

Workplace Safety

HR



About This Policy

Effective Date:

07-01-1994

Last Updated:

02-01-2016

Responsible University Office:

University Human Resources

Responsible University Administrator:

Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

Policy Contact:

University Human Resources

hrpolicy@iu.edu

Scope

Policy Statement

Procedure

Sanctions

History

[Back to top ^](#)

Scope

This policy applies to all AFSCME Service and CWA Staff employees.

[Back to top ^](#)

Policy Statement

1. Indiana University recognizes its responsibility to provide a safe and healthful working environment. This shall include making reasonable efforts to promptly investigate and address health and safety issues, not requiring employees to perform tasks that are dangerous to their health and safety without adequate training and safety equipment as determined by applicable state and federal laws, and making readily accessible information on hazardous materials. All department heads, administrators, and supervisors are recognized as having unique facilitative responsibilities in accomplishing this mission.
2. The departments of Environmental Health and Safety; University Human Resource Services; Office of Insurance, Loss Control & Claims, and other university designated experts have the responsibility to provide technical and regulatory assistance and information to all departments and units to accomplish this mission.
3. All Staff employees have a responsibility to cooperate with the university in achieving this mission. This includes making reasonable efforts to promptly report health and safety issues. The university will promptly investigate and address such health and safety issues.
4. No department head, administrator or supervisor shall prevent or attempt to dissuade an employee from seeking assistance or information concerning workplace health or safety issues.

5. Safety Committees provide a means for active participation of Staff, their representatives, and management personnel to assist IU in achieving a safe and healthful workplace.
6. The Unions recognize their responsibility to cooperate with the University in maintaining and improving a safe and healthful working environment.

[Back to top ^](#)

Procedure

Dangerous conditions requiring immediate attention

1. In a dangerous, emergency situation, the employee should call 9-1-1. (In situations involving serious injury, the need for rescue, fire, or other emergencies that require the intervention of emergency response personnel, employees should immediately call 9-1-1.)
2. Where a dangerous working condition exists that requires immediate corrective action, the employee shall notify the supervisor at once. See also the section below on refusal of unsafe or dangerous work assignments.
3. The supervisor shall take immediate action to correct or minimize the hazard to a reasonable standard of safety. The supervisor shall notify the dean or director of the supervisor.
4. If corrective action is not taken immediately by the supervisor, or the action taken does not minimize the hazard to a reasonable standard of safety, the employee shall notify the campus **Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S)** office.
5. The campus EH&S office will document the report of a dangerous working condition and designate the appropriate individual to go to the scene immediately, evaluate the situation, make a judgment, and document and communicate the decision on appropriate action to the employee, the supervisor, and the dean or director.
6. For AFSCME Service at Bloomington:
 - a. The campus EH&S office will inform the Bloomington Joint Safety Committee (JSC), at the next regularly scheduled JSC meeting, of the report of a dangerous working condition and the decision of EH&S regarding appropriate action taken.
 - b. The JSC will review the information related to the dangerous working condition and determine whether the situation has been satisfactorily resolved or if additional investigation and actions are necessary. If the JSC determines that additional investigation is needed, then it will decide what actions are to be taken to reach a consensus at the following regularly scheduled JSC meeting.
 - c. In the case of impasse the matter shall be submitted to the Director of Environmental Health and Safety office at Bloomington for resolution.
7. For CWA covered Support Staff:
 - a. Employees who find themselves in a situation described below may ask their supervisor to review the unsafe task or condition. Employees and supervisors are encouraged to resolve the situation before requesting an outside review.
 - i. A situation which directs an employee to perform work that is unsafe or dangerous beyond the normal hazards of the occupation.
 - ii. A situation which directs an employee to perform work without adequate training or protective equipment required by applicable laws.

Refusal of unsafe or dangerous work assignments

1. For AFSCME Service covered employees:
 - a. An employee or group of employees who refuse a work assignment because of a reasonable belief that to perform such work would endanger his/her physical safety beyond the normal hazards of the occupation or violates governmental safety standards, should use the complaint procedure set forth in the section on “Dangerous conditions requiring immediate attention” above.
 - b. Employees, including the employee or employees who refused the work assignment shall not be required to resume the disputed work until either the alleged hazard is corrected or a determination has been made by a qualified person from the campus EH&S office stating the work is not unsafe or dangerous.

- c. No employee who refuses to perform work in accordance with this section shall be disciplined or retaliated against or lose the right to perform the work once the hazardous condition has been corrected.
 - d. Pending the decision by the University concerning the work in question or the removal of the hazardous conditions, such employees may be assigned to any other work that is available, without loss of pay or benefits.
2. For CWA covered employees, while a work situation is under review, the employee is not required to perform the work in question, as long as the employee provides a reasonable basis for their belief that the work would endanger their personal safety.

Unsafe conditions not requiring immediate attention

1. For AFSCME Service covered employees:
 - a. Where a working condition is thought to be unsafe, or potentially unsafe, but does not require immediate corrective action, employees and supervisors shall first work together informally to correct the unsafe working condition.
 - b. At Bloomington, when this informal process does not resolve the issue, the following procedure shall be used:
 - i. The employee(s) shall fill out an **Unsafe Working Conditions form** (also available as a **PDF**), being as detailed and specific as possible. The employee(s) shall note the location and cause of the unsafe condition and the actions which should be taken to correct the condition. The employee(s) should then give the form to the immediate supervisor.
 - ii. The supervisor shall have five (5) working days to investigate and respond in writing to the complaint of unsafe working conditions and take whatever corrective action, if any, needs to be taken. The supervisor shall consult with department management before preparing the written response.
 - iii. If the employee(s) disagrees with the action taken by the supervisor, or if no action is taken, the employee shall have three (3) working days to appeal to the campus **Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S)** office.
 - iv. The campus EH&S office shall have five (5) working days to investigate the matter and take whatever corrective action, if any, is needed. The campus EH&S office will inform the Bloomington Joint Safety Committee (JSC) at the next regularly scheduled JSC meeting regarding the complaint of an unsafe working condition and the decision of the campus EH&S office regarding appropriate corrective action taken.
 - v. If the employee(s) disagrees with the action taken by EH&S, or if no action is taken, the employee shall have three (3) working days to appeal to the Bloomington Joint Safety Committee.
 - vi. The Bloomington Joint Safety Committee shall consider the matter at its next regularly scheduled meeting. JSC will review the information related to the unsafe working condition and reach a consensus regarding whether the situation has been satisfactorily resolved or if additional investigation and actions are necessary. If the JSC determines that additional investigation is needed, then it will decide what actions are to be taken to reach a consensus at the following regularly scheduled JSC meeting. The Joint Safety Committee shall respond in writing to all complaints brought to its attention.
 - vii. In the case of an impasse the matter shall be submitted to the Director of Environmental Health and Safety office at Bloomington for resolution.
 - c. At IUPUI, employees who observe an unsafe working condition which does not appear to require immediate corrective action should complete an **Unsafe Working Conditions report** being as detailed as possible. The form is to be given to the immediate supervisor.
 - i. The supervisor has three (3) working days to investigate the matter and take appropriate corrective action as needed.
 - ii. If the employees disagree with the action taken, or if the supervisor takes no action, they will then have two (2) working days to appeal to the dean or director.
 - iii. The dean or director has five (5) working days to investigate the matter and take whatever corrective action is needed.
 - iv. If the employees disagree with the action taken by the dean or director, or if no action is taken, they have two (2) working days to appeal to the campus-wide Safety Committee (see the Safety Committee policy) by notifying the committee chairperson.

- v. The campus-wide Safety Committee will have five (5) working days to meet, investigate the matter and take appropriate corrective action as needed. The committee will issue a written response to all complaints brought to its attention.
- d. At South Bend, employees who observe an unsafe working condition which does not appear to require immediate corrective action, should complete an **Unsafe Working Conditions report** being as detailed as possible. The form is to be given to the immediate supervisor.
 - i. The supervisor has five (5) working days to investigate the matter and take appropriate corrective action as needed.
 - ii. If the employees disagree with the action taken, or if the supervisor takes no action, they will then have two (2) working days to appeal to the dean or director.
 - iii. The dean or director has five (5) working days to investigate the matter and take whatever corrective action is needed.
 - iv. If the employees disagree with the action taken by the dean or director, or if no action is taken, they have two (2) working days to appeal to the campus EH&S office.
 - v. The campus EH&S office will have five (5) working days to initiate an investigation of the matter. The campus EH&S office will inform the department and the employee of its conclusions and actions.

2. For CWA covered employees:

- a. At Bloomington, if no resolution between the employee and supervisor occurs, then the employee or supervisor may request a review of the situation by filing a **Safety Suggestion Report** with Environmental Health and Safety and the IU/CWA Safety Committee. This form is also available from the following sources: IU/CWA Safety Committee, HR representatives, CWA representatives, or Environmental Health and Safety.
- b. At Northwest, the employee or supervisor should contact the manager of **Environmental Health and Safety**.
- c. Environmental Health and Safety or other university designated expert will make the final determination as to whether the work is safe. They will also determine which safety standards apply to the given situation.

Toxic substances

1. For AFSCME Service and CWA covered employees:

- a. In accordance with the **Indiana University Hazard Communication Program**, whenever a substance is identified as being toxic, prior to any clean up or removal of the substance, the university will make a determination of the following:
 - i. The nature of the substance and its toxic properties
 - ii. The safe and recommended method of working with the substance, including the appropriate personal protective equipment necessary to work with the substance
- b. The university will supply a copy of the information to the affected employees and to the union president. Any clean-up will be under the supervision of an industrial hygienist, or other similarly qualified professional, who will have the authority to immediately stop work to protect the safety and health of workers, or to prevent harm to the environment.

Cumulative trauma

1. For CWA covered employees:

- a. Cumulative/repetitive trauma is "an injury which occurs to parts of the body after repetitive stress without sufficient time allowed for healing between the occurrences of injury."
- b. The CWA and management work cooperatively and constructively to reduce risk factors for cumulative trauma. This includes training to assist CWA representatives and supervisors on how to evaluate and address potential problems in the workplace.
- c. The IU/CWA Safety Committee develops and distributes information concerning practical techniques for reducing the risk factors for cumulative trauma.
- d. The office of Worker's Compensation publishes a set of guidelines, available from each department or from **Worker's Compensation**, for reviewing cumulative trauma claims.

Inadequate air quality

1. For CWA covered employees:
 - a. In the case of a problem of inadequate air quality, an employee can contact the appropriate campus department as identified below.
 - i. The following types of complaints should be referred to the Physical Plant or the maintenance personnel of the specific building zone: draftiness, lack of air or "stuffy" air, dirt or particles coming out of the vent system, and visible mold growth.
 - ii. All other complaints can be addressed to **Environmental Health and Safety**. These include but are not limited to unusual odors (chemical and exhaust-type smells) and sickness associated with one's occupancy of a building.

IU Safety Committees

1. For ASCME Service covered employees:
 - a. At Bloomington, Committee composition
 - i. A Joint Safety Committee composed of the following will be appointed to meet monthly to discuss safety and health matters:
 - Five (5) AFSCME appointees
 - Five (5) University administration members
 - ii. Committee specifics
 - University Human Resource Services will coordinate the committee appointments.
 - Clerical support for the committee will be provided as needed.
 - Environmental Health and Safety will provide technical support for the committee when requested.
 - The Chairperson of the committee shall rotate semi-annually between an AFSCME appointee and an Administration appointee.
 - b. At IUPUI, Campus-wide safety committee
 - i. A campus-wide safety committee will be established by Environmental Health and Safety. A representative from AFSCME is to be included on this committee.
 - ii. The committee will be chaired by a representative of Environmental Health and Safety and will be convened as necessary to address health and safety issues.
 - iii. The committee's objectives will be determined by its members; however, in general the committee will be responsible for:
 - Making policy recommendations on safety issues
 - Establishing a process to handle non-emergency safety complaints
 - Reviewing specific non-emergency situations
 - Conducting after-action reviews to evaluate responses to emergency situations
 - Providing input on specific safety programs
 - c. At South Bend, there is no stand-alone safety committee. See the Unsafe Working Conditions for the procedures for addressing workplace safety concerns.
2. For CWA covered employees:
 - a. At each campus, Bloomington and Northwest, a joint IU/CWA Safety Committee provides a means for active participation of staff, their representatives, and management personnel to assist IU in achieving a safe and healthful workplace.
 - i. The committee consists of three (3) representatives appointed by the administration and three (3) representatives appointed by CWA.
 - ii. The goals of the committee include the areas of promoting wellness, investigating complaints, and accountability.

- iii. The committee operates within a joint set of bylaws.
 - iv. A supervisor of a Safety Committee is encouraged, when work requirements permit, to release the Safety Committee member to investigate a safety complaint. The Safety Committee member is expected to conduct such an investigation in an expeditious manner and return to work as soon as possible.
- b. For more information about the committee and its goals and objectives, contact the campus Human Resources office or a CWA representative.

Indiana Occupational Safety and Health Administration (IOSHA) inspections

1. For all AFSCME Service and CWA covered Staff, should a compliance officer from IOSHA determine that a Union representative should accompany the compliance officer on an inspection of an IU facility or worksite, and/or to participate in opening and/or closing conferences, the Office of Environmental Health and Safety will contact the designated CWA representative.
2. The supervisor will make every effort to release the employee and without loss of pay.
3. AFSCME Service and CWA will be responsible for providing to Environmental Health and Safety an up-to-date list of union representatives, listed in the order in which they are to be contacted.
4. Each union contact should maintain a copy of said list and will provide to her/his supervisor in the event of a request by IOSHA to participate.

[Back to top ^](#)

Sanctions

Managers, supervisors, and employees who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

[Back to top ^](#)

History

Replaces the following policies:

AFSCME Service	10.7 - Safety Committee
AFSCME Service	10.8 - Workplace Safety
CWA	7.1 - Health and Safety