January 12, 2013

To: Indiana University Research Faculty & Staff

Subject: Indiana University Food & Drink Policy for All Laboratory Areas

This memo is a follow-up to the notification that laboratories received through the annual laboratory chemical safety audits beginning in June, 2011. Its purpose is to inform all Indiana University research faculty and staff of the current policies regarding the appropriate storage and use of food and drink intended for human consumption in laboratories at Indiana University. As with other safety requirements, the Principal Investigators in charge of individual laboratories are ultimately responsible for ensuring the implementation of this rule.

Consumption and storage of food and drink is prohibited in research spaces where animals, hazardous chemicals, or human tissues/fluids are located, as well as in all laboratories that have been designated as Biosafety Level 1 or 2. These policies are intended to safeguard the health and safety of all research personnel on Indiana University campuses and to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations.

The designation of clean or safe areas within the lab for food storage and consumption is not allowed and does not comply with these requirements, as interpreted by the regulatory bodies that have promulgated them, through direct guidance received by Indiana University. The “work area” of a laboratory has been defined by those bodies to be the entire open, adjoining laboratory space. No area within the laboratory is exempt from the restriction on food and drink in laboratories. This restriction applies even to closed containers.

Food and drink is allowed only in non-laboratory areas that are physically separated from the lab by a door or partition which can be closed, such as office areas. Desk areas within the laboratory that are not separated in the manner described above are not exempt from the laboratory restriction on food and drink.

Questions or concerns with regard to these policies may be directed to the Indiana University Office of Environmental, Health and Safety Management. EHS staff have been instructed to help PIs to work through creative methods of compliance with these requirements in individual spaces.

We appreciate your time and cooperation as well as your efforts in maintaining Indiana University’s high standards of safety in research.