



# THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

## Security in an Academic Environment

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### General

Recently there has been a growing concern about the possible misuse of chemical, biological, and radioactive materials. In response to these concerns, the following policy is intended to address the issue of security for hazardous materials at the University of Maine (e.g., preventing unauthorized access to chemical or biological agents and preventing the unauthorized removal of dangerous agents).

How we establish a secure environment for the use of hazardous materials while maintaining an open campus is a dilemma that touches the core of our way of life. The solution requires the efforts of the entire campus community. Security in an open campus requires the following steps:

- 1) laboratory supervisors must control access to their areas;
- 2) inventories of hazardous materials must be maintained regularly;
- 3) standard procedures to protect laboratory workers must be followed;
- 4) responsibilities must be integrated with decision-making in department, college and research unit administration.

### Requirements

#### **Risk Classification:**

**Low-Risk Areas** such as undergraduate teaching laboratories, classrooms, and other public areas may be very flexible in their security measures. These areas are expected to maintain an open collaborative work environment while at the same time identifying and mitigating any threats.

Security risks within these areas should be addressed by removing hazards that could pose a serious threat to human health or the environment and by securing building doors outside of normal hours of operation.

**Medium-Risk Areas** include some research laboratories, teaching lab prep-rooms, food preparation areas, and other types of areas where controlled access is required. Unauthorized personnel are not allowed in the area without the permission of the Area-Supervisor.

Security risks within these areas should be addressed by controlling access through the use of locked doors when the area is unattended and by challenging the presence of unauthorized (unfamiliar) persons within the work area.

**High-Risk Areas** are those areas where particularly hazardous materials are present, areas where serious health risks may be encountered or highly

sensitive/vulnerable areas. Types of hazards in these areas may include highly toxic chemical substances, select biological agents, radioactive materials, or potential physical hazards. These types of areas include certain laboratories, hazardous materials storage areas, mechanical rooms, or other types of areas that could be either a source of highly hazardous materials or could pose a serious health hazard to individuals present within the area.

*Radioactive material* must be secured from unauthorized use or removal. The NRC expects that unknown or unauthorized persons encountered in the laboratory will be challenged as to their identity and intent. Persons without justification for being in the laboratory are not allowed to remain unaccompanied in the lab.

*Biological agents or toxins* capable of causing serious or fatal illness to humans or animals must be maintained in a secure area designed to minimize opportunities for accidental or intentional removal of these agents.

*Controlled substances* must be maintained in secure areas with physical security controls appropriate for the schedules and quantity of Controlled Substances on hand. Generally a securely locked, substantially constructed cabinet, or a safe, will provide adequate security for storage.

*Hazardous Chemical Substances* may require special controls on transfer of agents from one laboratory to another and may require notifications for transfer or EPA registrations prior to manufacturer. Any substances that have the potential to cause serious injury or to cause environmental damage require special controls of some type.

State and Federal Regulations mandate special security precautions for the manufacture, storage, and use of high-risk hazardous materials. Area-Supervisors should assess the risks of other hazardous substances based upon both the nature and quantity of the substance present. Appropriate security measures should be established based upon the potential for risk to human health and the environment. Security protocols may be included in written *Chemical Hygiene Plans* where applicable.

Other factors that should be taken into account in assessing security include the potential to disrupt university operations, the potential for material or equipment losses from the university, and the potential for liability to the university as a result of lapses in security.

## **Responsibilities**

Responsibility for security logically belongs with those individuals who have the most direct control over the area. The University of Maine Security Department will conduct security surveys in areas upon request.

**Area Supervisors** are responsible for identifying and classifying potential security risks within their area and for establishing security protocols for high-

risk areas. Area-Supervisors may delegate responsibility for maintaining material or area security; however, they remain responsible for ensuring that individual employees, students, or guests within their area follow established security protocols.

**Employees, Students and Guests** are responsible for following established security protocols, reporting missing materials or equipment, reporting unusual activities or other security concerns to either the Area-Supervisor or the University Police as appropriate.

**For Additional Information**

Contact your Department Safety Coordinator or Safety and Environmental Management at (207) 581-4055.

DOT Security Plan – MP09046

**Document History**

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