

High Hazard Chemical Committee Charter and Bylaws

CHARTER AND BYLAWS

Approved on

Mission Statement

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) recognizes that the procurement, storage and use of hazardous chemicals may pose a risk to employees, students, and the environment. The UTK High Hazard Chemical Committee (HHCC) has been established to review chemical handling and use and to ensure that appropriate controls and safe operating procedures are in place. The scope of the HHCC covers the use of highly hazardous chemicals in conventional work areas and supplements the requirements of the OSHA Laboratory Standard (29 CFR 1910.1450) or other regulatory standards as applicable to provide additional precautions for the use of highly hazardous substances in research areas. The Committee oversees chemical safety-related matters for the campuses of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture (UTIA) campus in Knoxville, and the Graduate School of Medicine located at the University of Tennessee Medical Center). UTIA personnel and operations that are not based on the agricultural campus in Knoxville (as regular location of work) are excluded from the scope of this committee, although coverage may be extended to them via UTIA policy. The HHCC reports to Campus Safety Committee (CSC) and submits a progress report to the CSC with a courtesy copy to the Laboratory Safety Committee at least once annually, or as requested.

Responsibilities

- Establish criteria for classifying chemicals as highly hazardous and therefore subject to risk assessment and review of use;
- Provide subject matter expertise in the properties of hazardous chemicals, appropriate control measures, and safe handling procedures;
- Recommend controls (engineering controls, administrative controls, and personal protective equipment (PPE)) to mitigate the risk associated with the handling of highly hazardous chemicals;
- Maintain records to document the review and approved work practices for the handling of highly hazardous chemicals.
- Maintain, review and where appropriate improve or suggest improvements to policies and procedures related to the safety and health of employees, faculty, students and visitors;
- Innovate, improve and support enhancements to institutional safety culture.

Committee Members

Membership is a three-year appointment, unless otherwise stated. Members can be appointed to consecutive terms if it serves the best interest of achieving the responsibilities of the HHCC. Members of the committee will be ~~will be~~ qualified by their education and experience (i.e., subject matter expertise) and capable of evaluating the intended purpose, hazards controls and handling practices associated with the use of highly hazardous chemicals. Members may include faculty, staff, supervisors or other qualified individuals. The committee leadership (Chair and Vice-Chair) will be limited to tenure track faculty. Membership will be greater than or equal to 6 but less than or equal to 10. Committee members can recommend



an appropriate alternate to represent them in their absence. Alternates approved by the UTK HHCC will have voting rights only in the absence of the assigned members. The Committee membership will consist of representative from the following:

- UTK College of Arts and Sciences
- UTK Tickle College of Engineering
- UTIA (including CVM)
- UTMCK GSM
- UTK College of Education, Health and Human Sciences
- SGA or GSS student representative (ideally a two-year term)
- UTK Chemical Hygiene Officer
- UTK or UTIA Environmental Health and Safety (other than the UTK CHO)

Ad hoc and ex officio members may be added by Committee consent for one or more meetings to resolve particular matters or situations.

Quorum and Voting Rights

A quorum for a meeting will be a simple majority of assigned members. For purposes of passing a resolution or policy at a meeting, a simple majority of committee members attending a meeting with a quorum is sufficient. Voting rights may be exercised during the attendance of a Committee meeting or by electronic ballot. All members of the Committee, except ad hoc and ex officio members, have voting rights.

Ad Hoc Subcommittees

Ad hoc subcommittees may be appointed as necessary to address chemical safety & health related matters. These subcommittees may be composed solely of members from the HHCC or may include non-members. Subcommittees will present findings and/or proposed resolutions to the HHCC as required by the Chair. Subcommittees may not pass or enact resolutions independent of the full Committee.

Proceedings

Meetings will be conducted in accordance with the Committee Chair's Rules of Order. The Chair will issue all points of order, summarize initiatives as necessary, moderate discussion, and call for motions. Motions, seconds, and/or other propositions may be made by any voting member of the Safety Committee.

Where meeting outcomes create changes in policies, draft changes in policy, changes in procedure and/or draft changes in procedure, the changes will need to be communicated promptly to the Laboratory Safety Committee. The communication mechanism may vary due to circumstances and/or needs, but can include communications from the offices of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Public Safety, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research Compliance and the UTIA Agricultural Research Dean; the Safety Offices of the two campuses, or a communication issued by the Committee through the Committee members.

Agendas

Agendas are assembled by the Committee Chair and distributed to the Committee one week in advance of a scheduled meeting. However, sudden changes in circumstances or emergency events may require the Chair to present an updated



agenda at the meeting. Also, all agendas should include updates from the subcommittees and an item for “Any Other Business”. Any Committee member may request of the Chair that an item be included in the agenda.

Minutes

Minutes of the meeting shall include a copy of the meeting agenda, a list of members present and members absent, notes about the sequence of items discussed, the substance of the discussions, the statement of any resolutions and vote outcomes for those resolutions, statements about action items and responsible parties, a list of handouts, and a list of issues and/or trends to be briefed to the Laboratory Safety Committee. Minutes shall be:

- Compiled by a staff member reporting to the Committee Chair
- Available one week before the next meeting via e-mail and reviewed at the beginning of that meeting for correction and/or approval.
- Maintained on the UTK EHS website at a web link for the Laboratory Safety Committee/High Hazard Chemical Review Committee.

Minutes are provided in summary form to the Laboratory Safety Committee.

Meeting Frequency

The HHCC shall meet no less than bi-monthly to ensure timely review of chemical protocols. Special meetings of the HHCC may be called to address matters needing immediate attention. Members who are unable to attend are encouraged to send a representative from their respective unit to serve as their proxy. Members shall provide the name of their proxy, in advance, to the Chair for approval. Proxies shall have voting authority on behalf of the member. Members shall limit their proxy selection to no more than two alternate representatives.

Conflicts of Interest

A conflict of interest is defined as financial involvement with a commercial sponsor or personal relationship with an investigator or a sponsor. The University’s conflict of interest policy is published in the University’s fiscal policies ([Policy number FI0125](#)). Any HHCC member with financial or other interests with the investigator or a research sponsor should inform the HHCC and, if necessary, follow the procedures in the policy to manage or resolve the conflict, if any. Committee members may participate in discussion, but must abstain from voting if a conflict of interest exists.

Non-Disclosure

Section 8 of the [University’s Code of Conduct](#) requires that all employees protect the confidentiality of information that they receive in the course of their employment, as required by applicable laws, contracts, and policies:

“Responsible Use and Protection of Confidential Information: Employees are entrusted with a variety of confidential information about students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, research sponsors, licensing partners, patients, and others. Employees must access, use, protect, disclose, preserve, and dispose of confidential information in compliance with applicable laws, regulations, contracts, and university policies.”

Specific non-disclosure agreement requests made by granting agencies, corporations, other commercial entities or individuals will be submitted to the Office of the General Counsel for review.



Protections against Liability for HHCC Members

The University provides legal protection against liability for its employees in the conduct of their job functions. State law, Tenn. Code Ann. §9-8-307(h), provides that state employees, including employees of The University of Tennessee, have immunity from liability for acts or omissions within the scope of their employment, unless the acts or omissions are willful, malicious, criminal, or done for personal gain. The full policy may be viewed at: <https://counsel.tennessee.edu/liability/>. For more information on University Employee Protections against Liability, contact the Office of the General Counsel.

Bylaws Review and Revision

Bylaws for the High Hazard Chemical Review Committee shall be reviewed at least every two years but may be reviewed at any time as necessitated by changes in university administrative structure or policy. The bylaws revision process will be managed by the Chair. It will involve either the Committee as a whole or an ad hoc subcommittee appointed by the Committee. All revisions will be framed as motions to the Committee for voting on by the Committee and submitted with the meeting agenda prior to the meeting. Revisions to the bylaws must be shared with the Committee two weeks prior to a vote being held and be approved by the affirmative vote of a majority (51%) of the Committee membership. Ballots for such votes may be presented in person at the meeting where the vote occurs or made via electronic ballot to the Chair between release of the recommended changes and the established deadline.