



I. 8.5.4 Physical Safety

Chapter 8 - Health & Safety	Original Effective Date: June 2000
Section: 8.5 Environmental Health and Safety	Date Last Reviewed: April 2025
Responsible Entity: Senior Vice President for Facilities and Capital Planning	Date Last Revised: April 2025

II. Purpose

The UT Health San Antonio (UTHSA) Physical Safety Program is to assist all levels of management, employees, students and visitors in fulfilling the UTHSA commitment to provide a place of employment and learning free of recognized physical safety hazards while promoting world-class education, research and patient care.

III. Scope

This Policy applies to all UTHSA employees (faculty and staff), students and visitors to all UTHSA campuses.

IV. Policy

The Physical Safety Division of the Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) Department is charged with implementing and enforcing Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), and other occupational environmental rules or regulations pertinent to UTHSA campus operations.

A. Physical Safety Handbook

The Physical Safety Handbook (Handbook) is part of a continuous EH&S program designed to provide safety rules, information, and guidance to UTHSA employees (faculty and staff), students and visitors. UTHSA employees who willfully neglect to follow written directions, safety rules, regulations and guidance outlined in the Handbook may be subject to disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

The procedures and requirements outlined in the Handbook are specific to facilities and operations resident to UTHSA and its affiliates. The Handbook contains the objectives, policies, standards, and procedures pertaining to operations and employees. The Handbook also describes specific responsibilities, administrative procedures, and operational requirements that are relevant to UTHSA operations.

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Electric supplemental heating devices in UTHSA Campus Buildings are allowed only when prescribed by a Primary Care Physician (PCP) to support medical treatment or therapy. The prescribed unit must meet, without exception, all the following criteria:

1. Must be Underwriters Laboratory (UL) listed and labeled.
2. Must have an automatic, built-in, overcurrent and overheating protection circuit.
3. Must be equipped with tip-over (Fall) current disconnect protection.
4. Must contain only solid heat conductor(s).
5. Must be rated and approved for its proposed use.

B. Responsibilities

Each of the following have responsibilities in implementing a model Physical Safety Program.

1. Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) Department

The EH&S Department is responsible for establishing safety standards, regulations, guidelines, and programs designed to assure compliance with federal, state, and local rules and regulations. Environmental Health and Safety encompasses radiological, chemical, biological, physical safety and environmental protection.

2. EH&S Department, Physical Safety Division

- a. Maintain the Physical Safety Program Handbook.
- b. Provide guidance to UTHSA employees and students concerning Occupational Hazards and Fire and Life Safety concerns in the workplace.
- c. Provide general and specialized Physical Safety training upon request.
- d. Conduct exposure assessments and workplace audits upon request.
- e. Perform routine or specialized health and risk assessments to support Physical Safety Committee requests.
- f. Provide technical guidance concerning Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- g. Review and analyze UTHSA injury occurrences to track and reduce risk of further events.
- h. Remain current on rules and regulations concerning occupational exposure to potentially injurious Physical Agent use in UTHSA workplace environments.

3. Faculty and Staff in charge of supervising laboratories

- a. Inform and train employees concerning Physical Agents in the workplace as required by the Physical Safety Handbook.
- b. Retain all training records and associated documentation.
- c. Implement and enforce rules and standards concerning health and safety for laboratories under the supervisor's jurisdiction.
- d. Ensure employee compliance with the Physical Safety Handbook.

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- e. Ensure the availability and enforce the use of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Safety Interlock Systems, Ventilation Equipment, and relevant Operating and Maintenance (O&M) Manuals.
 - f. Remain cognizant of potentially injurious Physical Agents in the workplace and their associated occupational health hazards.
 - g. Actively participate in Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation Exercises.
 - h. Conduct internal inspections of the workplace to identify, reduce or eliminate Health and Safety risks in their work area.
 - i. Request guidance from the EH&S Department, Physical Safety Division when guidance in the Physical Safety Handbook is unclear or unavailable.
4. Employees (faculty and staff) and Students
- a. Follow all Health and Safety Standards and Rules applicable to their occupational environment.
 - b. Report all hazardous conditions to their Supervisor or Student Advisor.
 - c. Use appropriate PPE in any occupational environment where hazardous compounds are used and/or exposure to potentially injurious concentration of hazardous substances exist.
 - d. Report any job-related injuries or illnesses to their Supervisor or Student Advisor and seek immediate medical treatment.
 - e. Refrain from operating any equipment or job-related instrumentation without approved, documented training and/or authorization.
 - f. Ask questions to Supervisor and/or Student Advisors when workplace equipment use, or operating procedures are unclear.
 - g. Remain aware of workplace Physical Agents.
 - h. Request information on training on safely handling or using hazardous compounds.

V. Definitions

When used in this document, the following words have the meaning set forth below unless the context requires a different meaning.

Physical Agents – an umbrella term for a wide variety of hazards (chemical, biological or physical stress) that may cause injury or disease. Examples include metals, dusts, biological agents, such as bacteria, viruses, or physical stress such as noise, heat, cold, repetitive motion, etc.

VI. Related References

[Environmental Health and Safety Department](#)

VII. Review and Approval History

The approving authority of this policy is the University Executive Committee.

Effective Date	Action Taken	Approved By	Approved Date
06/2000	Policy Origination		
09/2018	Policy Revision		
05/2021	Policy Revision/Discretionary Edits		
04/2025	Policy Revision	Executive Committee	04/15/2025