

4.15 Hazardous Substances

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4.01	OHS Policy
4.15A	Haz Sub Reference Group TOR
4.15c	Classes of Dangerous Goods
4.16A	Institutional Biosafety Committee TOR
D03/1600	UNE Records Management Policy

Rationale and Scope

Under the terms of the Occupational Health and Safety legislation the University of New England has a responsibility to ensure that systems are in place to ensure that staff, students, contractors and visitors are protected from both the short and long term health effects of hazardous substances and processes.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the definitions below will apply.

Australian Standards are the collective set of voluntary standards for technical and commercial activities in Australia, developed by Standards Australia under a memorandum of understanding with the Commonwealth Government. The following standards are relevant for the storage of Hazardous Substances:

AS1940 The storage and handling of flammable and combustible liquids.

AS 2243.1 Safety in Laboratories Part 1.

AS 2243.2 Safety in Laboratories Part 2: Chemical Aspects

AS 2243.10 Safety in Laboratories Part 10 Storage of Chemicals

AS 3780 The storage and handling of corrosive substances

AS 4326 The storage and handling of oxidising agents

Contractor is an individual or company that is engaged to work on site at UNE for a discrete task or project specified under a contract. A contractor is not an employee of the University and is required to have independent workers compensation and other insurance policies.

Dangerous Goods (DG) are substances that have the potential to cause immediate harm and are sub-divided into 9 Classes as is listed in the Australian Dangerous Goods Code.

NB: All Dangerous Goods are Hazardous Substances.

Hazardous Substance is defined in the National Standard as any substance that:

Is listed in the “List of Designated Hazardous Substances” [NOHSC: 1005 (1994)], or satisfies the criteria of “Approved Criteria for Classifying Hazardous Substances” [NOHSC: 1008 (1994)].

For the purposes of this policy the general definition of the term is taken to be any substance that has the potential to harm the health of persons in the workplace and includes chemicals scheduled under the Poisons Act, chemicals classified under the Dangerous Goods Act (1975) or Hazardous waste.

Hazardous Substance Reference Group – an informal committee composed of staff and postgraduates who work with, or have an interest in the safe handling of hazardous substances and dangerous goods.

Radiation Safety Committee – A University Committee reporting to the Occupational Health and Safety Strategic Committee

Biosafety Committee - A University Committee reporting to the Occupational Health and Safety Strategic Committee

Student is any person currently enrolled as an undergraduate or postgraduate at UNE.

UNE Records Management Policy is that policy developed by UNE Records Management Office and available on the UNE website.

Visitor is a member of the public who is on site but not engaged in any work activity.

Policy

4.15.01 All persons involved in work with hazardous substances must comply with requirements of both National and New South Wales (NSW) Hazardous Substance and Dangerous Goods legislation.

Compliance

4.15.02 The University will comply with the duty of care and hazardous substance requirements of Part 2 of the OHS Act 2000 and Part 6 & 7 of the OHS Regulation 2001.

4.15.03 The University will provide annual notification to NSW WorkCover, when the quantities of dangerous goods on its premises are in excess of WorkCover’s Notification Requirements.

- 4.15.04** The University will comply with Federal Government requirements for annual reporting requirements for new chemicals and Priority Existing Chemicals (PEC).
- 4.15.05** The University will comply with Federal Government National security directives and NSW state licensing requirements for Security Sensitive Dangerous Substances Goods (SSDS) and Security Sensitive Ammonium Nitrate (SSAN).
- 4.15.06** The University will ensure that persons using pesticides (including herbicides, insecticides, bactericides, baits, lures and rodenticides) as part of their job are trained and keep records as required by NSW state and Federal Government environment and pesticide legislation.
- 4.15.07** The University will comply with NSW state requirements for the use of veterinary and farm chemicals.
- 4.15.08** The University will ensure that any person sending or receiving hazardous substances or dangerous goods has the appropriate training and licensing as refined by National road, rail and air transport requirements.
- 4.15.09** The University will ensure that any person importing or exporting hazardous substances, dangerous goods or other products or substances has the appropriate licensing and documentation as required by quarantine requirements.
- 4.15.010** The University will ensure that the removal or disposal of hazardous waste complies with the legislative requirements and has minimum adverse environmental impact.
- 4.15.11** The University will comply with the NSW Health directives in respect to the requirements for labelling, packaging and administration of poisons and other pharmaceuticals.
- 4.15.12** The University will comply with asbestos legislation, develop management plans as required and will not employ, direct or allow another person to do licensed work unless the person holds a licence relevant to that work.
- 4.15.13** The University will ensure that it obtains licences, from the relevant state authority, for the use of radioactive substances, ionising radiation apparatus and ensure appropriate licensing and accreditation of persons who carry out prescribed activities as required by NSW radiation legislation.
- 4.15.14** The University will appoint a Radiation Safety Officer and establish a Radiation Safety Committee.
- 4.15.15** The Radiation Safety Committee will provide summary reports to the OHS Strategic Committee at least twice each year.

- 4.15.16** The Biosafety Committee will report annually, or as required, to the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) and carry out laboratory licensing and inspections as required.
- 4.15.17** The Biosafety Committee will provide summary reports to the OHS Strategic Committee at least twice each year.
- 4.15.18** It is recommended that all persons using hazardous substances or dangerous goods comply with relevant Codes of Practice and Australian Standards.
- 4.15.19** Where applicable, Heads of Cost Centres will be responsible for ensuring compliance with the above requirements.

Hazardous Substance Reference Group

- 4.15.20** The Hazardous Substances Reference Group will:
- Provide practical and technical input into the development and ongoing review of the hazardous substances and dangerous goods policies and guidelines.
 - Identify areas of non-compliance and provide suggestions for continuous improvement.

Risk Assessment

- 4.15.21** Risk assessments may be conducted for;
- chemicals
 - chemical processes
 - storage
 - disposal and
 - transport of Hazardous Substances and Dangerous Goods.
- 4.15.22** A risk assessment will be conducted;
- whenever a Hazardous Substance or Dangerous Good is introduced into the work area and
 - for any procedure or process requiring the use or production of any Hazardous Substances.
- 4.15.23** Each risk assessment will be revised whenever;
- a new Hazardous Substance is introduced in to the workplace or
 - there is evidence to indicate that the assessment is no longer valid or

- there is a significant change in the work or procedure to which the assessment relates or
- when an incident investigation identifies a concern with current procedure, standard practice or
- the University is advised on any necessary preventative or remedial action as a result of health surveillance.

4.15.24 An assessment may relate to more than one work activity, more than one place of work and more than one Hazardous Substance, so long as it takes account of the context and particular circumstances of each work activity, the place of work and the Hazardous Substance to which it relates.

4.15.25 All risk assessments will be documented.

4.15.26 Although a range of risk assessment tools may be used, the final rating must be consistent with the University Risk Management matrix.

4.15.27 If the inherent risk is assessed as “High” or “Extreme”, controls must be implemented.

4.15.28 Wherever practicable, the prevention or adequate control of a person’s exposure to a Hazardous Substance must be achieved by application of the standard hierarchy of controls (viz. elimination, substitution, isolation, engineering controls, safe work practices, personal protective equipment.)

Record Keeping

4.15.29 The University will ensure that at least one computer based software package is available to assist in the management of Hazardous Substance and Dangerous Goods compliance.

4.15.30 Records for Hazardous Substances will be maintained and as per the OHS Regulation 2001. These will include risk assessments (5-30 years), health surveillance (30 years) and training records (5 years).

4.15.31 Such records will also be maintained and archived as per UNE Records Management Policy D03/1600.

Registers

4.15.32 A register of all Hazardous Substances will be kept at all places of work. This may be kept electronically.

4.15.33 Registers must be regularly maintained and readily accessible to all persons working in the vicinity.

- 4.15.34** Registers or summaries of inventories must be immediately available to WorkCover and emergency services.
- 4.15.35** Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) must be available for all Hazardous Substances.
- 4.15.36** When first purchasing substances (which may be hazardous) from a supplier or manufacturer, the purchaser must enquire whether MSDS is available.
- 4.15.37** If a MSDS is mislaid, destroyed or is more than 5 years old, the user must contact the manufacturer and request a current MSDS.
- 4.15.38** An asbestos register must be kept at all workplaces where asbestos products or building materials have been identified and must be shown to all contractors and other persons who may be at risk.

Training

- 4.15.39** The University will provide induction and on-going training to any staff member or student who is likely to be exposed to any Hazardous Substance at the University.
- 4.15.40** The University will ensure that the induction and training is appropriate for the level of risk to health caused by a Hazardous Substance that has been identified.
- 4.15.41** Such training will be documented and provided in a manner that is appropriate to the staff and students in the local work area.

Labelling

- 4.15.42** All storage vessels containing Hazardous Substances or Dangerous Goods will be labelled as required by the appropriate regulation.
- 4.15.43** All labels will clearly identify the Hazardous Substance and provide basic health and safety information including relevant risk and safety phrases.

Storage

- 4.15.44** The quantities of Hazardous Substances and Dangerous Goods stored will be kept to a minimal amount as is practicable.
- 4.15.45** All storage facilities will comply with the appropriate Australian Standards for storage of chemicals and laboratory practices.
- 4.15.46** All cylinders will be secured and stored in an upright position.

Radiation

- 4.15.47 Persons wanting to use radiation sources at the University must contact the Radiation Safety Officer prior to conducting work or research.
- 4.15.48 No person may use any unsealed radiation source kept by the University, or at locations controlled by the University, unless that person is authorised to do so by a licence or temporary licence.
- 4.15.49 The Radiation Safety Officer will arrange for annual inspections of all work areas that are using radiation sources. The outcomes of such inspections will be reported to the UNE Radiation Safety Committee.

Incident Reporting

- 4.15.50 All hazardous substance related spills, explosions or adverse exposures will be recorded and reported directly to the immediate supervisor. (see OHS policy 4.01.40)
- 4.15.51 Supervisors are responsible for carrying out an immediate investigation and ensuring that others are not put at risk.
- 4.15.52 In the event of a fatality or life threatening incident, supervisors are responsible for ensuring the area is secured (4 metres) and evidence preserved until a full investigation can be carried out by the relevant authority.

Waste Disposal

- 4.15.53 All chemical waste material must be stored and disposed of in a safe and environmentally responsible manner.
- 4.15.54 Hazardous Substances and Dangerous Goods that have not been used for long periods and which have no immediate use, should be, where possible, redistributed or disposed of in an appropriate manner.
- 4.15.55 A contract waste pick up service is available to UNE. This service is provided by a licensed waste disposal contractor.

Emergency Plan

- 4.15.56 A Hazardous Substance Emergency Plan will be developed and displayed in each area where dangerous goods in excess of 50kg are used or stored.
- 4.15.57 The Hazardous Substance Emergency Plan will include procedures for spillages, fire, explosion, medical response and recovery.

Health Surveillance

- 4.15.58 Health surveillance will be carried out for employees exposed to those hazardous substances listed in Schedule 3 of The National Model Regulations for the Control of Workplace Hazardous Substances [NOHSC:1005] and the NSW OHS Regulation 2001 (in case where or

when they differ, the NSW legislation has priority) where it has been determined that there is a significant risk to their health as a result of such exposure.

Further Information

Occupation Health and Safety Unit, ext 3232 ohs@une.edu.au

References

See 4.15b for a list of relevant Legislation, Standards and Codes of Practice