

SCISHIELD CUSTOMER STORY



BOSTON
COLLEGE

A Transformational Journey

How Boston College developed a comprehensive program to promote laboratory safety

As Director of Environmental Health and Safety for Boston College, Gail Hall has experienced quite the journey. During her tenure, she's overseen a transformation in her team and how it manages laboratory safety.

The department experimented with a number of information and training management approaches over the years, from humble beginnings with paper files and binders, to plugging names into an excel spreadsheet, to attempts with home-grown software.

The real traction towards systematic compliance began with the adoption of ChemTracker. Enterprise software allowed the team to begin managing chemical inventory in an efficient, unified fashion. ChemTracker represented a huge advance over the filing cabinets, and it was just the beginning.

Prior to using SciShield producing training compliance reports was for the most part infeasible, now a variety of reports can be produced **in minutes.**

Broadening horizons of safety

By 2020, the EHS team saw additional opportunities for improvement.

"The pain point was the diffusion of all kinds of information out there," said Gail. "We had records here and records there. We needed a better way of keeping track of all that information."

// The data EHS was able to extract from SciShield demonstrated to the senior administration the need for more people to manage laboratory safety."

"The goal was to bring it together, centralize it," said Gail, recalling the aspirations for a program that went beyond managing chemical inventories. "Linking people to laboratories. Linking people to hazards. Training people for the appropriate hazards in the laboratory."

The first change was hiring two new Lab Safety Specialists. With the bolstered team in place, Gail set about implementing a solution to the broader informational challenge.

Building on the SciShield platform



With a clear vision of what they wanted and a successful track record with ChemTracker, the EHS team didn't have to search far.

"We didn't really look at other solutions because of our experience with ChemTracker," said Gail. "It was a matter of convincing the administration that the other pieces of SciShield were important."

With 99 lab groups and 500 research spaces under the safety department's purview, the administration quickly understood the case for a unified approach to safety management. Gail's team set about implementing it.

Boston College expanded on the SciShield platform, adopting modules for SDS Search, Inspection, Biosafety Management, Training LMS, Hazardous Waste, Equipment, Incident Management and other aspects of lab safety.

It was all part of a single, integrated, web-based solution; a robust safety program with comprehensive visibility of the hazards exposed to the campus community of staff and researchers.

Delivering fundamental change

Over the evolution of their program, the BC EHS team has developed true confidence in the reliability, security and availability of their data – and their ability to act on it.

Prior to implementation of the SciShield platform, it would have taken all day to create a report of all lab groups and their principal investigators or lead scientists. Now it can be done in five minutes.

According to Gail, creating a list of lab groups or individuals that work with a particular hazard, or a list of locations with a given hazard, wouldn't even have been possible prior to SciShield. Now her team can create it in 15 minutes.

Similarly, a report of overall safety compliance, almost inconceivable previously, can be generated in an hour.

On a broader scale, visibility to laboratory data allows EHS to identify trends, justify resources and develop appropriate programs and campaigns to address important safety matters.

For example, observations made during Lab Safety Inspections led to efforts to educate researchers on PPE requirements. In addition to creating fliers for the labs, the team utilized the platform to send seasonal reminders about safe lab uniforms during the summer months.



Continuing improvement: Focus on training

The lab safety team continues to strengthen a safety culture, with regular working-group meetings, extensive communication, and ongoing refinements to the Chemical Hygiene Plan (CHP).

A particular interest of Gail's is promoting the existing resources to their various labs. One area of focus has been training.

The department provides eight training courses to the Boston College community, six web-based (previously delivered in person or via Zoom, now available remotely within SciShield). EHS also hosts 12 instructor-led sessions per year. In 2023 BC users completed close to 1300 course training records. And every training session directs the participants to resources on Google Sites.

The SciShield Training LMS module, with its capability to send automated reminders, has been instrumental to helping people get appropriate training.

“The Training LMS module has allowed us to direct people to the training they need to take, whether it's radiation training, biosafety training, general lab safety or waste training.”

According to Gail, one of the biggest time savings benefits with the Training module is reporting.

“We can readily access data and show how we are doing in the laboratories,” said Gail, who reports to an executive oversight committee. “We pull it right out of the application.”

And since implementing the module, her team *loves* to talk about training.



A training breakthrough

The SciShield platform has helped the team deliver a profound improvement in laboratory safety training.

With the Training LMS module in place, the safety team has newfound confidence that people are adequately trained for hazards, and the training assigned is tailored to personal hazard exposures.

// We have up to **97%** compliance."

Additionally, the Training LMS module has eliminated the need for an outside consultant that had provided biosafety training and audits.

Prior to using the Training LMS module, producing compliance reports was for the most part infeasible. Now Gail's team creates a variety of reports in mere minutes:

- Overall training compliance: **15 minutes**
- Compliance for a given course: **5 minutes**
- Users overdue for a course: **5 minutes**
- Completed records for a course: **5 minutes**
- Report for a department head: **5 minutes**

The work of a safety department is never done. At Boston College, the EHS team continues to seek ways to bring ever more awareness and diligence in all its labs. But with a scalable, centralized information foundation, the program has never been better positioned.



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ABOUT BOSTON COLLEGE

Boston College, the first institution of higher education to operate in the city of Boston, is today among the nation's foremost universities, a leader in the liberal arts, scientific inquiry, and student formation.

ABOUT SCISHEILD

At SciShield, we reduce the burden on scientists worldwide while improving safety, regulatory compliance, and operational efficiency in their organizations through our modular, enterprise software solutions.