SEC-019

University Health and Safety Programs for the Workplace and Instructional Environment

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Status Final

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Policy Type University

Contact Office Environmental Health and Safety

Oversight Executive
Vice President for Research

Applies To Academic Division, the Medical Center, and the College at Wise.

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Reason for Policy

The University regards its responsibility for providing a healthful and safe work and learning environment for its faculty, staff, and students to be a high priority. Health and safety programs:

- Help prevent accidents, illnesses, and injuries.
- Meet federal, state, and University requirements for environmental and occupational health and safety programs.
- Raise safety awareness.

This policy sets forth requirements to provide reasonable assurance that the health and safety of all individuals on properties controlled or managed by the University are maintained.

Definition of Terms

Health

Description Freedom from physical pain or disease.

Safety

Description Condition of being protected from harm, danger, or risk of injury.

Hazard

Description A condition or activity with the potential to cause damage, harm, or adverse health effects.

Imminent Danger to Life or Health (IDLH)

Description

Any condition or practice that a danger exists which could reasonably be expected to cause death or serious physical harm immediately or before the imminence of such danger can be eliminated.

Policy Statement

While conducting University activities, all individuals must (1) comply with applicable federal, state, and local health and safety regulations and applicable University policies; and (2) use reasonable precautions to protect faculty, staff, students, the public, and the environment to minimize dangers to life, safety, and property. The cost of maintaining a healthful and safe environment falls on the school/department/unit under whose auspices a particular activity is being conducted.

1. **Responsibilities:**
   Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) is responsible for:
   - Developing and maintaining policies, programs, and best practices to comply with laws and regulations applicable to the management of hazardous materials, equipment, environments, conditions, and regulated waste.
   - Providing guidance, consultation, and technical assistance to schools/departments/units in the identification, evaluation, and control of potential hazards or hazardous conditions.
   - Providing or coordinating training upon request.
   - Monitoring the University's adherence to applicable laws, regulations, and policies and serving as a resource for the University in developing programs to meet those requirements.
   - Investigating incidents reported to EHS.
   - Interfacing and reporting to external agencies as required.

   The staff of EHS is principally a coordinating, standard setting, monitoring, and service organization rather than an enforcer of regulations.

   Administrators of each school/department/unit are responsible for:
   - Complying with requirements in this policy and safety programs applicable to their school/department/unit.
   - Providing a healthful and safe environment for faculty, staff, and students.
   - Purchasing required safety equipment and personal protection equipment (PPE) and necessary safety equipment/devices.
   - Enforcing correction of hazardous conditions or regulatory deficiencies when brought to their attention with one exception:

     In extreme emergencies, wherein the director of environmental health & safety (or designee) judges that a particular situation is causing an imminent danger to life or health (IDLH) and/or University property.

In those cases where IDLH or regulatory violations are detected and where a school/department/unit administrator does not respond as advised, EHS shall, at the director's discretion, appeal its recommendations through the appropriate vice president, and if necessary, to the university president. Similarly, schools/departments/units which disagree with the counsel of EHS may appeal those decisions to the vice president for research. In cases where, in the judgment of the director, there is IDLH and/or University property, the dDirector has the authority to issue cease and desist orders, which may be appealed after they have been obeyed, as indicated above.

Faculty, principal investigators, and supervisors are responsible for:

- Complying with:
  - Requirements in this policy and safety programs applicable to their areas of supervision/control.
  - Policy SEC-005: Safety of Students in Laboratories, Makerspaces, Shops, and Studios to effectively mitigate the risk of injury or illness.
- Developing and maintaining Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to include precautions and methods of exposure control for activities involving hazardous materials, equipment, environments, conditions, and regulated wastes in advance of activity being performed.
- Establishing appropriate emergency procedures for their areas of supervision/control.
- Completing required training.
- Determining required training for individuals under their supervision/instruction and verifying completion of training prior to conducting associated tasks.
- Enforcing safe practices for individuals under their supervision/instruction.
- Reporting any work-related incident resulting in a (i) fatality, (ii) inpatient hospitalization of one or more persons, (iii) an amputation, (iv) loss of an eye, or (v) medical events, e.g., heart attack, to EHS ***immediately upon discovery*** (see Procedure 1). (Upon receipt of notification, EHS will report these work-related incidents to the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry in a manner compliant with Virginia Code § 40.1-51.1.)
- Encouraging individuals to report any other incidents, unsafe conditions, and practices (see Procedure 2).

All individuals subject to this policy are responsible for:

- Conducting their activities in a manner that does not adversely impact themselves, others, University property, or the environment.
- Following procedures as instructed or written.
- Completing required training.
- Promptly notifying their supervisor of any accidents, injuries, or hazardous conditions.

2. **Written Health and Safety Programs:**
   In accordance with federal, state, and local regulations related to this policy, the University must establish and adhere to written health and safety programs, as applicable. These programs provide requirements, procedures, and guidance for managing specific health, safety, and environmental risks. Written health and safety programs are published and available on the EHS website and are not intended to supersede any Academic Division, Medical Center, or College at Wise policy. The Academic Division, Medical Center, College at Wise, and schools/departments/units thereof, may develop written health and safety programs customized to their needs so long as the programs adhere to federal, state, and local regulations.

   Examples of some University written programs and their application include:

Program	Targeted Audience: Faculty, Staff, and Students who:
Confined Space *OSHA 29 CFR 1910.146*	Enter or work near confined spaces. These spaces include areas like pits, manholes, electrical vaults, boilers, wells, and tanks.
Electrical Safety *OSHA 29 CFR Subpart S*	Work on or near electrical systems including any tasks involving energized parts or equipment that is still connected to a power source.
Ergonomics	May encounter Work-related Musculoskeletal Disorders (WMSD).
Fall Protection *OSHA 29 CFR 1910.28*	Work in areas where they could fall more than four feet or face fall risks on walking surfaces.
Lockout Tagout *OSHA 29 CFR 1910.47*	May shut down and isolate energy sources before doing any service or maintenance on machines or equipment. Such individuals must be properly trained and authorized.
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) *29 CFR 1910 Subpart I*	Wear PPE for protection against risk of injury or exposure to hazardous substances or conditions. Select area or activities may require specific PPE which will be provided as necessary.
Powered Industrial Truck (PIT) *OSHA 29 CFR 1910.178*	Operate a powered industrial truck (PIT). PITs include forklifts, powered pallet jacks, straddle stackers, and powered hand trucks used to move materials. Operators must be trained and certified.
Respiratory Protection *OSHA 29 CFR 1910.134*	Wear a respirator. Individuals who wear a respirator must be enrolled in the Respiratory Protection Program.
Hearing Protection *OSHA 29 CFR 1910.95*	Perform activities in areas that have been identified as having potential exposure to excessive noise levels. A Hearing Conservation Program (HCP) has been established to prevent adverse health effects from exposure to excessive noise.

3. **Compliance with Policy:**
   Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination or expulsion in accordance with relevant University policies.

   Direct questions about this policy to Environmental Health and Safety.

Procedures

Procedure 1: Report a Serious Work-Related Incident
Procedure 2: REPORT AN ACCIDENT, SAFETY CONCERN, NEAR-MISS OR HAZARDOUS SITUATION

Related Information

SEC-005: Safety of Students in Laboratories, Makerspaces, Shops, and Studios
Virginia Code § 40.1-51.1

Major Category Safety, Security and Environmental Quality

Next Scheduled Review Friday, January 12, 2029

Revision History

Reorganized and incorporated Section 2 1/12/26; Confirmed 8/28/25; Added Compliance section 7/21/21.

Approved By Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

Approved Date Monday, June 6, 2005