Last month EHS sent the following email across campus:

UNI Environmental Health and Safety would like to remind the campus of the role that the Occupational Safety and Health Act ("OSH Act"), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration ("OSHA"), and Federal Occupational Safety and Health Standards play in protecting UNI employees as they perform their job duties.

Does the Occupational Safety and Health Act ("OSH Act") of 1970, 29 U.S.C. § 651 et seq., apply to UNI?
Yes. Under the OSH Act state employees are ensured OSH Act protections if they work in a state with an OSHA-Approved State Plan. 29 USC § 667. Since 1985 the State of Iowa has had an OSHA-Approved State Plan and it specifically covers all State employers and employees, including the University of Northern Iowa and its employees. See Iowa Code § 88.3; 29 CFR § 1952.6(b)-(d).

Do Federal Occupational Safety and Health Standards ("OSHA Standards") apply to UNI?
Yes. As part of the State of Iowa’s OSHA-Approved Plan the state has adopted Federal Occupational Safety and Health Standards, these are commonly referred to as OSHA regulations or OSHA standards, as a result they apply to the university and its employees. Iowa Admin. Code 875-10.20(88), -26.1(88).

Are labs on campus exempt from OSHA Standards?
No. Iowa’s OSHA-Approved State Plan specifically covers all State employers and employees and makes no exception for labs or their employees. See Iowa Code § 88.3; 29 CFR § 1952.6(d). There are specific OSHA standards that apply only to non-production labs, for instance the Occupational Exposure to Hazardous Chemicals in Laboratories Standard, 29 CFR § 1910.1450.
Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment, or PPE, is designed to protect workers from serious workplace injuries or illnesses resulting from contact with chemical, radiological, physical, electrical, mechanical, or other workplace hazards. Besides face shields, safety glasses, hard hats, and safety shoes, protective equipment includes a variety of devices and garments such as goggles, coveralls, gloves, vests, earplugs, and respirators.

Per OSHA regulations as an employer, you must assess your workplace to determine if hazards are present that require the use of personal protective equipment. If such hazards are present, you must select protective equipment and require workers to use it, communicate your protective equipment selection decisions to your workers, and select personal protective equipment that properly fits your workers.

More information on PPE may be found on the EH&S web site at https://risk.uni.edu/ppe-program-university-wide.

In addition, EH&S is available to provide training on PPE and PPE hazard assessment.

Below is a Certification of Hazard Assessment done by the EH&S Department on classrooms, office spaces, conference rooms, lounges, and congregational spaces.

Certification of Hazard Assessment
Personal Protective Equipment

This written certification is drafted to comply with 29 CFR § 1910.132(d)(2), which requires the university to verify that a workplace hazard assessment has been performed through a written certification that identifies the workplace evaluated; the person certifying that the evaluation has been performed; the date of the hazard assessment; and identifies the document as a certification of hazard assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer:</th>
<th>The University of Northern Iowa</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of Assessment:</td>
<td>3/5/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person Certifying the Evaluation:</td>
<td>Joseph Rayzor, University Safety Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplaces Evaluated:</td>
<td>Traditional Classrooms, Office Spaces, Conference Rooms, Lounges, and Congregational Spaces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Under 29 CFR § 1910.132(d)(1), the University of Northern Iowa is required as an employer to assess the workplace to determine if hazards are present, or are likely to be present, which necessitate the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

For areas that are traditional classrooms, office spaces, conference rooms, lounges, and congregational spaces, Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) has determined that no hazards exist, or are likely to exist, which necessitate the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

In reaching this decision EHS reviewed past workplace injuries and utilized common sense and appropriate expertise.

On occasion tasks being completed in these areas may require PPE, i.e. custodial services, maintenance. University employees are required to wear the appropriate PPE in these areas if the task requires it.

Name of Person Certifying the Assessment

Joseph Rayzor, University Safety Officer
WORKPLACE STRESS

Workplace stress is normal – but when the stress is excessive it can wreak havoc on the productivity, performance, and physical and emotional health of your employees. It can also interfere with job safety. You can help your employees deal with stress in several ways.

First, you must be aware of common causes of workplace stress.

- Fear of being laid off
- More overtime due to staff cutbacks
- Pressure to perform to meet rising expectations but with no increase in job satisfaction
- Pressure to work at optimum levels—all the time!
- Lack of control over how you do your work

Next, know and educate employees on the signs of excessive workplace stress.

- Feeling anxious, irritable, or depressed
- Apathy, loss of interest in work
- Problems sleeping
- Fatigue
- Trouble concentrating
- Muscle tension or headaches
- Stomach problems
- Social withdrawal
- Loss of sex drive
- Using alcohol or drugs to cope

Then, encourage employees to try these stress busting tips.

**Exercise** - Working out regularly is one of the best ways to relax your body and mind. Plus, exercise will improve your mood. But you have to do it often for it to pay off.

**Eat Well** - Eating a regular, well-balanced diet helps you feel better in general. It may also help control your moods. Aim for meals full of vegetables, fruit, whole grains, and lean protein for energy. And don’t skip any. It’s not good for you and can put you in a bad mood, which can actually increase your stress.

**Sleep Well** - Try to improve the quality of your sleep by going to bed and getting up at the same time every day, even on weekends. Aim for 8 hours a night—the amount of sleep most adults need to operate at their best. Turn off screens one hour before bedtime. The light emitted from TV, tablets, smartphones, and computers suppresses your body’s production of melatonin and can severely disrupt your sleep. Avoid stimulating activity and stressful situations before bedtime such as catching up on work. Instead, focus on quiet, soothing activities, such as reading or listening to soft music, while keeping lights low.

**Chill Out** - When you’re driving on the highway, switch to the slow lane so you can avoid road rage. Break down big jobs into smaller ones. For example, don’t try to answer all 100 emails if you don’t have to — just answer a few of them. Try yoga, meditation, listening to music you like and other relaxing activities and hobbies.

**Talk it Out** - Find a friend, co-worker, or family member you feel comfortable sharing your feelings with. Talking about things that are troubling you can help lower your stress.
Safety in Places of Public Assembly

Every day, millions of people wake up, go to work or school, and take part in social events. But every so often the unexpected happens: an earthquake, a fire, a chemical spill, an act of terrorism or some other disaster. Routines change drastically, and people are suddenly aware of how fragile their lives and routines can be. Each disaster can have lasting effects — people may be seriously injured or killed, and devastating and costly property damage can occur. People entering any public assembly building need to be prepared in case of an emergency.

BEFORE YOU ENTER

Take a good look. Does the building appear to be in a condition that makes you feel comfortable? Is the main entrance wide and does it open outward to allow easy exit? Is the outside area clear of materials stored against the building or blocking exits?

Have a communication plan. Identify a relative or friend to contact in case of emergency and you are separated from family or friends.

Plan a meeting place. Pick a meeting place outside to meet family or friends with whom you are attending the function. If there is an emergency, be sure to meet them there.

WHEN YOU ENTER

Take a good look. Locate exits immediately. When you enter a building you should look for all available exits. Some exits may be in front and some in back of you. Be prepared to use your closest exit. You may not be able to use the main exit.

Check for clear exit paths. Make sure aisles are wide enough and not obstructed by chairs or furniture. Check to make sure your exit door is not blocked or chained. If there are not at least two exits or exit paths are blocked, report the violation to management and leave the building if it is not immediately addressed. Call the local fire marshal to register a complaint.

Do you feel safe? Does the building appear to be overcrowded? Are there fire sources such as candles burning, cigarettes or cigars burning, pyrotechnics, or other heat sources that may make you feel unsafe? Are there safety systems in place such as alternative exits, sprinklers, and smoke alarms? Ask the management for clarification on your concerns. If you do not feel safe in the building, leave immediately.

DURING AN EMERGENCY

React immediately. If an alarm sounds, you see smoke or fire, or some other unusual disturbance immediately exit the building in an orderly fashion.

Get out, stay out! Once you have escaped, stay out. Under no circumstances should you ever go back into a burning building. Let trained firefighters conduct rescue operations.

FACT

A fire at The Station nightclub in W. Warwick, RI, on February 20, 2003, claimed 100 lives and is the fourth-deadliest nightclub fire in U.S. history. Since that fire, NFPA has enacted tough new code provisions for fire sprinklers and crowd management in nightclub-type venues. Those provisions mark sweeping changes to the codes and standards governing safety in assembly occupancies.