

# University of Saskatchewan

## Workplace Responsibilities System

Department of Health, Safety & Environment  
University of Saskatchewan

# WORKPLACE RESPONSIBILITIES SYSTEM

## Abstract

The safety of all members of the University of Saskatchewan (herein referred to as University), as well as its visitors, is of utmost concern to the University. By implementing a Workplace Responsibilities System, the University aims to encompass and prevent hazardous occurrences at the University. The Workplace Responsibilities System is the University of Saskatchewan-specific “line management” model. The key to superior safety performance is the creation of a culture that secures involvement and participation at all levels of the organization. This is the opposite of a structure where people do nothing until instructed to do so by an inspector. A “line management” system focuses on prevention rather than after-the-fact analysis of a perilous situation. Specifically, responsibility for hazard identification and control is to be shared by all parties in the workplace.

The Workplace Responsibilities System formulates the University of Saskatchewan employee obligations according to *The Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and Regulations*. Health and safety obligations apply to all University employees, regardless of one’s affiliation or position. All employees are advised to read the Workplace Responsibilities System upon being hired, and to know where they fit in on the structure. Employees should also be cognizant of the fact that they may fulfill more than one role identified in the Workplace Responsibilities System.

## Statements of Principle

The following statements of principle are to guide the fulfillment of the above abstract and direct the Workplace Responsibilities System.

1. Every worker has the right to a safe and healthy environment in which to work.
2. The University of Saskatchewan shall treat standards set by applicable HSE law as the minimum benchmark to be met in regards to worker health and safety.
3. Workers are encouraged to be actively engaged in sustaining a safe and healthy work environment and in carrying out safe and healthy work practices. Everyone in the workplace has a responsibility for helping to maintain health and safety.
4. The University of Saskatchewan shall develop, implement and maintain current, a Health, Safety Environmental Management System (HSEMS) which will realize the goals identified in the HSEMS.
5. Health and safety management is not a non-obligatory extra, nor an “add-on” to management activities already in existence. An effective HSEMS is integrated completely into all other management activities and the person who manages the activities of a certain sector, must also manage the risks of the activities and their associated health and safety requirements. Each level of management has an obligation and responsibility to those below them and is accountable to those above them with respect to health and safety as with all other management activities.

6. The aim of a “line management” model is to get people working together to identify and control situations that could cause harm. The fundamental intention is to guarantee that everyone incorporates health and safety into their work.
7. Every job at the University of Saskatchewan entails its own responsibilities and accountabilities for health and safety. The higher the level of responsibility, the greater the accountability. Everyone is accountable (as an individual) for carrying out their obligations.
8. Collaboration between the employer and the unions at the University of Saskatchewan, via the Occupational Health Committee (OHC), is considered necessary in developing, implementing and maintaining a HSEMS.
9. The safety and welfare of the University’s employees is to be actively promoted under the University of Saskatchewan’s HSEMS.
10. Courses of action under the HSEMS will be designed for effective, competent and impartial response to work-related incidents, illness and injury.
11. The Department of Health, Safety and Environment shall monitor the effectiveness of the HSEMS through regular audits of colleges, divisions and departments across the University.
12. The University shall ensure that the HSEMS is reviewed every three years to ensure the program meets the University’s operational and strategic direction and its regulatory requirements.
13. Positions not specifically identified herein are still responsible for reporting and acting on health, safety or environmental issues, either through resolution of the issue or directing the issue to their supervisor as appropriate.

## **Preamble**

The following statements outline the distribution of authority, responsibility and accountability through “line management” for health, safety and environmental protection throughout the University community.

## **Governors and Officers of the University**

Every Governor and every Officer of the University of Saskatchewan shall take all reasonable care to ensure the safety of workers and the University community. This should be done by ensuring compliance with HSE law as well as the contravention orders, compliance assurance notices and requirements of HSE regulatory personnel in their administration of the HSE legislation.

Senior management shall demonstrate their commitment for fulfilling the University’s moral and legal obligations for health, safety and protection of the environment through:

- Effective leadership;
- The establishment of an effective organization structure;

- Establishing and sufficiently funding a local authority (the Department of Health, Safety and Environment) to manage and direct the University's Health, Safety and Environmental Management System.

### **University of Saskatchewan Board of Governors**

The Board is responsible for directing the health, safety and environmental protection activities of the University and for ensuring that:

1. the Health, Safety Environmental Management System (HSEMS) is developed, implemented and maintained current for the University;
2. the subject of the development, implementation, maintenance and effectiveness of the HSEMS appears quarterly on the agenda of the Board's review of the University's operations; and
3. when made aware of non-compliance matters and given suggestions by DHSE, they direct the appropriate officers to take the actions as deemed necessary.

### **The President**

The President is responsible to the Board for directing the health and safety activities of the University and for ensuring that:

1. the HSEMS is developed, implemented and maintained current for the University; and
2. the subject of the development, implementation, maintenance and effectiveness of the HSEMS appears quarterly on the agenda of the President's review of the University's operations.

### **Vice-Presidents**

The vice-presidents are responsible to the President for directing the health and safety activities of the University and for ensuring that:

1. the HSEMS is developed, implemented and maintained current for the University;
2. associate vice presidents, deans, directors and department heads reporting to vice-presidents develop, implement and maintain HSE Programs applicable to their faculties, division or work areas and that any concerns not resolved at the local level are acted upon and resolved in a timely manner; and
3. the subject of the development, implementation, maintenance and effectiveness of the HSEMS appears quarterly on the agenda of the vice-president's review of the University's operations.

## **Vice-President, Finance and Resources**

In addition to the duties outlined above, the Vice-President, Finance and Resources is responsible to the President for coordinating the University's activities regarding the development, implementation and maintenance of the HSEMS. The Vice-President Finance and Resources as the supervisor of the Department of Health, Safety and Environment is responsible to act as the advocate for health, safety and environmental stewardship and management at the corporate level of the University.

## **Associate Vice-Presidents**

The associate vice-presidents are responsible to their respective vice-president for ensuring that

1. the HSE Programs applicable to their faculties, division or work areas are developed, implemented and maintained current;
2. department heads, directors or managers reporting to an associate vice-president develop, implement and maintain HSE Programs applicable to their division or work areas; and
3. the subject of the development, implementation, maintenance and effectiveness of the applicable HSE Programs appears quarterly on the agenda for the associate vice-presidents review of operations.

## **Deans, Vice-Provost and Assistant Provost**

The deans, Vice-Provost and Assistant Provost are responsible to the Provost and Vice-President Academic, for ensuring that:

1. the HSE Programs applicable to their faculties, division or work areas are developed, implemented and maintained current;
2. where applicable Local Safety Committees (LSCs) are formed to support functions of the University's OHC and to assist deans, department heads and division heads in fulfilling the requirements of the HSEMS;
3. department heads, directors or managers reporting to a dean, Vice-Provost and Assistant Provost develop, implement and maintain HSE Programs applicable to their faculties, division or work areas;
4. the subject of the development, implementation, maintenance and effectiveness of the applicable HSE Programs appears quarterly on the agenda of deans, Vice-Provost and Assistant Provost; and .
5. the health and safety concerns of workers within the college or unit are addressed as soon as is reasonably practicable either through action by the supervisor or the Local Safety Committee as appropriate. If either agency is not able to resolve the concern, the dean, Vice-Provost and Assistant Provost is responsible to take action necessary to resolve the concern.

## **Directors**

The directors are responsible to the appropriate vice-presidents or associate vice-presidents for ensuring that:

1. the HSE Programs applicable to their work areas are developed, implemented and maintained current;
2. the persons reporting to the directors carry out their responsibilities under the HSEMS;
3. the health and safety concerns of workers within the unit are addressed as soon as is reasonably practicable either through action by the supervisor or the Local Safety Committee as appropriate. If either agency is not able to resolve the concern, the director is responsible to take action necessary to resolve the concern; and
4. the subject of the development, implementation, maintenance and effectiveness of the applicable HSE Programs appears quarterly on the agenda of the director's review of operations.

## **Director, Department of Health and Safety and Environment**

In addition to the expectations identified for directors, the Director, Health, Safety and Environment, is responsible to the Vice-President, Finance and Resources, for:

1. acting as the corporate authority on behalf of the University to maintain and monitor the HSEMS and making recommendations as necessary;
2. It is the fiscal responsibility of the University to ensure that the most cost-effective HSEMS is developed, while not sacrificing health, safety or the environment in any way. In the development, implementation and maintenance of the HSEMS, the resources available within the University of Saskatchewan community will be recognized and utilized where appropriate.
3. to act as a leader in promoting health, safety and protection of the environment;
4. developing and directing HSE programs within all University workplaces;
5. to act as an agent of the University on health, safety and environmental matters with external and regulatory agencies;
6. assisting clients with the resolution of unresolved concerns as necessary; and
7. preparing quarterly HSE status reports for the University's Governors and Officers.

## **Department Head**

The department heads are responsible to deans or division heads for ensuring that:

1. the HSE programs applicable to the workplace under their administrative control are developed, implemented and maintained within their department in accordance with the HSEMS;
2. where department heads have appointed a member of the department as the Departmental Safety Officer (DSO), the DSO will be responsible to the department head for ensuring that the HSE programs applicable to the workplace under their administrative control are developed, implemented and maintained within their department in accordance with the HSEMS;
3. the subject of the development, implementation, maintenance and effectiveness of the applicable HSE Programs appears quarterly on the agenda of the department head's review of operations of their department;
4. where applicable Local Safety Committees (LSCs) are formed to support functions of the University's OHC and to assist deans or division heads in fulfilling the requirements of the HSEMS; and
5. the health and safety concerns of workers within the department or unit are addressed as soon as is reasonably practicable either through action by the supervisor or the Local Safety Committee as appropriate. If either agency is not able to resolve the concern, the department head is responsible to take action necessary to resolve the concern.

### **The Occupational Health Committee (OHC)**

The OHC is constituted pursuant to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993* and performs its functions on a University-wide basis in accordance with the adopted University of Saskatchewan Terms of Reference Occupational Health Committee (see appendix).

### **Local Safety Committee**

Local Safety Committees are formed and operate in accordance with the University of Saskatchewan Terms of Reference *Local Safety Committees* document (see appendix).

### **Teaching Faculty/Instructor/Sessional Lecturer/Principal Investigator**

Insofar as a member of the Teaching Faculty/Instructor/Sessional Lecturer is a "worker", the member shall exercise the rights and duties of a worker within the meaning of the HSE legislation and as further developed in this document. (See "All University of Saskatchewan Workers and Students".)

Insofar as a member of the Teaching Faculty/Instructor/Sessional Lecturer is a "supervisor", the member shall exercise the rights and duties of a supervisor within the meaning of the HSE law and as further developed in this document. (See "Supervisor" section.)

Insofar as a member of the Teaching Faculty is a Principal Investigator, the member shall exercise the rights and duties of a supervisor within the meaning of the HSE law and as further developed in this document.

Insofar as a member of the Teaching Faculty serves in an administrative role that is identified in this document as having responsibility, authority and accountability for an HSE Program (or part thereof), the member shall carry out the requirements with a view to fulfilling the intent of the HSE Policy.

All members of this category are obligated to ensure that students (undergraduate and graduate) are provided with a safe environment and receive adequate instruction and safety precautions for their related areas of instruction.

### **Post-Doctoral Fellows**

Post-Doctoral Fellows have the rights of a worker and are responsible to the Principal Investigator holding the grant they are working under. If a Post-Doctoral Fellow is in charge of his/her own grant, he/she is a Principal Investigator and shall exercise the rights and duties of a Principal Investigator and supervisor within the meaning of the HSE law and as further developed in this document. Similarly, the rights and duties of a supervisor apply when the Post-Doctoral Fellow hires an assistant.

### **Managers**

Every manager will be responsible for taking an active role in:

1. providing leadership in protecting and promoting the health and safety of those persons reporting to the manager; and
2. fulfilling the role of a manager in the Line Management. This involves meeting the requirements of HSE Programs applicable to their workplace with a view to fulfilling the intent of the HSE Policy.

### **Supervisor**

Every supervisor, in addition to complying with the duties imposed by contract (this does not refer to collective agreements, since the *OHSA Act and Regulations* obligations cannot be negotiated or contracted out of) and HSE law, will be responsible for taking an active role in:

1. providing leadership in protecting and promoting the health and safety of those persons reporting to the supervisor (this includes both students and workers);
2. providing competent supervision and ensuring all persons working under their supervision have received applicable safety training and copies of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs);
3. taking immediate actions to correct unsafe conditions when they become aware of them; and
4. fulfilling the role of a supervisor in the Line Management. This involves meeting the

requirements of HSE Programs applicable to their workplace with a view to fulfilling the intent of the University HSE Policy.

### **All University of Saskatchewan Workers**

Every University worker and graduate student, in addition to complying with the duties imposed by contract (this does not refer to collective agreements, since the *OHSA and Regulations* obligations cannot be negotiated or contracted out of) and HSE law, will be responsible to their supervisors for:

1. complying with HSE laws, University policies, rules, procedures and codes of practice for performing work in a safe and healthy manner;
2. taking an active role in protecting and promoting his / her health and safety;
3. refraining from activities that may jeopardize the health and safety of others;
4. taking an active role in fulfilling the requirements of applicable Health, Safety and Environmental Protection Programs with a view to fulfilling the intent of the HSE Policy; and
5. reporting forthwith to his/her supervisor, when he/she becomes aware of any hazards or lapses in the functioning of a HSE Program.

### **Interns and Residents**

Every resident and intern shall exercise the rights and duties of a worker. Residents and interns are responsible to:

1. adhere to HSE laws and University of Saskatchewan policies;
2. report to their respective college as required;
3. report to their on-site supervisor as required; and
4. adhere to the HSE requirements of each site they work at. If the HSE requirements of their site location are in contrast with the University of Saskatchewan HSE policies or procedures, the intern or resident is to abide by the requirements at their placement.

### **Graduate Students**

Regardless of whether or not a graduate student is an employee or not, all graduate students shall exercise the rights and duties of a worker.

1. adhere to HSE laws and University of Saskatchewan policies;
2. report to their respective college as required; and
3. report to their on-site supervisor as required.

## **Students**

Students have the right to work and learn in a safe and healthy environment. Equally, students have the right to be properly instructed regarding HSE law, standards, practises and precautions. Every University student (undergraduate and graduate) must act with regard to HSE law and follow all instructions and safety precautions conferred upon them by their supervisor or instructor.

## **Supervisors of Independent Contractors**

Any worker of the University who is responsible for overseeing a contract for goods or services between the University and an independent contractor shall ensure that:

1. the contract documents refer to applicable requirements under the University's HSEMS;
2. information related to health, safety and the environment is communicated between the University and the independent contractor; and
3. contract requirements for complying with the University's HSEMS are monitored and, wherever possible, enforced.