

Safety Note #180

General Greenhouse Safety



Greenhouses are important structures for conducting various agricultural research programs. Many typical agricultural accidents and injuries can also occur in greenhouses. Several ANR Safety Notes can be incorporated as part of a greenhouse safety training program for employees and students working in them. All greenhouses should have a manager responsible for the safe operation of them. Supervisors and Principal Investigators are responsible for the training of greenhouse workers.

For working safely in a greenhouse, please review the following safety tips:

- Anyone working in greenhouses must be trained and instructed in the hazards associated with the greenhouse, including tasks, equipment, chemicals, PPE, and emergency procedures.
- Fire extinguishers, chemical spill kits and first aid kits are to be available at the greenhouse.
- Emergency contact/evacuation information, pesticide labels and Data Safety Sheets should be posted in the greenhouse along with any other safety information required.
- In the event of lighting, hail, high winds, or earthquake, immediately leave the greenhouse for a more secure structure. Do not re-enter until the greenhouse has been determined to be safe to enter.
- Glass ceiling panes must be in good condition. Panes with cracks or missing sections must be replaced.
- Follow all propane gas heater safety procedures, including how to shut off the gas in an emergency.
- If there is a strong odor of propane, **do not enter the greenhouse or turn lights and equipment on.** Call the Fire Department.
- Wear proper work clothing including closed-toe shoes and wear appropriate PPE when required.
- Greenhouse floors can be slippery when wet and have algae growing on them. Use rubber mats and wear slip resistant shoes. Floors may be treated to reduce algae growth.
- Keep aisles and walkways free of clutter, including hoses and electrical cords, which are trip hazards.
- All electrical outlets must have GFI protection and have protective caps installed.
- Check all electrical cords for damage and keep them off wet surfaces. Do not use damaged cords.
- Employees must be instructed in heat stress prevention and should have drinking water available.
- Do not drink water from any hoses or faucets in the greenhouse.
- All fans must be properly guarded.
- Hand tools with loose heads or split and defective handles are to be repaired or replaced.
- Bars under rolling benches can be a hazard to hands when moving. Ensure benches are stable and not creating a hazard.
- Follow the ANR Pesticide Use and Handling Guidelines at <http://safety.ucanr.edu/files/2861.pdf>.
- Post all pesticide signage when required.
- Reduce ergonomic stress and fatigue. Conduct various tasks during the day instead of the same repetitive task. Use proper lifting and handling techniques.
- If an injury/accident occurs, seek first aid or medical assistance as needed. Report all injuries to your supervisor.