

# Environmental Health and Safety

**Section:** IX: Environmental Health and Safety

**Chapter:** 1

**Date Updated:** August 5, 2013

## 1.1 Environmental Health and Safety Policies

**1.1.1** It is the policy of the University to furnish a place of employment and learning that is as free as possible from recognized hazards that cause or are likely to cause harm or death of its faculty, staff, students, visitors and/or the surrounding community.

**1.1.2** Administrators, faculty, staff and students share in this responsibility and are expected to ensure that their actions as well as activities under their control are conducted in a manner that presents the least possible hazard to themselves, other members of the University community, visitors, University property and/or the surrounding community.

**1.1.3** The Director of EH&S is responsible for development of safety-related policy recommendations, implementation of procedural guidelines, and, through an ongoing audit and observation function, providing reasonable assurance to the President that the institution is in compliance with approved safety standards and policies. The Director is further empowered to take interim action to close, evacuate or bar entry to any area, space, classroom, laboratory or office and order the cessation of any activity on property own or controlled by the University which, in the opinion of the Director represents a possible danger to members of the University community or University property, including repeated violation or flagrant disregard of University safety policies.

**1.1.4** University personnel shall comply with all applicable federal and state statutes, ordinances, rules and codes; generally accepted industrial safety standards; and University policies contained in EH&S procedural manuals which are incorporated by reference into this handbook and are available electronically at: <http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=7393>.

## 1.2 Radiation Safety

EH&S is responsible for monitoring the safe use of radioisotopes at the University to ensure compliance with regulations governing use of radioactive sources, X-ray generating devices, and lasers. The University operates under Academic Radioactive Materials License #L-00159 issued by the Radiation Control Division of the Texas Department of State Health Services. An EH&S Radiation Safety Officer shall monitor all areas where radioactive materials are used to ensure regulatory requirements and

conditions of University licensure are adhered to by departmental sub-licensees. All University employees seeking to utilize radioactive materials or radiation producing equipment must register with EH&S and receive appropriate mandatory training before use will be granted under the University license.

**1.2.1** The EH&S Radiation Safety Officer monitors all areas where radioactive materials are used to ensure regulatory requirements and conditions of University licensure are adhered to by departmental sub-licensees. All University employees seeking to utilize radioactive materials or radiation producing equipment must register with EH&S and receive appropriate mandatory training before use will be granted under the University license.

### **1.3 Biological and Chemical Safety**

EH&S is responsible for monitoring the safe use and disposal of chemical and biological agents at the University to ensure compliance with prudent laboratory practices, National Institutes of Health guidelines, requirements of the Center for Disease Control and U. S. Department of Homeland Security, and the Texas Health and Safety Code. Hazardous chemical training and biological safety training are required of all University personnel who will use or encounter these materials during the course of their work. All University personnel seeking to utilize hazardous chemicals and/or biological agents must register and receive appropriate mandatory training from EH&S. Principal investigators are further responsible for insuring that all personnel under their direction have received appropriate training to address the hazards of specific chemicals or biological materials used in their research. Where research protocols will involve infectious agents or recombinant DNA, researchers shall seek pre-approval and continuing approval of the proposed research through submission of specific information for the consideration of the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC). IBC procedures may be found in the Biosafety Manual published at the EH&S procedural manuals website.

### **1.4 Physical Safety and Loss Prevention**

The University's Physical Safety program is designed to ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to preserve life and property from exposures to fire and other hazards, and to take measures aimed at loss prevention to include not only corrective actions but also to educate the campus community in its role to preserve life and property. The program is meant to serve as a helpful resource for managers and supervisors who must carry out specific procedures related to loss prevention.

**1.4.1** EH&S monitors University operations and facilities campus-wide to ensure continuity of physical safety and the functionality of building safety system (such as fire protection and detection systems) through a program of regular facility inspections and provision of appropriate loss prevention and emergency preparedness safety training for the University community.

## **1.5 Occupational Safety and Health**

The University recognizes the Occupational Safety and Health (OSHA) national standards and uses its provisions as an important guide in establishing and implementing institutional policies as contained in EH&S procedural manuals. The University also complies with provisions of the Texas Health and Safety Code, which adopts many of the basic OSHA principles into State law. EH&S provides job safety training and monitors compliance with the policies, manuals and rules to assure adequate and appropriate care is given to protect University employees. All records regarding employee training and workplace inspections are maintained by EH&S.

**1.5.1** EH&S supports research endeavors and other at risk functions of the campus through administration of a program of occupational risk assessment and health monitoring where the routine duties of employees are found to present an increased risk for occupational illness or disease.

## **1.6 Environmental Compliance**

EH&S is responsible for monitoring compliance with all applicable federal and state environmental laws including the application and receipt of required permits, and the gathering and reporting of all regulatory required data.

**1.6.1** EH&S represents the University before all regulatory agencies having environmental authority. This includes but is not limited to all matters pertaining to hazardous waste management, asbestos project monitoring and abatement, air quality permitting, storm water management, annual hazardous wastes summaries, Universal Waste records, fuel usage reports, air emission calculations and reports, and other environmental data as may be required by law or governmental regulations.

## **1.7 Workers' Compensation Insurance**

The University's Workers' Compensation Insurance (WCI) program is a state regulated insurance plan that covers medical treatment and rehabilitation for work related injuries and illnesses. WCI also pays a portion of income lost while an employee is away from work recovering.

**1.7.1** EH&S is responsible for all employer functions related to the University's Workers' Compensation program, which includes providing assistance to employees who experience a work related injury or illness, electronic reporting of claims to the insurance carrier, and return to work. EH&S also ensures timely compliance by the University of the Texas Department of Insurance, Workers' Compensation Insurance rules and regulations.

**1.7.2** The University's Return to Work (RTW) program provides opportunities for an employee who is injured on the job to return to work at full duty. If the injured worker is not physically capable of returning to full duty, the RTW program provides opportunities to perform regular job duties with modifications or, when available, to perform alternate temporary work that

meets the injured worker's physical capabilities. The program is designed to encourage and actively assist injured workers in the successful return to work.

## **1.8 Smoke and Tobacco Free Policy**

### **1.8.1 Purpose.**

The purpose of this policy is to establish requirements for the prohibition of tobacco use and smoke products on the campus of the University. This policy applies to all tobacco products.

The University encourages students, faculty and staff to support and use tobacco cessation programs available.

**1.8.2 Policy.** The use of tobacco products (including but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco or all other tobacco products) as well as smoking or use of any smoking device, by students, faculty, staff, and visitors is prohibited at all times on University Property. In doing so all areas of the University are designated as "Tobacco and Smoke Free Areas" in this Policy.

### **1.8.3 Definitions.**

**1.8.3.1. University Property** is defined as both interior and exterior space within the boundaries of all University owned, leased, operated, occupied, or controlled property and University campuses, including yet not limited to, all enclosed or partially enclosed areas such as walkways, breezeways and bus shelters, sidewalks, parking lots, and parking structures, whether attached or unattached . For purposes of this policy, University Property also includes all University vehicles including buses, vans, and all other University vehicles, whether leased or owned, and all indoor and outdoor athletic facilities, as well as the grandstands of outdoor facilities.

University Property does not include personal vehicles, provided that: 1) the windows are closed, 2) all tobacco waste products are properly disposed of, and 3) there is no prohibition under the terms of a grant or sponsored research (including CPRIT) requirements.

**1.8.3.2. University Tobacco and Smoke Free Areas** are defined as all University Property (as defined above).

**1.8.3.2.1.** Tobacco and Smoke Free Areas apply throughout the University Property, including all grounds, sidewalks, parking areas, structures, and buildings, whether or not signs are posted. No ashtrays or smoking shelters will be provided on University Property as it is in its entirety all designated as a University Tobacco and Smoke Free Area.

**1.8.4 Advertising and Sales.** The University prohibits the advertising, sale, or free sampling of tobacco products, smoking and/or smoking devices on campus.

**1.8.5 Littering.** Littering the campus with remains of tobacco products or any other disposable product is prohibited.

**1.8.6 Public Events.** Organizers and attendees at public events, such as conferences, meetings, public lectures, social events, cultural events and sporting events using University facilities will be required to abide by the Smoke and Tobacco Free Policy. Organizers of such events are responsible for communicating the policy to attendees and for enforcing this policy.

**1.8.7 Smoking and Tobacco Use Cessation Programs.** The University is committed to support all students and employees who wish to stop smoking and/or using tobacco products. Assistance to students, faculty, and staff to overcome addiction to smoking and tobacco products is available through Human Resources and Student Health Services. Referrals to cessation services are encouraged.

**1.8.8 Compliance.** Adherence to the policy cited above is the responsibility of all University students, faculty, staff, contractors and visitors. It is expected that all students, faculty, staff, and visitors to campus comply with this policy. Members of our campus community are empowered to respectfully inform others about the policy in an ongoing effort to enhance awareness and encourage a culture of compliance.

**1.8.9 Exceptions to Policy.** Tobacco use may be permitted under the following circumstances:

1. Sponsored research involving tobacco or tobacco products, provided the University employee obtains prior approval of the Executive Vice President and Provost, and a waiver is requested and granted in accordance with sponsored research and requirements, if any. Smoke, like any other laboratory contaminant, shall be controlled. The designs for designated laboratories must be approved by the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S). <http://www.utep.edu/eh&s>
2. By artists or actors who participate in University authorized performances that require smoking as part of the artistic production.
3. Educational or clinical purposes with prior approval of the dean or director responsible for the facility, or the Executive Vice President or Provost, and in the case of smoking, the University Fire Safety Manager.

**1.8.10 Enforcement.** An individual who feels that there has been a violation of this procedure may invoke the following actions:

1. The individual should attempt to resolve the problem informally by requesting that the individual comply with the policy.

2. If direct appeal fails and the behavior persists, the individual should contact the Office of Human Resources or Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs for referral to the appropriate administrative official.
3. Repeat offenses by the same person shall be dealt with through already established administrative/disciplinary policies and procedures.  
<http://admin.utep.edu/Portals/1196/docs/Discipline%20and%20Dismissal%20of%20Staff%20Employees.pdf>;  
<http://admin.utep.edu/Portals/1196/docs/Academic%20Policies%20and%20Faculty%20Personnel%20Matters.pdf>.
4. Violations could result in referral to the appropriate University officials for disciplinary action in accordance with established student, staff, and/or faculty codes of conduct and procedures.