

# AUTHORITY, RESPONSIBILITIES, & DUTIES

Version: December 2019



## Research Safety

Office of Research

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

### I. Environmental Health & Safety Management System Committees

UGA's Comprehensive Environmental Health and Safety Management System (EHSMS) was established in accordance with [Academic Affairs Policies 6.01 and 6.02](#) and is intended to govern how UGA manages all aspects of environmental health and safety. The EHSMS serves as an integrated set of processes and procedures for managing the day-to-day EHS compliance operations to enhance the level of compliance and to increase efficiency of operations in a comprehensive manner. The EHSMS shall use a process-driven approach to track information, identify safety risks, set safety goals, take action to ensure safety, assess results of those actions, and adjust processes as necessary to produce the intended results. As described below, the EHSMS is governed by oversight, steering, and other committees with execution by a variety of operational units.

#### A. Executive Committee

The EHSMS Executive Committee reviews and provides guidance on the design, development, and implementation of the EHSMS. The Executive Committee will also meet periodically to review and provide oversight on the EHSMS. In accordance with Academic Affairs Policy 6.02, the Executive Committee is also tasked with forming and charging standing and ad hoc committees as needed.

#### B. Academic/Research Steering Committee

The EHSMS Academic/Research Steering Committee guides the development and implementation of those aspects of the EHSMS that improve Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) programs and research compliance at UGA.

#### C. Administrative/Operations Steering Committee

The EHSMS Administrative/Operations Steering Committee guides the development and implementation of those aspects of the EHSMS that improve EHS programs and the compliance of administrative operations at UGA.

#### D. Research Safety Committee

The Research Safety Committee (RSC) is a standing committee within the EHSMS and

is charged with guiding the development and implementation of campus-wide Environmental Health and Safety programs consistent with [Academic Affairs Policies 6.01 and 6.02](#). Per Academic Affairs Policy 6.02, the RSC is appointed by the President of UGA through the EHSMS Executive Committee. The RSC will be advisory to the Vice President for Research (VPR), and work directly with the Office of Research Integrity & Safety (ORIS), the Environmental Safety Division (ESD), and their respective leaders.

The RSC is charged to review safety trends regarding chemical and laboratory safety and definitively address and mitigate unresolved issues of non-compliance. The RSC will work in collaboration with ad hoc working groups and the existing research compliance committees for Animal Care and Use, Biosafety, Radiation Safety, and Human Subjects. The RSC reports to the VPR through the Associate Vice President for Research Integrity & Safety. Also, consistent with Academic Affairs Policy 6.02, the RSC will keep the VPR and EHSMS Executive Committee informed of its findings, conclusions, actions or non-actions, and recommendations. Other responsibilities include:

1. Establishing and reviewing laboratory safety policies, procedures, and safety survey audit forms. Policies and procedures will be set forth in the UGA Chemical and Laboratory Safety Manual (CLSM) and other documents. No changes shall be made to the CLSM, appendices, or portions of the manual contained on the web site without RSC approval. The RSC shall approve all procedures used to evaluate laboratory safety and ensure accountability.
2. Designing policies to:
  - a. Protect and ensure safety for all faculty, staff, students, visitors, and members of the public from hazardous agents
  - b. Keep the University in compliance with local, state, and federal regulations regarding laboratory safety, the purchase, transportation, use, handling, storage, and disposal of all chemicals and hazardous agents
3. Recommending and providing oversight of training programs on laboratory safety practices that will result in faculty, staff, and students having a thorough awareness and application of safe laboratory practices, chemical storage, chemical use, and chemical disposal.
4. Reviewing and advising on corrective actions recommended by the ORS laboratory safety staff. During the review process, principal investigators can contact the RSC directly at: [RSC@uga.edu](mailto:RSC@uga.edu).
  - a. Principal investigators may appeal decisions made by ORS in the

implementation of the laboratory safety program to the RSC. (See Appendix B, Unsafe Laboratory Closure Policy.)

- b. When laboratories fail to implement corrective actions and are non-compliant with this manual, the ORS, may bring these to the attention of the RSC for resolution as described in the [Office of Research Policy & Procedure for Responding to Allegations of Research Non-Compliance](#).
5. Notifying UGA administration through the EHSMS executive and steering committees of any problems that need to be addressed through institutional level administrative procedures or policies and advise them accordingly
6. Closing any laboratory determined to be unsafe per the laboratory closure policy after informing the EHSMS executive and steering committee chairs. Any closed laboratory will be reopened for use only after a follow-up inspection from ORS and RSC review. A determination of the RSC to not close a laboratory reviewed for unsafe practices will also be reported to the EHSMS executive and steering committee chairs. The EHSMS executive committee has the authority to impose more stringent sanctions than those recommended by the RSC.
7. Investigating any incident that causes an excessive chemical, hazardous agent exposure or other non-compliance in accord with the [Policy & Procedure for Responding to Allegations of Research Non-Compliance](#) and reporting outcomes to the EHSMS executive and steering committee chairs

## **II. Programs for Research Environmental Health and Safety**

The Programs for Research Environmental Health and Safety (PREHS) include all programs and services provided by the Office of Research Safety, located within the Office of Research, and the Environmental Safety Division, located within the Office of Finance and Administration.

### **A. Office of Research Safety (ORS)**

The Associate Vice President (AVP) for Research Integrity & Safety has been designated by the Vice President for Research as the central point of coordination for Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) matters within research areas at UGA. They communicate to the EHSMS Executive Committee as needed regarding EHS matters. ORS staff report directly to the AVP for Research Integrity & Safety and provide guidance to UGA faculty, staff, and students on general laboratory safety and the safe use of chemical agents, radiation safety, and laser safety. The program is committed to safety, health, environmental protection, and compliance based on

current government regulations, guidelines, and best practices. Responsibilities include:

1. Providing advice and consultation to the RSC which is solely responsible for establishing university policies for chemical and laboratory safety as presented in this manual
2. Providing advice, consultation, and assistance to Principal Investigators (PIs) and laboratory personnel in complying with the policies and guidelines of this manual
3. Maintaining a level of expertise in designated EHS regulatory and program areas
4. Implementing the UGA Standard Operating Procedures for Laboratory Safety Inspections
5. Informing the RSC of continuing noncompliant or unsafe conditions in University laboratories using the guidelines and procedures provided for in the [Policy & Procedure for Responding to Allegations of Research Non-Compliance](#)
6. Taking immediate and necessary action to protect the health and safety of University employees, the public, and the environment in those situations that pose an immediate threat to life and health. These actions shall be governed using the provisions and guidelines of the laboratory closure procedure and the [Policy & Procedure for Responding to Allegations of Research Non-Compliance](#)
7. Inspecting university laboratories for compliance with the policies and provisions of this manual and appendices
8. Advising, as appropriate, PIs, deans, department/unit heads, and the RSC of problems found in individual laboratories
9. Providing technical assistance to laboratory personnel in establishing safety programs in their individual laboratories
10. Providing consultation on the safe design of chemical laboratories and their associated safety equipment

11. Responding to chemical emergencies, providing guidance, consultation, and appropriate assistance
12. Assisting ESD in the further development and maintenance of a central chemical container inventory system (Chematix)
13. Assisting departments and laboratories in developing plans for the use, storage, and disposal of hazardous chemicals and for the training of laboratory workers, ensuring that those plans are compatible with University policy
14. Supporting the RSC in developing, updating, and implementing the Chemical & Laboratory Safety Manual

**B. Environmental Safety Division**

The Associate Vice President for Environmental Safety has been designated by the President as the primary point of contact and communication both within non-research areas at the University of Georgia and with external environmental regulatory bodies. The Environmental Safety Division (ESD) reports directly to the AVP for Environmental Safety and provides guidance to UGA faculty, staff, and students in laboratories on engineered safety features and equipment, chemical exposure monitoring, respiratory equipment fit testing, fire and life safety, hazardous waste management, and worker right-to-know. Responsibilities include:

1. Providing advice and consultation to the RSC which is solely responsible for establishing University policies for chemical and laboratory safety as presented in this manual
2. Advising, consulting with, and assisting PIs and laboratory personnel in complying with the policies and guidelines of this manual with regard to engineered safety features and equipment, chemical exposure monitoring, respiratory equipment fit testing, fire and life safety, hazardous waste management, and worker right-to-know
3. Maintaining a level of expertise in designated EHS regulatory and program areas
4. Implementing the UGA Standard Operating Procedures for Non-Chemical Laboratory Safety Inspections
5. Informing the RSC of continuing noncompliant or unsafe conditions in

University laboratories using the guidelines and procedures provided for in the [Policy & Procedure for Responding to Allegations of Research Non-Compliance](#)

6. Inspecting University laboratories designated as non-chemical Laboratories for compliance with the policies and provisions of this manual
7. Inspecting University laboratories for compliance with State and Federal laws and standards for the management of hazardous waste
8. Advising, as appropriate, Pls, deans, department/unit heads, and the RSCof problems found in individual laboratories
9. Providing technical assistance to laboratory personnel in establishing safety and compliance programs in their individual laboratories
10. Providing consultation on the safe design of chemical laboratories and their associated safety equipment
11. Responding to chemical emergencies, providing guidance, consultation, and appropriate assistance
12. Taking immediate and necessary action to protect the health and safety of University employees, the public, and the environment in those situations that pose an immediate threat to life and health. These actions shall be governed using the provisions and guidelines of the laboratory closure procedure and the [Policy & Procedure for Responding to Allegations of Research Non-Compliance](#).
13. Providing testing and/or quality assurance control for proper operation of safety equipment in chemical laboratories (i.e., safety showers, eyewash stations, chemical fume hoods)
14. Providing programs for chemical exposure monitoring, respiratory equipment issuance and fit testing, right to know, and other relevant safety education
15. Providing pickup of hazardous and non-hazardous chemical waste from laboratories
16. Developing and maintaining a central chemical container inventory system (Chematix)

17. Assisting departments and laboratories in developing plans for the use, storage, and disposal of hazardous chemicals and for the training of laboratory workers, ensuring that those plans are compatible with University policy
18. Supporting the RSC in the developing, updating, and implementing the Chemical & Laboratory Safety Manual.

### **III. Academic and Research Units**

#### **A. Deans**

Responsibilities include:

1. Ensuring that all research and activities in the college or school are conducted in compliance with all applicable EHS regulations and UGA policies and procedures
2. Ensuring all laboratory and non-laboratory spaces under their direction are properly maintained while in use and closed appropriately and safely cleaned before transfer to a new occupant
3. Remedying all non-compliance matters within all laboratory spaces that they oversee

#### **B. Department Head/Center & Institute Director**

Responsibilities include:

1. Ensuring that all research and activities in the department or Center/Institute are conducted in compliance with all applicable EHS regulations and UGA policies and procedures
2. Ensuring all laboratory and non-laboratory spaces under their direction are properly maintained while in use and closed appropriately and safely cleaned before transfer to a new occupant
3. Remedying all non-compliance matters within all laboratory spaces that they oversee and manage overall financial responsibility on such matters.
4. Assuming accountability for any hazardous material left temporarily in any laboratory without proper supervision and assigning to a new PI or initiating

disposition by ESD.

5. In the event that hazardous materials are abandoned in any laboratory, the department head will immediately initiate disposition by ESD upon becoming aware of the situation.

**C. Principal Investigator (PI)**

A principal investigator is defined as a faculty member (assistant professor, associate professor, professor, or instructor), a research professional, an academic professional, or laboratory director who is associated with or provides guidance to a laboratory or laboratories using chemicals or hazardous materials. Graduate students and postdoctoral associates will not be considered a PI except under special circumstances at the discretion of the unit head. Responsibilities include:

1. The PI shall train or provide for the training of all new personnel before allowing them to work in a laboratory using hazardous materials. Training shall include the following:
  - a. Reading of this manual including the Laboratory Specific Chemical Safety Plan
  - b. Successful completion of all required [laboratory safety training](#)
  - c. Development of process specific safety protocol for chemicals and equipment.
  - d. The proper use of job-specific personal protective equipment (PPE)
  - e. Notifying the proper authorities in the event of an emergency or accident
2. The PI shall ensure that all laboratory personnel are entered into the Chematix database and this database is maintained and updated regularly.
3. The PI shall see that records are kept as required by this manual.
4. The PI shall remove chemical and biological substances under his/her control that may pose a hazard prior to maintenance personnel working on furnishings, equipment, or laboratory systems.
5. When leaving the University, or terminating his/her PI position, the PI shall relinquish all hazardous chemicals in his/her possession by disposal or transfer to another principal investigator who has facilities capable of safely handling the material in question.
6. The PI on leave or absent more than 60 calendar days:



- a. May assign responsibility for his/her program to a temporary designee who will be in charge of the laboratory in his/her absence. This person will be: a faculty member, a laboratory director, a research professional, or an academic professional who agrees, in writing, to accept responsibility for the laboratory.
  - b. If the PI does not choose the option listed above in 6.a., his/her laboratory will be placed under the temporary supervision of another faculty member, research professional, academic professional, or laboratory director selected by the department head.
  - c. The departing PI will ensure that all door signs reflect the change in supervisory status.
  - d. The temporary designee may not be utilized for a period exceeding 12 months without approval of the department head.
7. Upon PI retirement, with or without emeritus status, his/her status as principal investigator will terminate. The retiring PI must safely dispose of or transfer the chemicals and hazardous waste inventory prior to retirement per the laboratory closing procedures. In the event that this is not possible, the PI may apply to the department head for continued principal investigator status until all chemicals and hazardous materials are safely disposed.

#### **D. Laboratory Supervisor/Laboratory Coordinator**

Responsibilities include:

- 1. Provide day-to-day supervision of research and activities in the laboratory ensuring that those activities comply with all applicable EHS regulations and UGA policies and procedures
- 2. Keep the PI informed of any potential compliance issues and assist the PI with all EHS matters.

#### **E. Laboratory Personnel**

Laboratory personnel are any persons who work, teach, or observe activities within a designated research or instructional laboratory or field environment. This includes students, visitors, teaching assistants, and instructors. Responsibilities include:

- 1. Conduct activities in compliance with all laboratory-specific procedures,

applicable EHS regulations, and UGA policies and procedures

2. Assist the PI or their designee with all EHS matters

**IV. Contacts**

Environmental Safety Division: 706-542-5801

Office of Research Safety: 706-542-5288