Laboratory Emergency Information Signs

What Are They?

Caltech Laboratory Emergency Information Signs are designed to advise emergency responders of the hazards present in lab areas. In addition to providing the lab location and emergency contact information, these signs utilize the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 704 Hazard Identification System.

The NFPA system uses a “diamond shape” to succinctly display the type of hazards present.

Who Fills the NFPA Sign Out?

These signs should be filled out by the lab safety officer or other knowledgeable person and be updated as the hazards present or emergency contact information changes.

Filling Out the Sign

- A fillable PDF version of the sign is available online.
- Enter full building name and room/laboratory number on the placard.
- Verify emergency contact information and make any appropriate changes. The recommended emergency contacts for laboratories are the Principal Investigator and group safety officer.
- Mark the appropriate checks for the hazards present in the laboratory. Note: Indicate quantities/specifics in the "list specifics" column for the following:
  - Water Reactive Material
  - Neurotoxins
  - Biohazards (Indicate Biohazard classification, i.e. Minimal Hazard)
To find the NFPA classification rating for a chemical, refer to the Safety Data Sheet (SDS), chemical label, or contact the EH&S Office for assistance. The following should be used for the evaluation of the chemical hazard:

- **Health Hazard** - follow the NFPA classification rating.
- **Flammability Hazard** - laboratories smaller than 100 square feet use NFPA classification rating.
- Laboratories larger than 100 square feet use the following guidelines to determine rating:
  - **NFPA 4** - More than 5 gallons (NFPA 4, Class IA) and/or any flammable gases.
  - **NFPA 3** - 5 gallons or less (NFPA 4, Class IA) and/or 10 gallons or less of (NFPA 4,3,2,1).
  - **NFPA 2** - 2 gallons or less (NFPA 4, Class IA) and/or 4 gallons or less of (NFPA 4,3,2,1).
  - **NFPA 1** - Less than 1 gallon (NFPA 4, Class IA) and/or 2 gallons or less of (NFPA 4,3,2,1).
- **Instability Hazard** - follow the NFPA classification rating.
- **Special Hazard** - follow the NFPA classification rating. *Note: The only authorized symbols are the $\text{W}$ (water reactive) and $\text{OX}$ (oxidizer) symbols.
- For the List Specific column indicate the following:
  - The quantities/specifies for the three hazards listed above.
  - List quantities for Health, Flammability and/or Instability hazards rated 3 or above.

**Posting the Sign**

After completing all information on the sign:

- Install the sign on the wall next to the laboratory entrance. The sign should hang at eye level on the door knob side of the doorway.
- DO NOT INSTALL ON THE DOOR. If the sign has to be installed on a door then place a sign on both sides of the door.

*Current as of August 2015*