
Subject: Health and Safety Policy

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1. Purpose

This policy is intended to: help prevent accidents, illnesses and injuries; increase safety awareness; meet requirements of environmental, occupational health, and safety laws and regulations; reduce institutional liability; and establish safety responsibilities for members of the university community and visitors to university-owned or occupied property.

At Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), safety is everyone's responsibility. All members of the university community are expected to be thoroughly familiar with their safety responsibilities, strive to follow safety practices at all times, act proactively to prevent accidents and injuries, communicate hazards to supervisors, and be prepared for emergencies that may occur in the workplace.

This Health and Safety Policy reaffirms the university's commitment to safety and good environmental stewardship and establishes a uniform system to help individuals, departments, and units meet their health and safety responsibilities.

This policy outlines safety responsibilities and training requirements to ensure individual and institutional compliance with relevant environmental health and safety laws, regulations, policies, and guidelines.

Environmental Health and Safety Services (EHSS) will work closely with departments, safety committees, employees, and students throughout the university to ensure compliance with this policy.

2. Policy

Virginia Tech strives to maintain a safe living, learning, and working environment. Faculty, staff, students, and other members of the Virginia Tech community must conduct university operations in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations, and EHSS requirements.

2.1 Entities Affected by the Policy

All individuals, departments, and units under the direct supervision of Virginia Tech.

2.2 Who Should Read This Policy

All members of the Virginia Tech community.

3. Procedures

3.1 Responsible Parties

University President

Assumes overall responsibility for the implementation of the university's Health and Safety Policy at all facilities under university control.

Provost, Vice Presidents and Deans

Implement and enforce the Health and Safety Policy in all facilities and operations under their control.

University EHS Committee

The university has established the Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) Committee as a University Operational Committee with the authority to oversee university compliance with the Health and Safety Policy.

Directors/Department Heads

1. Implement the Health and Safety Policy and communicate its requirements to faculty, students, and staff.
2. Designate and empower a safety team as necessary to address and coordinate safety efforts and work with EHSS within departments/units.
3. Designate and empower safety representative(s) for departments, units, or sections to ensure compliance with the Health and Safety Policy and program requirements. This representative will work with EHSS staff to develop and maintain safety programs.
4. Direct individuals, including but not limited to principal investigators, supervisors, regular and temporary employees, visiting professors, and students, to obtain any required safety training before they work with hazardous chemicals, biohazardous agents, radiation, or physical/mechanical hazards in their working or learning environments.
5. Report all accidents, job-related illnesses, and work site injuries to Human Resources. Also, conduct a review and investigation of all job-related illnesses, accidents, and work site injuries as needed to complete the Employer's Accident Report and to identify if there are workplace hazards that need to be corrected.
6. Determine whether safety needs for units/departments are met (e.g., training, personal protective equipment, and corrective measures including non-mandated items identified in safety audits).
7. Incorporate workplace safety requirements and responsibilities into each appropriate job description and ensure that workplace safety expectations are communicated to each employee.
8. Ensure that periodic safety self-audits of work areas and/or facilities are conducted.
9. Ensure that emergency action preparedness plans are developed and communicated to all personnel in order to ensure familiarity and coordination between facility personnel and emergency responders.

Faculty, Principal Investigators, Supervisors, and Safety Representatives

1. Implement the university's Health and Safety Policy and all other university safety programs in work areas under their supervision/control.
2. Require all staff members and students under their direction to attend and maintain current required safety training.
3. Maintain workplaces and equipment under their control in a safe, well-kept condition. Ensure compliance with the Health and Safety Policy in these workplaces.
4. Assure that hazards are proactively identified and corrected by implementing engineering or administrative controls, or by assuring use of necessary personal protective equipment.
5. Dispose of waste properly and in accordance with university, state and federal requirements.

Employees and Students

1. Comply with this policy and all other university health and safety programs.
2. Attend required health and safety training.
3. Inform a supervisor or instructor of any safety or health hazards in the workplace on university property, or in areas tenanted or used by Virginia Tech.
4. Know your role in an emergency.

Contractors

1. Comply with Virginia Tech’s *Safety Requirements for Contractors and Subcontractors* program.

Human Resources

1. Include the Health and Safety Policy in appropriate informational handbooks, brochures, and trainings.
2. Refer unresolved safety matters to EHSS for assistance, review, and resolution.
3. Maintain a database of completed accident reports.

Environmental Health and Safety Services (EHSS)

1. Advise the university community of its responsibilities regarding the Health and Safety Policy.
2. Prepare documents and guidelines for programs to ensure individual and university compliance with relevant environmental, health, and safety laws, regulations, policies, and guidelines.
3. Recommend programs and actions for compliance.
4. Consult with regulators and other external entities on behalf of the university.
5. Provide guidance and technical assistance to supervisors and managers in colleges, schools, departments, and other work units in identifying, evaluating, and correcting safety and health hazards.
6. Provide required training.
7. Conduct investigations and analyses of occupational accidents and injuries.
8. Monitor compliance with health and safety statutes and regulations and university health and safety policies, programs, and guidelines.
9. Identify noncompliant situations and recommend improvements; submit these to vice presidents, deans, directors, department heads, supervisors and principal investigators who are responsible for departments, laboratories, units, and work areas.
10. Ensure that hazardous materials are disposed of properly.
11. Execute responsibilities involving inspection and enforcement delegated by any standing university safety committee.
12. In cases of imminent danger to life or health, order the cessation of hazardous activity until the danger from such a condition is abated or adequate measures have been taken.
13. Appraise the administration of compliance status.

3.2 Policy Compliance

The following committees oversee and assure that specific regulatory requirements are met including, where applicable, the review, approval or rejection of research protocols.

Committee	Ensures Compliance for Projects or Activities Involving:
Environmental, Health and Safety Committee	Compliance with university Health and Safety Policy
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee	Vertebrate Animals

Institutional Review Board	Humans as Subjects
Radiation Safety Committee	Radioactive materials and radiation-producing equipment
Institutional Biosafety Committee	Recombinant DNA
Biosafety Compliance Committee	Human Pathogens, Select Agents and Toxins, Plant Pathogens
University Laboratory and Hazardous Materials Safety Committee	Hazardous materials management and laboratory safety

4. References

4.1 Related University Documents

- Animal Use in Research Policy
- Asbestos Operations and Maintenance Program
- Biosafety Program
- Chemical Hygiene Plan
- Confined Space Entry Program
- Contractor Safety Requirements
- Electrical Safety Program
- Employer's First Report of Accident
- Ergonomics Program
- Excavation, Trenching, and Shoring Program
- Exposure Control Plan (for bloodborne pathogens)
- Fall Protection
- Fire and Life Safety Program
- Hazard Communication Program (for chemicals)
- Hazardous Materials Management Program
- Hearing Conservation Program
- Hot Work Permit Program
- Laser Safety Training Manual
- Lead Hazard Control Program
- Lockout/Tagout Program
- Occupational Health Assurance Program
- Personal Protective Equipment Program
- Radioactive Material Safety Program
- Respiratory Protection Program
- Safety Requirements for Contractors and Subcontractors
- Tuberculosis Exposure Control Program
- [University Policy No. 4415: Worker's Compensation Program](#)
- X-Ray Safety Handbook

For a complete listing, including access to written programs, see www.ehss.vt.edu.

5. Approval and Revisions

Approved January 10, 2001 by the Vice President for Administration and Treasurer, Raymond D. Smoot, Jr.

- Revision 1

Section 3.2. Asbestos Operations and Maintenance, and Lead hazards and Lead-Based Paint moved from Occupational Safety Division to Occupational Health and Industrial Hygiene Division. Machine Shop Safety and Scaffolding added to Occupational Safety Division.

Approved May 6, 2002 by Vice President for Administration and Treasurer, Raymond D. Smoot, Jr.

Policy 5800: Health and Safety Policy renumbered April 15, 2003 to Policy 1005 and moved to General University Policies list.

- Revision 2

Changes to entire policy to update and clarify requirements and update information related to university committees that address safety and health issues at the university.

Approved February 28, 2007 by Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, James A. Hyatt

- Revision 3

April 1, 2008: Updates to position titles and/or responsibilities due to university reorganization.