

SAFETY COMPLIANCE FOR THE HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

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SAFETY COMPLIANCE

Safety compliance begins at the top level Administration for the Health Sciences Center and filters down in rank to all employees of the facility.

Over the past few decades the knowledge and understanding of hazards to humans and their environment such as Chemical, Radiation, Biological and Fire have laid the foundation for growth in safety regulations. Federal, State, and Local Governments have created and enforced laws as minimum standards for safety in the workplace. Many of the standards have come from non-regulatory agencies as recommendations before becoming laws.

OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration), EPA (Environmental Protection Agency), NRC (Nuclear Regulatory Commission), CDC/NIH (Center for Disease Control/National Institutes for Health), and NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) are but a few of Regulatory Agencies that require safe practices. These agencies work together with each other and many of their regulations will parallel or overlap certain areas. An example of this is when a substance mixture contains hazards that all of the agencies regulate. The highest safety hazard within the mixture usually determines which agency has jurisdiction of enforcing the regulation.

Who then is responsible for safety at the Health Sciences Center? Everyone! Every individual in an organization who makes decisions about the everyday operation of a facility, laboratory, clinic, and maintenance shop, etc. or those that work within these areas, share responsibility for setting good examples for safety compliance.

Safety in the workplace is not limited to compliance with laws and regulations. These are minimum standards as guidelines to follow. The institution may elect to set its own polices within the confines of the guidelines or above the standard guidelines set by a regulatory agency.

AVANTAGES OF COMPLIANCE

1. To Protect and Reduce Safety Risks for Employees.
2. Avoid Fines to the Institution from the Regulatory Agency. Potential Fines can range from a Few Hundred to Thousands of Dollars.
3. Institutional Loss of Federal Grants for Research.
4. Avoid loss of License.
5. Protection of the Environment.

SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Health Sciences Safety Committee meets monthly and is comprised of individuals representing various departments within the HSC. If you have any safety concerns, please contact a safety committee member from the list located on the Safety Office's website. (www.hsc.wvu.edu/safety)

CHEMICAL HYGIENE

In modern society, Humans have found a way to use natural chemicals or to manufacture synthetic ones for beneficial purposes. Their use is everywhere. Exposure to chemicals can cause illness and death. Death from chemical exposure is approximately 150 a day or 50,000 persons per year. For this reason it is extremely important to follow good chemical hygiene practices. It is vital to the health and safety efforts of everyone to know the hazards from exposure to chemicals in the workplace. For this reason the Federal Government enacted laws pertaining to chemical use under the Occupational Safety & Health Agency (OSHA), Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulation (29CFR1910), with subparts to specify minimum safety standards. These standards are applicable to all academic institutions.

Federal Law requires each laboratory or workplace using chemicals to have its own system to provide information to employees. (OSHA 29CFR1910.1450) Known as the Laboratory Standard provides guidelines for:

1. A written Chemical Hygiene Plan (CHP).
2. An inventory of all chemicals.
3. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS).
4. A labeling system to communicate the hazards and safety precautions.
5. Provides for Chemical Hygiene Officer(s).(CHO)

HEALTH SCIENCES CHEMICAL HYGIENE OFFICERS

Individuals from each school or department are selected and appointed by the School or Department Administrator. Both Faculty and Staff members can be appointed to serve. These individuals are trained in Chemical Hygiene, Laboratory Safety, and other safe practice methods. They assist the school or department with their technical support for developing and carrying out the Chemical Hygiene Plan, and interact both with Health Sciences Safety Personnel and WVU Environmental Health & Safety Personnel with safety issues. For any issues or concerns, please contact your CHO.