

Purdue Chemistry Guidelines for working after-hours

Purdue University and its employees bear a collective responsibility to support safe working practices at all times. For this reason, the DSC has assembled some practical guidelines for principal investigators (PI's), lab directors, staff, and student researchers who have reason to work after-hours in the presence of chemical or physical hazards.

Definitions: "After-hours" can be categorized as early PM (6–9 pm), late PM/early AM (9 pm–6 am), and weekends and holidays. Workers fall into three categories: (a) Departmental staff; (b) Undergraduates and other tuition-paying students, short-term (exchange) students, interns, and rotators; (c) Graduate students (employed), postdocs (PD), visiting scholars (VS), and PIs.

Guidelines for each worker category:

(a) Departmental Staff: Service/skilled-trade staff are generally hourly employees and should not work outside of normal hours without express permission from their supervisor. Management/professional staff are generally salaried and work as needed to accomplish their duties, but should exercise good judgment and avoid working alone with known hazards.

(b) Undergraduates/interns: The supervising researcher and PI are both responsible for the safety and well-being of these students while inside the work area. Such students must not conduct hazardous activities unsupervised after-hours or on weekends, but may be permitted to perform supervised activities with low levels of risk as determined by the PI.

(c) PhD students, PD's, VS's, PI's: While there are many reasons and incentives to conduct laboratory work after-hours, the level of risk should be graded with restrictions applied in an appropriate manner, as recommended below.

Guidelines for after-hour research activities:

(a) Workers should establish and maintain contact with nearby researchers (buddy system) during after-hour periods. Extra caution is needed if working during late PM/early AM hours.

(b) Activities with the highest level of risk (e.g., exposure to GHS Cat. 1 agents, reactive gases, high-powered lasers, pyrophorics) should require explicit authorization by the PI, plus the physical presence of at least one other lab member.

(c) Activities with medium levels of risk (e.g., handling of corrosive or flammable liquids, very hot or very cold temperatures, sharp or heavy objects, or high-voltage equipment) may require after-hours authorization, depending on the PI's judgment. Workers should be in active communication with nearby researchers, and able to assist each other quickly in case of emergencies.

(d) Activities with low levels of risk (ambient conditions, low-power equipment) can be conducted with prudence during early PM hours and weekends. Workers should be in communication with nearby researchers, in case of emergencies.



For after-hour emergencies (lockout, disturbances, etc.), contact Police Dispatch at 4-8221