



OP 03.06 WORKPLACE SAFETY

PURPOSE

To cultivate a Generative Safety Culture within Mississippi State University (“University”) where safety is prioritized in all policies, decisions, and actions with an aim to prevent workplace accidents, illnesses, and injuries.

POLICY

Mississippi State University is committed to providing a safe working and learning environment for all University-related activities. It is the Policy of the University that all Covered Persons perform their Work safely. It is the responsibility of everyone in coordination and cooperation with each other to maintain a safe and healthy Workplace in accordance with good safety practices and compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The University will continuously evaluate and improve its Safety Programs and culture.

DEFINITIONS

Covered Persons – Individuals performing Work on behalf of the University. This may include students, employees, and volunteers.

Generative Safety Culture – an ethos or a common attitude in which everyone believes, values, and encourages safe practices and actively participates in creating a safe working and learning environment for all. Safety is a guiding principle.

Safety Guideline – a framework to assist Covered Persons in ensuring safety. Safety Guidelines are developed based on good practices, regulatory requirements, and knowledge gained from previous experiences to minimize the risk of accidents, injuries, and other potential hazards.

Safety Procedure – a set of standardized steps and protocols designed to prevent accidents and injuries. Procedures are developed based on this Policy and Safety Guidelines, good practices, regulatory requirements, hazard analysis, and knowledge gained from previous experiences to minimize the risk of accidents, injuries, and other potential hazards.

Safety Programs – a related set of Safety Guidelines, Procedures, and trainings implemented by the University, division, college, unit, or department to inform and train Covered Persons to increase safety awareness, prevent accidents, ensure compliance, and promote continuous improvement.

Supervisor – Those who assign Work to Covered Persons (e.g., managers, faculty, instructors, program leaders, etc.).

Work – to perform or carry through an assigned task on behalf of the University, whether

compensated or uncompensated.

Workplace – any location where Covered Persons carry out or perform Work.

SAFETY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Covered Persons are responsible for compliance with this Policy as it relates to operations under their control or their Work. Specific responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

President – responsible for leading and promoting the implementation of this Policy.

Vice Presidents – responsible for leading and upholding Workplace safety within their division. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring that the appropriate guidance, infrastructure, and resources needed for a safe working environment are available.
- Leading and promoting initiatives toward constant improvement of safety culture and practices.
- Fostering a positive, nonpunitive environment for all Covered Persons to raise safety concerns and communicate freely about safety and health issues.
- Recognizing individuals for maintaining or developing good Workplace safety practices.
- Holding Deans, Directors, Department Heads, and Unit Managers accountable for safety in their areas.

Deans, Directors, Department Heads, and Unit Managers – responsible for leading and upholding Workplace safety within their areas and taking necessary steps to ensure Work complies with this Policy, Safety Guidelines, and Safety Procedures. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring that the appropriate guidance, infrastructure, and resources needed for a safe working environment are available.
- Taking appropriate action to ensure that identified hazards are addressed and identified issues of non-compliance are corrected in a timely manner.
- Empowering individuals under their management with the appropriate authority and support to implement and fulfill this Policy, Safety Guidelines, and Procedures.
- Fostering a positive, nonpunitive environment for Covered Persons under their direction to raise safety concerns and communicate freely about safety issues.
- Holding Supervisors accountable for safety in their areas.

Supervisors – responsible for ensuring a safe Workplace for Covered Persons to whom they assign Work. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Ensuring Workplaces and equipment are safe.
- Providing continuous guidance in safely performing Work through routine safety awareness and training.
- Ensuring that Covered Persons under their supervision have completed required safety trainings.
- Ensuring that applicable safety equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) is

provided, maintained, and properly used.

- Reporting near-misses and unsafe conditions to Environmental Health & Safety and their administration.
- Reporting incidents and injuries to the Office of Compliance and Risk Management (OCRM) and their administration.
- Responding in a timely manner to address noncompliance violations of this Policy, Safety Guidelines and Safety Procedures, safety concerns, and recommendations to mitigate potentially unsafe conditions in consultation with EH&S as necessary.
- Fostering a positive, nonpunitive environment for Covered Persons under their supervision to raise safety concerns and communicate freely about safety issues.
- Holding Covered Persons under their supervision accountable for following this Policy, Safety Guidelines, and Safety Procedures.

Covered Persons – responsible for conducting Work in a safe manner to protect themselves and those around them. Responsibilities include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Abiding by this Policy, Safety Guidelines, and Safety Procedures.
- Completing required safety trainings.
- Participating in Safety Programs.
- Wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) as required in published Safety Guidelines, Safety Procedures, or by their Supervisor.
- Reporting near-misses and unsafe conditions to their Supervisor and/or EH&S (including any instructions you receive that depart from safe Workplace practices).
- Reporting incidents and Workplace injuries to their Supervisor.
- Declining to perform Work they feel poses an undue risk to themselves or others. If a Covered Person does not understand how to perform a task safely, they shouldn't do it; instead, ask for guidance.

Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) – responsible for establishing, implementing, and ensuring compliance with University Workplace Safety Guidelines and programs. EH&S responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Developing and maintaining Safety Guidelines and Safety Procedures to ensure individual and University compliance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations and recommending changes to Safety Guidelines and Safety Procedures to ensure continued compliance.
- Communicating this Policy, Safety Guidelines, and Safety Procedures.
- Conducting safety training and providing educational materials, assistance, and training for Covered Persons.
- Maintaining Safety Programs that combine training consultation, documentation, compliance, and evaluation.
- Providing guidance and technical assistance in identifying, evaluating, and correcting safety hazards.
- Reviewing accidents with stakeholders and providing reports to the relevant Dean, Director, Department Head, Unit Manager, or Supervisor on the cause and recommendations for the prevention of reoccurrences.

- Responding promptly to safety concerns or issues and undertaking or recommending corrective action. This includes the authority to order immediate cessation of activities that present an immediate danger to life, health, or safety.
- Representing the University in interactions relating to safety with external enforcement agencies and other entities in the areas of occupational health & safety, fire & life safety, radiation safety, biological safety, chemical safety, and environmental regulations.
- Coordinating and cooperating with divisions, colleges, departments, units, Covered Persons, and the University Workplace Safety Committee.

PROCEDURES

Safety Committees

The University Workplace Safety Committee is a standing committee reporting to the Provost and Executive Vice President. The Committee will serve as the overarching safety committee for the University.

Responsibilities of the Committee include:

- Promoting a Generative Safety Culture in all actions, decisions, and policies with an aim to prevent accidents, illnesses, and injuries.
- Ensuring University compliance with this Policy.
- Reviewing and approving Safety Guidelines.
- Reviewing and evaluating Workplace incidents.
- Reviewing and discussing safety suggestions from Covered Persons.
- Providing recommendations and feedback on Safety Programs.

Membership of the Workplace Safety Committee shall consist of an:

- A Chair appointed by the Provost and Executive Vice President
- An appointee from each Vice President/Division
- An appointee from the President of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate
- An Appointee from the Chair of the Staff Council
- Representatives approved by the Provost and Executive Vice President from
 - Human Resource Management
 - Office of Compliance and Risk Management
 - Office of Emergency Management
 - Office of General Counsel

Members of this Committee shall serve a term of three years. Members may be reappointed to consecutive terms.

The University Workplace Safety Committee shall coordinate with, seek input from, and may defer items to other established University safety related committees, including but not limited to the Radiological, Chemical, and Laboratory Safety Committee, the Institutional Biosafety Committee, or divisional safety committees.

Divisions, departments, and units may establish formal safety committees to further support the

implementation of this Policy and promote a Generative Safety Culture within their division, department, or unit.

Safety Guidelines and Safety Procedures

Safety Guidelines and Safety Procedures are developed to assist Covered Persons in conducting their Work safely and maintaining a safe Workplace.

Safety Guidelines shall be developed by EH&S and will include safety related requirements that must be followed by Covered Persons in all divisions, departments, and units, along with recommendations that should be followed by Covered Persons in all divisions, departments, and units.

Safety Guidelines shall be approved and reviewed at least every four years by the University Workplace Safety Committee.

Safety Guidelines shall be published on the EH&S website at ehs.msstate.edu/resources. A list of all Safety Guidelines shall be distributed annually to Deans, Directors, and Department Heads.

Safety Procedures may be developed by divisions, departments, Supervisors, or others to address unique or specific hazards associated with the Work performed within a division, department, or unit. Safety Procedures should supplement Safety Guidelines.

Safety Training

All Covered Persons must be properly trained to conduct their Work safely and competently. EH&S shall establish and conduct University-wide Workplace safety training programs and assist divisions, departments, and units with developing and delivering Safety Programs that address specific or unique Work hazards.

All Covered Persons must complete safety training based on their Work classifications and the hazards associated with their Work. Supervisors or Covered Persons may determine applicable safety training by completing the published EH&S safety training matrices at ehs.msstate.edu/training. Each Supervisor, department, or unit may require additional safety related training specific to hazards associated with the Work being performed. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that Covered Persons under their supervision have completed required safety trainings in accordance with this Policy, Safety Guidelines, and Procedures.

All safety-related training and the completion of such training by Covered Persons must be entered and tracked centrally in the University's Information Technology Services Training Management and Records System (TMaRS), the University's system for managing required and optional training. Safety related training, including division, department, and unit training, should be registered with EH&S in accordance with published procedures at ehs.msstate.edu/training.

Incident Reporting and Investigations (Lessons Learned)

Covered Persons injured while performing their Work should seek appropriate first aid or

medical treatment and must report any injuries to their Supervisor or department as soon as possible after the injury or when it is safe to do so.

Supervisors or persons designated by a Supervisor or department must report all workplace related injuries or illnesses of Covered Persons within one business day to the Office of Compliance and Risk Management in accordance with published incident reporting procedures at ocrm.msstate.edu/reporting.

Near-miss incidents (i.e., incidents where no injury was sustained but where, given a slight shift in time or position, injury easily could have occurred) should be reported to EH&S in accordance with published near-miss incident reporting procedures at ehs.msstate.edu/reporting.

All incidents and near-misses reported will be assessed and may be investigated in accordance with the Incident and Near-Miss Investigation Guidelines published by OCRM at ocrm.msstate.edu/reporting. Supervisors and affected Covered Persons will be required to participate in incident or near-miss investigations in an effort to prevent future or similar incidents.

Safety Compliance

Violations of this Policy by Covered Persons may result in corrective and/or disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

EH&S shall monitor compliance with the requirements contained within this Policy, approved Safety Guidelines, and regulatory requirements. EH&S may perform routine and unannounced inspections to determine compliance, document deficiencies, provide recommendations, or request corrective actions. If a regulatory agency requires a more stringent response to correct a violation, Covered Persons must adhere to the regulatory requirement.

Noncompliance violations will be categorized based on risk level as minor noncompliance, moderate noncompliance, and major violations immediately dangerous to life and health. The following describes each violation category and the required corrective actions required.

Minor Noncompliance - The occurrence of an unsafe activity or operation not in accordance with this Policy, applicable Safety Guidelines, and Safety Procedures and that does not pose an immediate life-threatening danger or harm. Supervisors shall develop and implement corrective actions in consultation with EH&S that resolve identified violations.

Moderate Noncompliance - The occurrence of an unsafe activity or operation not in accordance with this Policy, applicable Safety Guidelines, Safety Procedures, and regulatory requirements that do not pose an immediate life-threatening danger or harm, but which violates regulatory requirements, or which can reasonably be considered to represent a life-threatening danger in the near future. EH&S will provide written notice to the Supervisor, department head, and/or director of moderate noncompliance violations. Supervisors shall develop and implement corrective actions in consultation with EH&S that rectify identified violations. EH&S will report violations that are not rectified within a reasonable amount of time to the appropriate Dean or Vice President.

Major Violations Immediately Dangerous to Life and Health - The occurrence of an unsafe activity or operation not in accordance with this Policy, applicable Safety Guidelines, Safety Procedures, and regulatory requirements that pose an immediate life-threatening danger or harm. Covered Persons, Supervisors, or EH&S will stop the unsafe activity immediately. If EH&S is required to stop an unsafe activity, then EH&S will notify the Supervisor and the Director of Risk Management. The Director of Risk Management will notify the appropriate University officials of the risk to Covered Persons or the University. Supervisors shall develop and implement a corrective action plan to rectify the violation immediately and to prevent such violations from reoccurring. EH&S must review and approve the corrective action plan before operations can resume. EH&S will monitor corrective action plans.

REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed every four years (or whenever circumstances require an earlier review) by the University Workplace Safety Committee, with recommendations for revision presented to the Provost and Executive Vice President.

REVIEWED BY:

Chair, University Workplace Safety Committee

Date

Provost and Executive Vice President

Date

Associate Vice President, Institutional Strategy & Effectiveness

Date

General Counsel

Date

APPROVED BY:

President

Date