


POLICY: WORK ABOVE BENCHES IN LABS			NUMBER: WP-14
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			SUPERSEDES: N.D.

The purpose of this policy is to assist personnel in developing safe work habits while operating above or in the vicinity of laboratory benches. Most benches in the research labs turn out to be very cluttered places with glassware, chemicals, and a variety of equipment. As well as these chemicals being hazardous, the glassware and equipment are very costly.

The types of work performed above benches are:

- a) Repair of leaks in services above ceiling
- b) Repair of light fixtures
- c) Ceiling tile replacement
- d) Installation of new services, etc.

Causes of damage:

- a) Dropped parts or tools
- b) Stepped on or knocked over items when using bench for work platform
- c) Dropped items deflecting off ladders, etc. When not directly over bench
- d) Walking on bench tops without protection for top

Methods of Protection:

1. Relocate lab equipment and glassware below work area. This should be done with the assistance of a lab technician or similar person who is familiar with what is being moved.
2. Protect bench top if you are going to walk on it.
 - a. If bench cannot be cleared, evaluate the work to be done:
 - Is it creating a hazard?
 - Does it require repair right now? Tomorrow? Next week? Never?
 - Is bench clearable now? Tomorrow? Next week? Never?
3. If work must be done, the stationary equipment on the bench must be protected. This, at times, can be as simple as a cardboard deflector or may require a section of scaffold with planks on top and side protectors. Lab personnel will be able to evaluate the danger and value of what you are protecting. Extremely hazardous material is usually labelled.