

November 9, 2020

To: Deans and Research Deans

From: Diane Pataki
Associate Vice President for Research

Subject: Requirement to Establish College Safety Committees

The purpose of this memo is to communicate the requirement that all University Colleges establish safety committees, with the expectation that committees will be formed by January 2021 and fully functional by June 2021.

Local safety committees are considered a “best practice” and a proven way to encourage a culture of safety and improve safety performance in complex organizations. The University of Utah committed to establishing a system of college safety committees in response to the State of Utah audit findings in “*A Performance Audit of the University of Utah’s Laboratory Safety Practices, (Report No. 2019-04).*” At the same time, the University President’s Lab Safety Culture Task Force also recommended the formation of safety committees based on the traditional management structure of the University.

To assist with implementation of this requirement, please find attached:

1. A “College Safety Committee” guidance document that summarizes the requirements, justification, objectives, scope, and structure of University of Utah college safety committees.
2. A “Health and Safety Roles and Responsibilities” guidance document that reviews the basic roles and responsibilities of individuals and organizations with respect to health and safety in the workplace, as per Policy 3-300, *University Health and Safety*.
3. A template safety committee charter.

In recognition of the differences in the size, complexity, research, and inherent hazards amongst Colleges, considerable flexibility is afforded as to how this safety committee requirement should be implemented.

It is of note that several Colleges already have active safety committees in place, including the College of Science (committees in Chemistry, Biology, and Physics), the College of Mines and Earth Sciences, the College of Engineering, and the College of Pharmacy. These committees can provide valuable insights and lessons learned regarding successful committee implementation and practice.

Environmental Health and Safety can assist with the formation of these committees and can provide on-going technical staff support. Supporting information, including training links, FAQs, committee rosters/contact information, and other useful resources is available on a new safety committee web site: <https://safetycommittees.ehs.utah.edu/>.

Lastly, as previously communicated, future F&A distribution determinations will explicitly consider 3 safety-related metrics: (1) Registration of PIs in the SAM lab management system, (2) the existence of active College safety committees, and (3) the status of health and safety deficiencies and effectiveness of corrective actions.