

# Lab safety, 10 years later

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On December 29, 2008, staff scientist Sheri Sangji was working on a chemical synthesis in a lab at the University of California, Los Angeles, when one of the reagents ignited. Sangji's clothes caught fire, causing injuries that led to her death on January 16, 2009, at age 23. Now, a decade later, chemists discuss ongoing efforts to improve academic lab safety in *Chemical & Engineering News (C&EN)*, the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society.

Sangji's tragic death inspired some chemists to improve academic lab [safety](#) to prevent similar accidents at their own institutions and elsewhere, writes Executive Editor Jyllian Kemsley. These efforts include incorporating safety into chemistry education, improving training, and creating a lab safety culture through the development of new resources and improved communication. However, some worry that although progress has been made, the efforts haven't gone far enough, as evidenced by several other unfortunate lab accidents in recent years.

Some universities have developed standard operating procedures to describe the safe handling and storage of various chemicals. Others are considering courses on how to work with hazardous chemicals. One institution, Stony Brook University, celebrates an annual Chemistry Safety Day with training and demonstrations. On an individual level, Sangji's death has caused some researchers and students to reflect on how such an accident could happen to them and has prompted them to have more routine safety discussions with each other.

**More information:** "10 years after Sheri Sangji's death, are academic

labs any safer?," [cen.acs.org/safety/lab-safety/... -Sangjis-death/97/i1](https://cen.acs.org/safety/lab-safety/...-Sangjis-death/97/i1)

Provided by American Chemical Society

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