

NSELA Safety Position Statement

Science Education Leader Support for the Implementation / Enforcement of OSHA's Hazard Communications & Lab Standard Programs

Introduction:

Establishing and maintaining a safer working environment for science/STEM teachers, support for employees and students in the academic science/STEM laboratory and/or field site is necessary and legally required for effective and safer teaching/learning science/STEM programs. In this way, the National Science Education Leadership Association (NSELA) affirms its support and encourages implementation and enforcement of:

1. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA's) Hazard Communications Standard or Right-To-Understand Standard (29 CFR 1910.1200) and
2. Occupational Exposure to Hazardous Chemicals in Laboratories or Laboratory Standard (29 CFR 1910.1450) or individual state law equivalents.

Statement:

In concert with these legal safety standards, NSELA advocates the following critical elements for safer science/STEM programs to include:

- A. Appropriate access, use and maintenance of engineering controls (e.g., eyewash, ventilation, fume hoods, etc.);
- B. School adoption of standard safety operating or administrative procedures (appropriate use, storage and disposal of hazardous chemicals, chemical inventories, chemical labeling, employee safety training, progressive discipline, etc.);
- C. Appropriate access, use and maintenance of personal protective equipment (chemical splash goggles, safety glasses with side shields, non-latex gloves and aprons, etc.).

NSELA urges all science education leaders to be familiar with and advocate/support adoption of required health and safety laws/standards at the local, state and federal levels in the workplace, in addition to better professional safety practices (NSTA, ACS, etc.).

The National Science Education Leadership Association further supports the OSHA requirement that school district employers assign employees who are qualified by training or experience to serve as the safety compliance officer/trainer(s) for the Hazard Communications Standard program and chemical hygiene officer(s) for the Laboratory Standard's Chemical Hygiene Program.

Conclusion:

Legal safety standards designed specifically to enhance levels of safety in science/STEM laboratories must be adopted, applied and enforced for a safer teacher/learning experience by science/STEM leadership.

References:

- Enviro-Health Links - Laboratory Safety, Environmental Health & Toxicology:
<http://sis.nlm.nih.gov/enviro/labsafety.html#a4>
- Hazard Communication 1910.1200, OSHA:
https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=standards&p_id=10099
- Occupational Exposure to Hazardous Chemicals in the Laboratory 1910.1450, OSHA:
https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=10106

Credits:

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