



Environmental Health and Safety Principal Investigator Orientation Manual

Welcome to The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth Houston)! The Office of Safety, Health, Environment and Risk Management (SHERM) is committed to ensuring the health and safety of all faculty, staff, students, medical residents, and visitors at UTHealth Houston. This document provides valuable information in helping us achieve the ultimate goal of ensuring that everyone leaves at the end of each day as healthy and safe as when they arrived on our campus.

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) is strategically organized into programs that address the risks associated with the teaching, research and service activities that occur on our campus. While each program is charged with ensuring compliance with applicable rules and regulations, our commitment to you is that we will provide assistance while maintaining a friendly and efficient customer service approach.

If you have any service needs or questions for EHS, please do not hesitate to contact our main number at 713-500-8100 or visit our website at <https://www.uth.edu/safety/>. If you have an after-hours need for a safety reason, call 713-500-5832 to reach one of our on-call Safety Specialists. Remember, if you have an emergency situation for any reason, call 911 immediately.

A description of each of our programs is as follows:



Note that the Occupational Health Program (Employee Health) for UTHealth Houston is operated out of the UT Health Services clinic, but reports on its activities to SHERM. This program supports the mission of the EHS programs and works hand in hand to prevent workplace accidents and injuries and to get people back to work as soon as possible after an accident or injury. More information on the Occupational Health Program can be found here: <https://www.uthealthservices.com/employee-health/>

CHEMICAL SAFETY PROGRAM (CYF G.102)

713-500-5832

The Chemical Safety Program is charged with ensuring that hazardous chemicals (poisons, corrosives, reactives, toxins, reproductive hazards, carcinogens, etc.) are utilized safely and in compliance with applicable state and federal rules and regulations. The Chemical Safety Program achieves this goal through the implementation and maintenance of a comprehensive hazard communication program, safety training, laboratory surveillance, and risk assessment protocol evaluation of certain hazardous chemicals prior to experimentation.

Please visit the Chemical Safety Program website for more information:

<https://www.uth.edu/safety/chemical-safety/index.htm>



Using Chemical Agents

Principal investigators are responsible for obtaining approval for use of certain hazardous chemical agents. To determine whether a chemical requires committee approval and to find the appropriate protocol submission form, please visit our website here: <https://www.uth.edu/safety/chemical-safety/chemical-protocol-review.htm> or contact us at 713-500-5832 for more information.

The safe work practices expected to be implemented when using chemicals at UTHealth can be found in our Chemical Hygiene Plan found here:

<https://www.uth.edu/safety/chemical-safety/hygiene-plan.htm>

Training

All personnel who work with hazardous chemicals must attend the Basic Laboratory Safety and Bloodborne Pathogens training course. This course is available on our learning management system platform. Please visit our website for more information:

<https://www.uth.edu/safety/training/index.htm>

Other Services

The Chemical Safety Program offers a variety of services such as respiratory fit testing and training, workplace ergonomics assessments, indoor air quality investigations, industrial hygiene evaluation and monitoring, and assistance with minor chemical spill clean-up. Contact us at 713-500-5832 for more information.

BIOLOGICAL SAFETY PROGRAM (CYF G.102)

713-500-8170



The Biological Safety Program is charged with ensuring that all biological agents (e.g. viruses, bacteria, parasites, prions, recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules, human blood and tissues, etc.) are used safely and in compliance with all applicable guidelines and regulations. The Biological Safety Program achieves this goal through the implementation a comprehensive laboratory evaluation program, safety training, and risk assessment protocol evaluation and review by the Institutional Biosafety Committee.

Please visit the Biological Safety Program website for more information:

<https://www.uth.edu/safety/biological-safety/index.htm>

Using Biological Agents

Principal investigators are responsible for obtaining approval for use of biological agents that are classified as risk group 2 or greater, and for the use of any recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules that qualify under the *NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules*. To determine whether your research requires Institutional Biosafety Committee review and approval, please visit our website and scroll down to the “Institutional Biosafety Committee” section for a variety of helpful documents: <https://www.uth.edu/safety/biological-safety/index.htm>.

To submit your protocol, please click here to access our online protocol submission system: [Online Protocol Submission Interface](#). If you have any specific questions or need more guidance, do not hesitate to contact us at 713-500-8170 for more information.

The safe work practices expected to be implemented when using biological agents at UTHealth can be found in our Institutional Biosafety Manual found here: [UTHealth Houston Institutional Biological Safety Manual](#). This manual also includes the institution’s Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan.

Training

All personnel who work with biological agents must attend the Basic Laboratory Safety training course which includes information on bloodborne pathogens. This course is available on our learning management system platform. Please visit our website for more information: <https://www.uth.edu/safety/training/index.htm>

In addition, other specialized training from the Biological Safety Program is available. Please contact us at 713-500-8170 for more information.

RADIATION SAFETY PROGRAM (CYF G.102)

713-500-5840

The Radiation Safety Program is charged with ensuring that all radiation sources at UTHealth Houston are purchased, utilized and disposed of in compliance with applicable state and federal rules and regulations, and in a manner that is consistent with as low as reasonably achievable (ALARA) principles. The program operates under a broad license issued by the Department of State Health Services Bureau of Radiation Control.

Please visit the Radiation Safety Program website for more information:

<https://www.uth.edu/safety/radiation-safety/index.htm>

Using Radioactive Materials

Principal Investigators must obtain an authorization prior to ordering and utilizing radioactive materials in biomedical research or clinical activities. This consists of filling out an application entitled "Application for Non-Human Use of Radioactive Material." This information can be obtained by visiting the Radiation Safety Program website at <https://www.uth.edu/safety/radiation-safety/index.htm> or by calling our office at 713-500-5840.

The Radiation Safety Program also oversees the use of radiation-producing devices such as X-rays and lasers. Contact the Radiation Safety Program for more information.

Training Requirements

All personnel working with radioactive materials must attend the Basic Radiation Safety training class hosted by Radiation Safety. Because information provided in this class is specific to UTHealth Houston, prior participation in a class offered at another institution does not necessarily count in fulfilling these requirements. The Basic Radiation Safety training is offered in two three-hour sessions, totaling six hours. Class dates and times can be found here: <https://www.uth.edu/safety/radiation-safety/radiation-safety-training.htm> or by calling the Radiation Safety Program office at 713-500-5840.



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PROGRAM (OCB 1.330) 713-500-8100

The Environmental Protection Program is responsible for the safe management and disposal of all hazardous wastes generated at UTHealth Houston, including chemical, biological, radioactive, and facilities waste, as well as all environmental releases such as air, water, and assets (e.g. surplus items). We are committed to managing all hazardous wastes safely, within compliance of all applicable rules and regulations, and in a manner that is as cost-effective as possible. The Environmental Protection Program is unique in that it provides a “one stop” service for laboratory personnel to dispose of all waste streams. As a service to UTHealth Houston, EHS provides routine collection of hazardous waste on Monday,



Wednesday, and Friday. Collection of all waste streams is facilitated by calling the **hazardous waste line at 713-500-5837**.

Please visit the Environmental Protection Program website for more information: <https://www.uth.edu/safety/environmental-protection/index.htm>

Your Waste Minimization Dollars at Work

A number of items purchased from monies saved from waste minimization efforts are available from the Environmental Protection

Program. They include sharps containers, radioactive waste containers, biological waste containers, flammable storage cabinets, and broken glass containers, to name a few. Contact the Environmental Protection Program at 713-500-8100 for more information.

Training

A variety of training is offered through the Environmental Protection Program, such as autoclave use training, Department of Transportation (DOT) security training for those who sign off on medical waste manifests, and much more.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND FIRE PREVENTION PROGRAM (OCB 1.330)

713-500-8100

The mission of the Occupational Safety and Fire Prevention Program is to help provide a safe and healthy place of learning and work for all UTHealth Houston faculty, employees, students, residents and visitors. We perform routine surveillance of UTHealth buildings and grounds to anticipate, recognize, evaluate and control physical hazards and to ensure compliance with fire and life safety code requirements. Through these proactive efforts we aim to minimize the occurrence of accidents and injuries on our campus. The Occupational Safety and Fire Prevention Program provides a variety of services, including reviewing fire protection systems to ensure they are working as designed, as well as



occupational hazard monitoring, responding to incidents, and performance of incident investigations as necessary. We also assist anyone who is mobility-impaired to plan and prepare for emergency evacuation situations.

Please visit the Occupational Safety and Fire Prevention Program website for more information:

<https://www.uth.edu/safety/occupational-safety-and-fire-prevention/index.htm>

Training

A variety of training is offered through the Occupational Safety and Fire Prevention Program, such as fire extinguisher training, Area Safety Liaison training, and much more.

HOSPITAL AND CLINIC SAFETY PROGRAM (OCB 1.330) 713-500-8100

Our newest program is the Hospital and Clinic Safety Program, which helps to oversee the health and safety within the Harris County Psychiatric Center (HCPC), the Dunn Center Building (DCB), the various UTPhysicians outpatient clinics located around the greater Houston area. We also provide safety oversight of the clinics located in the School of Dentistry and the Cizik School of Nursing.

Please visit the Hospital and Clinic Safety Program website for more information:

<https://www.uth.edu/safety/hospital-and-clinical-safety/>

Please contact 713-500-8100 for any questions regarding this program.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE (OCB 1.330) 713-500-8100

The Risk Management and Insurance Program administers emergency situations planning for the institution and maintains the UTHouston Emergency Management Plan. This program ensures the presence of systems to minimize the frequency and severity of personnel and property losses. We help to maintain cost-effective risk financing mechanisms as well as keep institutional leadership apprised of the levels of risk retention and the costs of risk transfer. The three product lines we manage are Workers' Compensation, Property Insurance (real business property and fleet), and Business Continuity Planning.



Please visit the Risk Management and Insurance website for more information:

<https://www.uth.edu/safety/risk-management-and-insurance/index.htm>

For more information on emergency procedures for UTHouston please visit:

<https://www.uth.edu/safety/occupational-safety-and-fire-prevention/emergency-procedures.htm>