

Laboratory Managers/Persons-in-Charge Lists

The laboratory managers/persons-in-charge list is an important document that each HSNO exempt laboratory must display or have in writing. The list serves two main purposes; firstly it determines who is in charge of the chemicals in the laboratory at any given time and secondly, in the event of an accident where an evacuation is required, it determines who should front up to emergency services personnel. One of the key responsibilities of the Laboratory Manager is to ensure the list is kept up to date and to inform all staff and students who work in the laboratory what their responsibilities are when working in the lab.

Determining who should be on the list

The Laboratory Managers/Persons-in-Charge list is a hierarchical list beginning with the laboratory manager and then followed by academics, technical staff, research staff and doctoral students – who will become Persons-in-Charge. In the Department of Chemistry all non-doctoral research students, including MSc and BSc(Hons) can not be placed on the list. All persons on the list should have a good working knowledge of the laboratory and be able to explain to others the major hazards found within the laboratory. It is not acceptable, for instance, to have a person on the list who conveniently works nearby but has no knowledge of the hazards found within that particular laboratory.

Working in a HSNO exempt laboratory

In order to comply with the Department of Chemistry's Working Alone/Working After Hours requirements, for any hazardous work to be undertaken in a laboratory there must be present someone on the Laboratory Managers/Person-in-Charge list AND at least one other person working either in or in close proximity to this laboratory. This allows, for example, a single student to work in the laboratory whilst the laboratory manager works in a nearby office; allows groups of doctoral and lower degree students to work out of hours but, for example, does not allow two BSc(Hons) students to work when no other person on their laboratory's list is present.

What to do in the event of an accident requiring an evacuation

If an accident occurs in a laboratory, and an evacuation is signaled, the person who is in charge of the laboratory at that point in time (ie the person present highest on the list) must report to the Building Wardens *** and emergency services personnel to inform them of the details of the accident and of any other hazards in the laboratory. If the laboratory manager is not present then the first available person working down from the top of the laboratory managers/persons-in-charge list must report. Any person who directly viewed the accident and can pass on useful information to the emergency services personnel should also make themselves available to convey this information to Emergency Services.

In the event of a drill

If the department is having an emergency drill it is possible that shortly prior to, or during, the drill any person working in a laboratory will be asked by one of the Health and Safety Committee to report to their Laboratory Manager/Person-in-Charge in the event of a drill. Laboratory Managers need to inform students of this possibility and explain that this is the equivalent as if the emergency was happening in their particular lab; and therefore the procedures followed should be as if the emergency personnel needed to be informed about that lab.

*** In Building 301 the Building Warden is Ron Bryant. The location for reporting is at the fire-board in the foyer (near the first-aid room) on the Ground Floor (Symonds Street side).

