

VAS-Lab

Introduction

The VAS-lab is part of the Central Research Facility, in Dutch “Centrale Onderzoeks Voorziening” (COV). This new facility allows us to work with highly toxic compounds in a safe and controlled environment. Highly toxic compounds means: carcinogenic, mutagenic, reproductive toxic and very toxic compounds as well by inhalation sensitizing compounds.

The VAS-lab contains 4 areas: an anteroom/changing room, a storage room, a weighing lab and a research lab (ML-II).

The UM wants to ensure the safety of its employees and by providing this facility, the UM/FHML has set a goal to minimize potential exposure to zero, as far as possible.

The facility is supervised by HSB and will be managed by VAS-Lab manager. The contact person at the department is the chemical administrator.

High risk chemicals handling at the VAS-lab

Solid (including powder) chemicals with high concern need to be weighed in the VAS-lab. These compounds are classified according to the CLP/GHS classification and labelled with the hazard-code:

- (Suspected) Mutagenic compounds H340/H341
- Carcinogenic compounds H350
- Reprotoxic compounds H360
- Very toxic compounds H300/H310/H330
- By inhalation sensitizing compounds H334
- Compounds with Long term effects H370/H372
- Other compounds classified by the occupational hygienist of HSB.

VAS-lab policy anno 2025

To comply with current laws and regulations, the use of the VAS-lab for weighing the solid high-risk substances has been made mandatory within FHML by 2025. Using the VAS-lab will ensure compliance with the desired near-zero exposure and the legally required registration when working with CMR substances (Working Conditions Decree, Chapter 4 Hazardous Substances). With decentralised use of the solid CMR substances, this is not guaranteed.

In concrete terms, that the weighing of all fixed high-risk substances must take place at the VAS-lab and that these substances must also be stored at the VAS-lab.

How to store Highly toxic compounds at the VAS-lab

All chemicals with the classification listed above need to be stored in VAS-lab. The chemical administrators of the departments are responsible for storage of these kinds of compounds at the VAS-lab. The storage room provides a fire safety cabinet (TR), a fridge (4°C) and a freezer (-20°C). Every department has his own storage box per category. If a new highly toxic compound arrives at your department it should be transported to the VAS-lab as soon as possible. Use the box in box principle (double containment) for safe transportation to the VAS lab.

Make sure you rebook the storage location of your compound in SOFOS360.

How to get access to the VAS-lab

Are you planning to use a compound which belongs to one of the categories above? Please contact the chemical administrator of your department. Be well in advanced, because getting access will take some time.

In consultation with the chemical administrator, a determination will be made whether the use of the VAS-lab is necessary. For occasional use of the VAS-lab, the chemicals administrator will refer you to an authorized person within the department. This is because of the time investment needed for training and guidance. If you want to use the VAS-lab more frequently, the chemical administrator will refer you to the manager of the VAS-lab.

After approval of your plans by the VAS-lab manager in consultation HSB, including verification of your employment contract, you will receive an invitation via the digital agenda and the training can start. The training consists of a tour by the VAS Lab manager and general practical instruction (Introduction I). Then lab instruction focusing on your substances and practical training under the supervision of the VAS Lab manager (Introduction II). An introduction in the reservation system is included. After completing the training successfully, UM-card access will be requested.

An employment contract at the UM is required to get access to the VAS-lab (a registration is not sufficient). For the indefinite employment contract, the access is continuous, temporary contract will get max. 2 years access. After expiration a new access request should be made.

Students or trainees are not allowed to get access to the VAS-lab.

Research lab (ML-II)

Check in advance whether you want to use the storage room and weighing lab or the research lab as well. Due to the ML-II classification of the research lab, an additional approval from the Biological Safety Officer (BSO) is needed.

Reservations

Reservations can be done via the digital agenda by filling in the complete requested information.

<https://software.memec.maastrichtuniversity.nl/agendalabsfhml/>

Rules for entering and leaving the VAS lab, work protocols are available from VAS lab management.