials are used, handled or stored.

This policy is intended to safeguard the health and safety of all students, faculty, staff, research personnel and University guests on NIU controlled property and to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations. The designation of safe or “Green” areas within the lab for food and drink storage and consumption is **no longer allowed** and does not comply with these requirements.

Consumption and storage of food and drink are permitted in a designated area (defined as a room with floor to ceiling walls and a closable door) separated from laboratory space. If a separate area can only be accessed by going through the laboratory, then only covered food or beverage items may be carried through the laboratory. Travel mugs or water bottles with lids are appropriate for liquid transport. It is not permissible to eat or drink while passing through the laboratory or research area. Rinsing of beverage or food containers in designated laboratory sinks is not allowed. Food or beverage containers may not be stored in the laboratory and washed drinking cups, food containers or eating utensils may not be dried in the laboratory.

Refrigerators used for storing food or beverages must be dedicated to food and beverages only and should be located outside of the laboratory and clearly labeled with the words “Food and beverages Only”. Refrigerators used for storage of hazardous materials should never be used for storage of food or beverages.

Laboratories are not suitable for applying cosmetics/ lip balm or adjusting contact lenses.

#### Annual Review

The Laboratory Safety Committee will review and revise this policy on an annual basis to reflect operational and procedural changes internal to the University as well as changes to applicable rule, and regulations and consensus standards.

Date	Reviewed by	Changes
2/21/2018	Lab Safety Committee	Annual review
3/8/2021	Lab Safety Manager	Annual review