

**Title:** Environmental Health and Safety -- Function and Responsibilities  
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## **Introduction**

Boston College is committed to providing a safe and healthful campus environment. Among its highest priorities are the health and safety of all faculty, staff, and students; the visiting public; and members of the neighboring community. In support of its commitment, the University has established an Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) to implement environmental and occupational health and safety programs and to ensure compliance with all relevant governmental laws and regulations. The Office of EHS reports within the Department of Facilities Management.

## **Policy**

Boston College strives to maintain a safe and healthful environment. The University makes all reasonable efforts to:

- protect the health and safety of Boston College faculty, staff, and students;
- provide safe workplaces -- academic, research, and administrative -- for faculty, staff, and students;
- provide information and training to faculty, staff, and students about safe and healthful work practices;
- identify and correct health and safety hazards and encourage faculty, staff, and students to report hazards; and
- provide information and safeguards for those on campus regarding environmental hazards arising from operations at the University.

Boston College complies with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations governing environmental and occupational health and safety. All members of the Boston College community are to conduct University operations in compliance with these regulations, with University health and safety programs, and with any applicable policies and procedures.

## **Responsibilities**

At Boston College, good health and safety practices are everyone's responsibility. All members of the University community are to be thoroughly familiar with their safety responsibilities, 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 or on campus.

Line responsibility for good health and safety practices begins with the supervisor in the workplace, laboratory, or classroom and proceeds upward through the levels of management. The specific responsibilities of each level are outlined below.

### Supervisors

Supervisors, including faculty, principal investigators, laboratory directors, class instructors, and other individuals who have direct supervisory authority, are responsible for protecting the health and safety of the staff members and students under their supervision. This responsibility entails:

- implementing Boston College health and safety programs, standards, policies, and procedures;
- ensuring that the laboratories, workplaces, and equipment under their direction are safe, well-maintained, and in compliance with Boston College programs, standards, policies, and procedures; and
- requiring staff members and students under their direction to obtain and maintain the necessary safety training.

#### Academic and Administrative Management

Academic and administrative managers, including department chairpersons, deans, directors, and vice presidents, are responsible for ensuring that:

- individuals under their management have the authority to implement appropriate health and safety programs, standards, policies, and procedures;
- units under their management have adequate funding for health and safety programs, facilities, and equipment; and
- units under their management are in compliance with Boston College programs, standards, policies, and procedures.

#### Office of Environmental Health and Safety

The Director of Environmental Health and Safety is responsible for:

- providing centralized environmental health and safety services to all areas of the University;
- monitoring the effectiveness of University health and safety programs;
- reviewing legislation and recommending University-wide health and safety policies; and
- ensuring overall institutional compliance with relevant laws and regulations and with University health and safety programs, standards, policies, and procedures.

In cases of imminent danger to life or health, the Director of EHS is authorized to order the cessation of hazardous activity until the danger from such a condition is abated or adequate measures have been taken.

The Office of Environmental Health and Safety is responsible for:

- developing and maintaining effective programs for hazardous materials management; chemical hygiene and waste disposal; biological safety; radiation safety; confined space entry; fire prevention; and other environmental health and safety issues as required;
- providing guidance and technical assistance to supervisors and managers in identifying, evaluating, and correcting safety hazards; and
- providing emergency services, investigations, analyses, and follow-up for environmental health and safety related incidents.

Comprehensive information regarding EHS programs, and direct access to program manuals, are available at the [EHS web site](#).

#### Safety Committees

University-wide committees oversee various aspects of health and safety at the University. The committees include:

- University Environmental Health and Safety Committee
- Chemical Hygiene Committee
- Institutional Biosafety Committee
- Radiation Safety Committee

Generally, the committees are responsible for:

- establishing, reviewing, and approving environmental health and safety policies and procedures;
- monitoring compliance with established policies and procedures, and with other relevant regulations and guidelines;
- monitoring the effectiveness of health and safety programs; and
- reviewing incident reports and ensuring that corrective action is taken.

The specific function and responsibilities of many of the committees are outlined in their respective manuals, available at the [EHS web site](#).

#### Employees and Students

Employees and students are responsible for:

- complying with all health and safety policies, programs, and practices in their workplace, classroom, laboratory, and student campus residences;
- participating in training programs provided by their supervisors and EHS; and
- promptly reporting safety, fire, and health hazards; environmental deficiencies; and injuries and illnesses to the responsible supervisor.

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