LABORATORY SAFETY COMMITTEE
Charter and Procedures

Mission Statement

The University is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for its students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Cultivating a culture of safety is a shared responsibility that requires all individuals working in laboratories to be appropriately trained and to comply with University policies and procedures.
The Laboratory Safety Committee (LSC) promotes safe working and learning conditions in all research and teaching laboratories on campus with respect to general laboratory safety and chemical hygiene. The LSC serves as a forum where members of the campus community can collaboratively discuss laboratory safety issues, challenges, and initiatives. In recognition of the specialized oversight provided by the Institutional Biosafety Committee and the Radiation Safety Committee, the LSC focuses on laboratory hazards not specifically addressed by those committees. In cases where jurisdictions overlap, the more stringent requirement applies.

Moreover, the University recognizes its obligation to exercise a duty of care in maintaining laboratory environments that are reasonably safe and free from foreseeable harm. This includes implementing policies, procedures, and training programs designed to identify, evaluate, and mitigate risks associated with research laboratory activities, particularly for students engaged in instructional settings. While expectations for independent judgement may differ among undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and staff, the University shall maintain consistent standards of safety training, hazard communication, and risk management to reduce the likelihood of injury, illness, or loss of life to demonstrate compliance with applicable legal and regulatory obligations.

Reporting

The Committee reports to the Vice President for Research and Economic Development ("VP for Research") or their designee.

Goals and Objectives

In support of the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) office and the designated Chemical Hygiene Officer (CHO), the Committee will:

- Ensure compliance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations and standards regarding laboratory safety, hazardous material usage and storage, and physical hazards.
- Review laboratory-related incidents, injuries, and illnesses, and recommend corrective actions to promote safe practices.
- Serve as a resource in the development, implementation, and maintenance of a comprehensive laboratory safety program.
- Oversee and review the University Chemical Hygiene Plan annually.
- Review and recommend policies, procedures, and guidelines related to laboratory and chemical safety, and assist in their timely and consistent implementation.
- Identify and evaluate potential hazards associated with research and teaching activities in the laboratory environment.
- Evaluate the use of highly hazardous chemicals and review or prescribe Standard Operating Procedures regarding their safe use.

- Assist in the definition of training programs and champion training initiatives related to laboratory safety.
- Review regulatory agency reports and changes in oversight that relate to laboratory or chemical safety and recommend policy or programmatic changes to promote compliance.
- Discuss institutional laboratory safety issues and serve as a forum for the campus community to raise safety concerns for collaborative review.
- Recommend disciplinary action to the appropriate University officials against personnel who violate laboratory safety regulations, institutional policies, or conditions of approved protocols.
- Review the LSC Charter every three years.
- Maintain a list of the members and their appropriate training and experience.

Membership Composition and Representation

Members are appointed by the President of the University in accordance with the approved procedures for standing committee appointments. All appointments are for an initial three-year term and may be reappointed for successive terms at the discretion of the President of the University. The composition of the Committee shall be large enough to adequately represent each of the major departments or colleges that maintain laboratory space. This includes:

- The CHO (Chemical Hygiene Officer)
- A representative from the administration who is neither a faculty member nor the CHO e.g. Assistant VP for Research, Director of Research Integrity and Compliance, etc.
- A representative from Environmental Health & Safety (cannot be the CHO)
- Faculty or technical representatives from the various schools, colleges, and offices maintaining laboratory space.
- Principal investigators and/or experienced professionals responsible for complex laboratory operations.

Subcommittees

Subcommittees may be established as necessary to perform specific duties and shall be comprised of members from the Committee as appointed by the Chair. Qualified individuals who are not members of the Committee may be appointed to subcommittees at the discretion of the Chair.

Chair

The Chair is appointed by the VP for Research or their designee following recommendation by the Committee members and the CHO. The Chair shall:

- Be a voting position.
- Be an individual of appropriate expertise and knowledge of laboratory safety issues, good leadership abilities, authority and credibility by virtue of their position within the University, and a desire to serve as Chair.
- Preside at all meetings or designate another member to serve in his/her absence.
- Work closely with the CHO to ensure the directives of the Committee are being implemented by the CHO.
- Schedule regular meetings of the Committee.

- Prepare and distribute an agenda to Committee members at least three working days prior to regular meetings and one day prior to special meetings.
- Approve the draft minutes of the meetings for distribution to the members of the Committee for review and approval.
- Call special meetings and appoint ad hoc sub-committees when necessary.
- Prepare, in collaboration with the Executive Officer, the annual report to the Administrative Council.
- Represent the Committee in Administrative Council meetings when requested.

The CHO shall not be appointed as the Chair of the Committee.

Chemical Hygiene Officer (CHO)

The highest priority for the CHO is to ensure that day-to-day operations involving chemical materials are conducted in a manner that adequately protects public health and safety. The CHO shall:

- Be a voting position.
- Design and implement the University laboratory safety program with the assistance and support of the Committee and the administration.
- Ensure that laboratory operations are being performed in accordance with the University's policy and procedure.
- Be responsible for keeping the Committee apprised of all major actions taken to implement and ensure compliance with radiation safety rules and regulations.

The CHO shall not serve as the Committee Chair.

Executive Officer

The Executive Officer shall be an administrator in the Office of Research and Economic Development and shall be appointed by the President of the University. The Executive Officer shall:

- Attend all meetings of the Committee without voting privileges.
- Serve as the Institutional/University Officer for the Committee.
- Serve as a consultant to the Committee and aid in the conduct of Committee business.
- Provide administrative support services to the Chair in the conduct and coordination of Committee activities.

Meetings

The Committee shall meet as necessary to conduct its business, but at least quarterly.

Fifty percent plus one of the Committee membership will constitute a quorum and must include the CHO, Committee Chair, and the representative from management. Actions of the Committee shall be taken by the vote of a majority of members present in any meeting at which a quorum is present. Members may participate by remote means when necessary or desirable. In the event that the meeting quorum is not met, the meeting will either be rescheduled, or limited business will take place.

Members are expected to review all information provided prior to the meeting and attend all scheduled Committee meetings. If a member must be absent from a meeting, every effort should be made to designate a proxy. Once a proxy has been designated by the member who plans to be absent from a meeting, notice should be given to the Chair and the name of the proxy provided.

The proxy for an absent member must be approved by the Chair since special expertise is required for Committee membership. Once approved by the Chair, the proxy will count towards a quorum. However, voting by proxy is prohibited.

Absence from fifty percent (50%) of regular meetings without due cause will result in a request by the Committee to the President of the University, via the Executive Officer, for replacement of that member.

Agendas, Minutes and Reports

The Chair, with assistance from the CHO, shall be responsible for establishing the agenda for meetings. Committee members may also make requests for agenda items. The agenda and relevant materials will be sent to Committee members at least five business days in advance of the meeting.

Minutes of the meetings shall be drafted by ORED staff and approved by Committee members at the following meeting. Approved minutes of Committee meetings shall be posted on the University Standing Committee website.

The Committee will provide periodic reports to the VP for Research as requested.

Amendment of Procedures

These procedures can be amended at any regular meeting of the Committee by a majority vote of the members present, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing to the members at least one week prior to the meeting where the voting will take place. Amendments to these procedures are subject to final approval by the Administrative Council.