

Research and Academic Safety Incident Review Protocol

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PURPOSE

As the Research and Academic Safety Committee (RASC), it is important to keep abreast of incidents affecting our research community. *This protocol outlines expectations for Environment, Health & Safety (EHS), the RASC, and unit safety committees (USCs) to ensure RASC's awareness of incidents occurring at the unit level and our ability to validate that corrective actions are taken, lessons learned are communicated, and parties have a mechanism to review recommendations.*

Incidents or accidents that occur in academic laboratories, shops, and studios must be promptly and thoroughly reported and addressed, appropriate to the severity of the situation. This reporting provides the institution with an opportunity to ensure that contributing root cause(s) are well understood and especially, that effective preventive actions are put in place to reduce the likelihood and/or impact of recurrence. For purposes of this protocol, "incidents" or "accidents" include reported near misses. Please note that nothing in this protocol affects traditional reporting lines for PIs and lab managers and that a well-established line of communication must be followed for a strong safety culture.

BACKGROUND

While a review of all reported incidents is important to understand impacts to our research community, incidents with more serious outcomes require a higher level of accountability and review. Accordingly, units must review all reported incidents that occur, ensure corrective actions are taken, and share lessons learned, as applicable. However, incidents resulting in significant injuries or significant property damage or with potential for significant injury or significant property damage (i.e., significant near misses) warrant an expedited review and involvement by the USC, EHS, and the RASC. **Significant injuries** would be those beyond onsite first aid treatment (e.g., those where an individual is taken to ER via medical transport, takes themselves to the ER, or calls 911). **Significant property damage** incidents typically result in repairs to facilities and/or other property (e.g., flood damage, fire damage, broken equipment). **Expedited review** indicates an expectation from the RASC that a unit will assess and address an incident resulting in significant injury or significant property damage promptly, including outside of the usual meeting cadence (as appropriate). Units are encouraged to share "lessons learned" in a de-identified manner (i.e., a general way so as to not identify specific individuals or locations) so that employees can benefit from the findings and a near miss does not turn into someone else's injury.



RESPONSIBILITIES

EHS:

- EHS has the responsibility for conducting an incident review of reported incidents to identify hazards and risks involved, understand the circumstances of the incident, and recommend corrective actions to mitigate the risks and hazards identified. This process is done in partnership with the individuals most knowledgeable.
- EHS documents findings in MI Safety Portal (MISP).
- EHS also provides regular (e.g., monthly) summaries of incidents to the RASC.
- For incidents of a significant nature, EHS will ensure the Safety Accountability Lead (SAL) and USC are notified.

PIs and lab managers:

- Reporting incidents and near misses in a timely fashion to EHS via MISP and unit leadership including the SAL via internal unit protocols.

Safety Accountability Leads (SALs):

- Timely communication to unit leadership, unit safety committee chair, per unit protocols.
- For significant incidents, incidents that result in significant property damage, or near miss incidents with the potential for significant injury or significant property damage, decision making and communication to involved parties to cease activities until further notice to allow for investigation to determine root cause and corrective actions to be in place.
- Work in coordination with the USC Chair on their responsibilities.

Unit Safety Committee Chair:

- Determine internal processes for notification of all incidents in a timely manner to the appropriate parties.
- Determining processes for reviewing incidents within their committee structures. Reports are available through MISP for unit incidents.
- Taking action for incidents with significant injuries or significant property damage or which have the potential for significant injury or significant property damage:
 - Immediately inquire about the status of the activity and make recommendations to leadership to cease activities if warranted.
 - Provide an initial response to the RASC within **10** business days as to who is leading the incident review, who is involved, the next steps to be taken for a full incident review, as well as any interim steps taken and/or planned while the matter is under review. Also include a timeline for an expedited review.
 - Review the incident and corrective actions taken and ensure corrective actions are appropriate and implemented.
 - Keep the RASC apprised of the situation upon request.

Research and Academic Safety Committee (RASC):

- Review trends for reported incidents on campus in aggregate form to recommend broad intervention such as training, awareness campaigns, etc. to be rolled out to the research community.



- Review incidents on a monthly basis as compiled by EHS
- Fully review incidents that involve significant injuries or significant property damage or have the potential for significant injury or significant property damage. Ensure that such a review is complete, including EHS review and USC chair review. The RASC may request a meeting with the USC chair and can recommend additional corrective actions to mitigate the risks and hazards if needed.
- Full reviews may also be warranted when it is identified that there are repeated incidents or a series of incidents that rise to a level of concern where possible intervention is needed.
- Coordinate with the SAL to ensure in appropriate situations that the activities involved are suspended until further review is conducted.
- Escalate any situation to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) that is felt to be:
 - a significant risk,
 - not adequately reviewed in a timely manner or
 - fails to apply what the committee feels is appropriate corrective action.
- RASC, working in coordination with EHS, may issue recommendations to the ELT for further action. Refer to the [Research and Academic Safety Resolution Policy](#) for more information.