

Imminent Danger

University of Tennessee Safety Procedure AD-023

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Purpose, Applicability, and Scope

Purpose - To establish a program to identify and manage situations that represent an imminent danger to life or health.

Applicability – This procedure shall apply to all employees, visitor and students on the University of Tennessee, Knoxville campus who may encounter an imminent danger situation.

Scope – This procedure covers all employees and students on the Knoxville campus. University employees and students engaged in off-site, university-sponsored activities are also covered. Contractors performing work on university property are not covered by this procedure.

Definitions and Abbreviations

EHS – Environmental Health and Safety

IDLH- Immediately dangerous to life or health

Imminent Danger – A situation that is likely to result in any of the following:

1. Death within 30 days following an injury or exposure to hazardous materials
2. Immediate severe injury or health hazard resulting in:
 - a. loss of limb(s)
 - b. loss of vision in one or both eyes
 - c. cessation of respiration or heart beat
 - d. severe loss of blood that is life threatening
 - e. loss of consciousness
 - f. heat stroke
 - g. permanent loss of function of a body part or significant loss of function
3. An atmosphere defined as immediately dangerous to life or health (IDLH) as defined by NIOSH.
4. Other hazards and situations as determined by a hazard analysis conducted by a trained professional.

NIOSH – National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health

Roles and Responsibilities

Supervisors:

1. Ensure that employees and students under their supervision are properly trained and equipped
2. Be aware of hazards in the workplace or on campus

3. Stop work if an employee or student is involved with a situation that is considered imminent danger

Environmental Health and Safety:

1. Conduct inspections of campus facilities to identify locations and activities that could result in imminent danger
2. Post or cause to be posted locations where an imminent danger situation could be present
3. Solicit input from employees regarding safety hazards
4. Evaluate complaints and referrals to determine the level of hazard and investigate as necessary
5. Stop work or intercede when an imminent danger situation is identified
6. Document imminent danger situations

Employees:

1. Be aware of situations and locations that could be considered imminent danger.
2. Report potential imminent danger to his or her supervisor
3. Follow accepted policies and procedures with respect to safety
4. Do not engage in work practices or enter spaces that could be considered imminent danger
5. Order a stop work if fellow workers are engaged in work that is considered imminent danger

Procedure

All employees must be aware of the hazards in the workplace and are authorized to intercede in order to protect those who might be in danger. Examples of general intervention include:

1. Order that work be stopped
2. Neutralize (turn off or lockout) energy sources (gas, electricity, pneumatic)
3. Contact the responsible supervisor or department head
4. Confiscate defective, dangerous property
5. Post danger signs on hazardous areas
6. Order an evacuation
7. Turn on ventilation
8. Activate the fire alarm
9. Limit access to the dangerous areas (e.g. lock doors)
10. Contact any or all of the following depending on the nature of the imminent danger:
 - a. Facilities Services
 - b. Environmental Health and Safety
 - c. UT Police
 - d. Fire Department

Time permitting; an employee should contact their immediate supervisor for approval.

Although taking immediate action is necessary, it must not cause harm.

If an imminent danger situation is not immediately present, but could be in the future, this information must be brought to the attention of the responsible person.

Refusal to Work - Employees have the right to refuse to do a job if they believe in good faith that they are exposed to an imminent danger. "Good faith" means that even if an imminent danger is not found to exist, the worker had reasonable grounds to believe that it did exist.

Refusal to work is permitted under the following:

1. Where possible, the employee has asked the employer to eliminate the danger, and the employer failed to do so; and
2. The employee refused to work in "good faith." This means that the employee must genuinely believe that an imminent danger exists. The refusal cannot be a disguised attempt to harass the department or disrupt business; and
3. A reasonable person would agree that there is a real danger of death or serious injury; and
4. There isn't enough time, due to the urgency of the hazard, to get it corrected through regular enforcement channels, such as requesting an OSHA inspection.

Training

None specific to this program. Follow OSHA standards for general industry (29 CFR 1910) and construction (29 CFR 1926) for guidance. Contact EHS if you have a situation that is not adequately addressed.

Recordkeeping

None specific to this program, however, a record of the event should be documented and submitted to EHS.

Regulatory Drivers and References

Check policies and procedures in the safety manual or contact EHS at 974-5084.

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