




Third party activities in the lab

Information sheet: [Laboratory general RhL080](#)

 De tekst "Werk door derden" is ook beschikbaar in het Nederlands.



Information for employees and students working at the Faculty of Science (W&N)

This information sheet describes the safety in the laboratory in regard to third party activities, and is meant for all employees and students who work in a laboratory within the Faculty of Science (W&N), but especially for those who are appointed as lab supervisor.

1 A laboratory environment is not a regular workplace for everyone

Laboratories contain several risk sources that are familiar to laboratory employees. Using your knowledge of these matters, you are able to take the right precautions to limit risks. A basic assumption in this is that everyone in the lab knows "how things work". In addition, you speak the same 'language' and everyone knows what everyone else is doing.

Third parties, such as cleaners, maintenance mechanics, or visitors, will, therefore, not be aware of this kind of risks that are unknown to them. However, sometimes third parties will have to perform activities in the lab for *their* work. It is a task of the lab supervisor and lab employees to point out the risks to these people. Please also keep the reverse interaction in mind: maintenance or cleaning activities, but also tours for school children, may interfere with the lab work or daily routine.

How do you think a cleaner or maintenance mechanic would react when he/she would tip over a beaker marked 'NaOH' and spill the contents over him-/herself?

In all likelihood not very alarmed: it looks like water, feels soapy, and he/she has never heard of NaOH. The questions do not come until later, when chemical burns start to appear.

Please find information for visitors/service personnel/third parties here:

- [Safety regulations for contractors of Leiden University \(Dutch link\)](#)
- [House rules for external contractors \(Dutch link\)](#)
- AMD information sheet A050: [Entering labs \(Dutch link\)](#)

2 Preventing unwanted interactions between different activities

2.1 Assessing the risks together

The following applies in general to prevent unwanted interactions of activities in the lab and those of third parties:

1. Ask who it is that you are dealing with (identity, company, commissioning party).
2. At the start, ask for the nature and specifics of the activities.
3. Determine if and which unwanted interactions are possible.

Always: Ask what someone intends to do and never let anyone perform activities if you are not sure if it is safe.

4. Assess the risks and take precautions in consultation with the third party. If necessary, provide PPEs. If you cannot reach an agreement, contact the commissioning party or ask the AMD for advice.
5. Establish clear arrangements about the completion notification of the activities. Only after the notification of work completion and after everything is brought (back) to the original or intended state, and, in some cases, a [test or certification](#) is performed, you may return to the daily routine.
6. When the activities span several days, the circumstances may be entirely different from day to day (other people, different experiments, other tools?): Repeat this process every morning!

- Please be aware that you are the expert.
- Do not overestimate the safety awareness of visitors, but explain and think about how you may help to prevent risks! Especially under unusual circumstances (such as third parties in the lab) incidents are prone to happen.

2.2 Different situations

Depending on the circumstances and the third party, precautions may already have been arranged:

1. Visitors
Visitors, for example, (sales) representatives or aspirant students, must always be accompanied by an employee. Please tell them not to touch anything and not to enter labs if not strictly necessary. Exception: If you bring a visitor into an environment in which strong magnetic fields are present, then please make sure that the visitor does not have an electronic implant, such as a pacemaker.
2. Standard third party activities
Permanently employed cleaners receive a yearly training by the AMD about the risks in a laboratory (about what may and may not be cleaned) and the meaning of door signage. Generally, special arrangements are made per room for classified rooms. For example, when the windows need cleaning or the floor needs to be waxed, this is notified beforehand with the request to make the room accessible (and, therefore, safe!) Please [contact Facility Management](#), if you foresee problems regarding the execution or planning.
3. The department itself has requested the activities/repairs.
Activities, such as [modifications of in-build facilities](#) or large scale repairs are usually planned by the G&T department in consultation with the applicant or the room supervisor. In those cases the risks for the performing party may be assessed beforehand. External parties must always be accompanied. Our own Technical Services have a general knowledge of the risks in the labs. However, they do not know the specific hazards, therefore, please check if the risks are known.
4. Unexpected activities
All of a sudden you are confronted with someone in the lab, for example, to fix a malfunction. This requires a concise, *ad hoc* risk assessment according to 2.1.

2.3 Tips for the risk assessment of activities

Below, you will find a number of matters you may take into account in the risk assessment *before* the activities commence:

- ✓ The environment surrounding the activities is cleared and in a state of household cleanliness.
- ✓ The release forms for room / equipment / [fumehood](#) (see AMD website) are present (if required).
- ✓ The space within the lab is clearly marked (put out of commission), in such a manner that lab and other activities are clearly separated.
- ✓ Colleagues are informed about the nature and duration of the activities. (Please also inform colleagues in adjoining rooms in case of expected odour or sound nuisance!)
- ✓ Make sure you have spoken with the workers about the risks and precautions taken. (Please also consider a safe passageway, among other things.)
- ✓ The workers know what to do in case of an incident or when the alarm sounds.
- ✓ Emergency exits, emergency routes, and emergency facilities are kept free of (building) materials.
- ✓ Classified labs (GMO, radiation): the room still satisfies the containment requirements. Perhaps the lab activities here will have to be postponed temporarily.
- ✓ Try to think of more issues (beyond this checklist).