

## Laboratory & Hazardous Materials Signage

The University of Regina has standardized our signage in order to create a clear and meaningful method of identifying hazardous areas across campus.

While this initiative began with the purpose of assisting first responders, it has other benefits as well. One of those benefits is keeping you safe while you perform your duties!

### What Do The Signs Tell Me?

The signs can give you a few pieces of information to use in your day-to-day activities.

**This statement:** "AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY Personal Protective Equipment Required."

**Means:** You should not enter this room unless you have spoken to someone who is knowledgeable and responsible for the area.

**This section:** Gives you the contact information for those people.

**Why:** Labs can have all kinds of chemical hazards, biohazards, lasers, radioactive materials, or dangerous equipment. Before you perform any work in one of these spaces, you want to know what you're working around!

The people responsible for the area are required to give you enough information for you to do your job safely.



### What Else Do I Need To Know?

You should talk to the person responsible for the area and explain what work you are there to do. As an example, let's say you have to fix a pipe under a sink. Things you should ask include:

- What surfaces are safe to touch?
- Where can I lay my tools so that they will not be contaminated?
- Have all hazardous materials been removed from the area where I need to work?
- Has the area around the sink, and the cabinet underneath the sink, been cleaned/ disinfected/ decontaminated?
- Should I wear any specific PPE while working in the area?

- Which electrical outlets can I use? (Never unplug anything in a lab, if you need access to an outlet, be sure to ask the lab personnel which outlet to use, and allow them to unplug any items that might be in your way).
- Likewise, if any equipment, boxes, etc are in your way, make sure to ask lab personnel if it is safe for you to touch and move it, or ask them to move it out of your way.

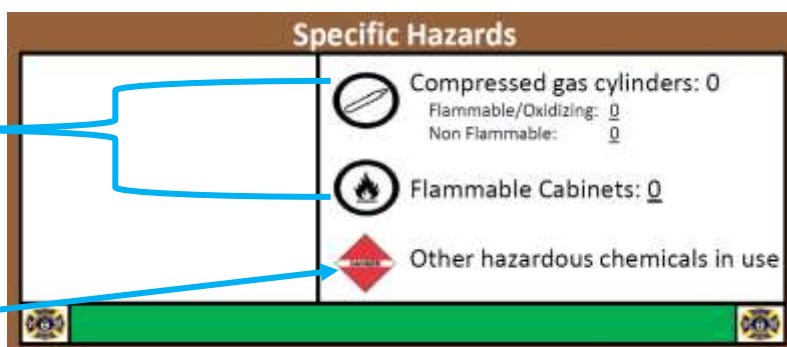
## Some Labs Are Safe To Enter

You may have noticed a box in the middle of the sign that talks about the hazards in the lab, but what does that information mean to you?

Let's look at two examples:

This example says there are no compressed gas cylinders, and no flammable cabinets. Does that mean it's safe to enter?

Not without talking to the personnel responsible for the lab. You'll notice this danger symbol is present.

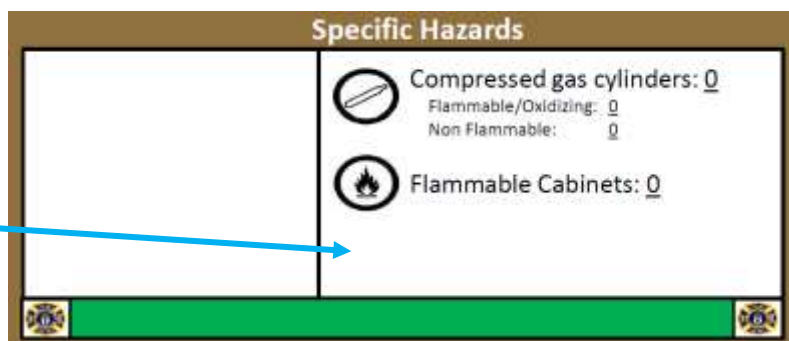


That means there are other chemicals used in the area, so the same precautions listed above should be taken. This section of the sign is mainly designed for the fire fighters, who are primarily concerned with flammables, and gas cylinders (because they are typically only responding when there is a fire, and both of these items can have drastic implications for how they fight the fire). The reason we don't list all the other hazards is because fire fighters always wear very high levels of PPE (supplied air respirators and turn-out gear) so things like acid and toxic materials are of little concern to them.

**For YOU:** all hazards should be a concern. You're not just spraying water into a room, you're likely having to touch surfaces, do work in the area, and breathe the air in the lab. You want to make sure your specific tasks are safe to perform.

This example also says there are no compressed gas cylinders, and no flammable cabinets. Does that mean it's safe to enter?

**In this case, the danger symbol is absent.**



You can certainly still contact the people listed on the slide for any questions you might have, and you still shouldn't move or unplug any equipment. Generally speaking, we call these "dry labs" because they do not use chemicals or biohazardous materials in these areas. That means surfaces don't need to be decontaminated, you likely won't need any PPE (other than what your job typically requires), and there's no chance that you could accidentally knock over a bottle of something nasty!

## Follow your Instincts..

**When in doubt, don't enter.**

**Feel free to call Health, Safety & Wellness**

- If a lab seems in disarray, is messy, has gas cylinders that aren't strapped, chemical bottles are sitting open and/or poorly labeled, it is perfectly natural to feel uncomfortable working in that area!
- If you feel like the information you were given by the personnel responsible for the area was insufficient, if they seemed rushed, or that they didn't seem to care about giving you the safety information you're entitled to.

We can help assess the risks in the lab, and ensure that the person responsible for the lab provides the proper information and cleaning the next time you need to enter the lab.

**Be patient, take a step back. The work may seem urgent, but your health and safety is always priority #1!**

### Questions or for more information

Contact:

Health, Safety & Wellness

306-337-2370 or ([health.safety@uregina.ca](mailto:health.safety@uregina.ca))