

<b>Title:</b>	<b><i>SAFE WORK PRACTICE #018:</i></b> <b>SCIENCE SAFETY POLICY</b>
SWP document #:	FSSC-SSWP-018-v1.0
Date of this revision:	2025-01-10

*This Safe Work Practice is approved and maintained by the Faculty of Science Safety Committee. Please contact Leanne Lucas, Safety Advisor–Science Activities, with any questions or concerns ([leanne.lucas@smu.ca](mailto:leanne.lucas@smu.ca))*

---

## **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1** Working safely is everyone’s responsibility. This Safe Work Practice (SWP) outlines the requirements for working safely in laboratories, on field trips, and during field research in the Faculty of Science at Saint Mary’s University.
- 1.2** The Faculty of Science at Saint Mary’s University is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy work and learning environment for Faculty, Staff, Students, and Visitors; to fostering awareness of the importance of safety; and to providing the education to perform activities or duties safely.

## **2. SCOPE**

- 2.1** This SWP applies in the Faculty of Science to those participating in teaching, research, and service activities.

## **3. HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT**

- 3.1** Saint Mary’s University complies with the Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act and accompanying Regulations, together with all applicable legal and other regulatory requirements to support this SWP.
- 3.2** Saint Mary’s University will support and cooperate with employees in pursuing occupational health and safety.
- 3.3** Department Chairpersons, Directors of Divisions, and the Dean of Science are responsible for health and safety with their respective areas. They also have responsibility for implementing this SWP and for ensuring that their areas comply with the Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations, and other laws of application within their respective areas.

- 3.4** All University Faculty, Staff, and Students have a responsibility for their own health and safety, and for the health and safety of others. Continuous improvement of workplace safety relies on individuals reporting injuries and safety concerns. Everyone is encouraged to offer suggestions or ideas to improve health and safety.
- 3.5** Everyone has a duty to report injuries, near misses, hazardous conditions, or other safety concerns related to the workplace as soon as possible via the procedures outlined by Science Safety <https://www.smu.ca/faculty-of-science/science-reporting-hazards-incidents-injuries.html> or the Occupational Health and Safety Office <https://www.smu.ca/about/ohs-reporting-incidents-and-injuries.html>.
- 3.6** The Faculty of Science Safety Sub-Committee will assist the University Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) in the collaborative and cooperative initiation, maintenance, and support of health and safety programs.
- 3.7** Advance preparation and adherence to safety documentation and directions given by Teaching Assistants, Departmental Technicians, Laboratory Instructors, Faculty, or Principal Investigators is necessary to ensure the safety of all participants during science activities. Respectful discussion is necessary to facilitate a safe teaching, learning, and research environment.
- 3.8** Students are required to follow the direction of supervising faculty instructors within laboratories and while engaging in field activities.
- 3.8.1 Students have a right to refuse work that they feel is unsafe. If a student is provided instruction from a faculty instructor that they are not comfortable in following, or put in a situation that they are not comfortable with, the student should discuss their concerns with the relevant Department Chairperson or Program Coordinator.
- 3.8.2 It is the responsibility of the supervising instructor to ensure that all students undertaking an activity have been provided with the safety instructions and training needed to undertake the activity safely.
- 3.8.3 A student who engages in unsafe behaviour and does not appropriately correct their behaviour following instruction from the supervising faculty instructor, or fails to follow explicit safety directions from a supervising faculty instructor, may be asked to leave the laboratory or cease involvement in an activity. Such instances may result in academic penalty for the activities not completed.
- 3.8.4 A student who is asked to leave a laboratory or cease involvement in an activity due to unsafe behaviour shall receive, within 48 hours of the occurrence, a written formal notification from the supervising instructor detailing the inappropriate behaviour and expectations for acceptable engagement in the next scheduled activity. The Safety Advisor, Science Activities, shall be copied on this notification. The incident should also be reported via a [Safety Incident Report Form](#).
- 3.8.5 Should a student receive written formal notification of unsafe behaviour and again subsequently engage in unsafe behaviour within the same course, the instructor may request that the Science Safety Committee review whether or not continued participation by the student within the course's laboratory or field activities presents an unacceptable safety risk. Review by the Science Safety Committee should normally occur within two

weeks of the instructor's request, during which time the student shall not engage in the course's laboratory or field activities. During its review, the instructor and student will each be invited to separately provide information on the case to the Science Safety Committee in person and/or in writing. Having considered the Science Safety Committee's assessment of risk associated with continued laboratory or fieldwork involvement, the Dean of Science may prohibit the student from engaging in further laboratory or field activities within the course. Such prohibition may result in academic penalty in the form of lost marks arising from uncompleted activities.

#### 4. REFERENCES

- 4.1 Saint Mary's University Safety Policy <https://www.smu.ca/webfiles/6-2007SafetySigned.pdf>
- 4.2 Injury, incident, and near miss reporting at Saint Mary's University <https://www.smu.ca/about/ohs-reporting-incidents-and-injuries.html> or <https://www.smu.ca/faculty-of-science/science-reporting-hazards-incidents-injuries.html>

#### 5. REVISION HISTORY

Date	Version	Summary of changes
2025-01-10	v1.0	New document approval.