



Human Resources

SAFE MANAGEMENT OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS POLICY

1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 The University of Sussex is a complex and diverse environment with a variety of buildings and grounds where a range of potentially hazardous activities takes place.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the arrangements in place at the University to comply with all legislation concerning the management of its buildings and grounds and applicable codes and standards, to minimise risk, reduce the impacts arising from work-related injuries, and preventing such injuries altogether.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all staff, students, contractors, third parties and visitors as detailed in the University Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy.
- 2.2 The policy applies to all University activities undertaken by individuals as part of their work, research, or education.
- 2.3 This policy applies to all building and locations under the control of the University of Sussex, whether located on the Falmer campus or elsewhere, and relates to the safe management, operation and maintenance of university buildings, spaces, and grounds.
- 2.4 This policy does not cover the management, operation, or maintenance arrangements within sites where a transfer of site possession is in place under the Construction Design and Management (CDM) Regulations 2015 (i.e. buildings/ grounds are under the control of a Principal Contractor (third party.))
- 2.5 This policy does not relate to general security management.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Vice-Chancellor

- 3.1.1 The Vice-Chancellor will provide leadership and executive oversight of health and safety. They are also accountable for ensuring that all work in relation to the management of the University's buildings and grounds is in compliance with the applicable health and safety regulations and requirements.

3.2 Executive Deans of Faculty and Directors of Professional Services

3.2.1 Executive Deans of Faculty and Directors of Professional Services are responsible for health and safety matters relating to the activities of their Faculty or Division, and the safe operation of buildings and grounds under their control and must ensure that:

- Health and safety considerations are integrated into Faculty/ Division decision-making in relation to the operation and use of buildings and grounds under their control.
- University processes for the design and development of new facilities / buildings, redesign and/or redevelopment of existing structures / grounds, and decommissioning / demolition of same are followed.
- A Faculty / Division Risk Register which includes building / grounds related health and safety risks under their control is maintained.
- Cooperation and coordination with other Executive Deans of Faculty and Directors of Professional Services colleagues where there are shared spaces, buildings, and grounds to ensure ongoing safety of site users.
- Line managers have in place suitable systems for controlling access to hazardous areas within their areas of responsibility.
- Suitable and effective arrangements are in place to deal with emergencies relating to hazards within buildings and/or grounds and that these events are reported centrally.
- Appropriate investigations are undertaken following any significant incidents, near misses, or untoward occurrences, relating to buildings or grounds and that any remedial or improvement actions are implemented.

3.3 **Director of Estates, Facilities and Commercial (EFC) Services**

3.3.1 In addition to the responsibilities detailed in Section 3.2 the Director of Estates, Facilities and Commercial Services is responsible for the management and operation of the University estate (the buildings, grounds, and services related to infrastructure) under the control of the University. This includes both the day-to-day operation of sites under the control of the University, and the strategic direction of the estate to ensure it meets the overarching vision and strategy of the University. They must:

- Ensure the work and maintenance regimes of any partners or contractors employed by Estates, Facilities and Commercial Services meet the University's safety standards.
- Ensure Estates related works and services commissioned directly by the University, meet all relevant health and safety statutory requirements including permit to work and access controls, and the necessary resources are provided to ensure staff can carry out their duties safely.

- Ensure the appropriate appointment of ‘Appointed Persons’, ‘Responsible Persons’ and ‘Competent Persons’ as required by legislation.
- Work closely with the Health Safety and Wellbeing Team to ensure a holistic approach to health and safety as it relates to building, grounds, and facilities management safety.

3.3.2 The Director of Estates, Facilities and Commercial Services acts as the ‘Responsible Person’ and/or the ‘Duty Holder’ where required under relevant legislation relating to the management of the estate. They act as:

- The ‘Duty Holder’ under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.
- The ‘Duty Holder’ under Approved Code of Practice Legionnaires' disease.

3.4 Chief Digital and Technology Officer

3.4.1 As the ITS Division commissions work and engages contractors to carry out intrusive works within University buildings and grounds (e.g. cable replacement activity) independent of the Estates, Facilities and Commercial Services Division, in addition to the responsibilities set out in 3.2, the Director of ITS is responsible for the following in their area of responsibility:

- Ensure works and services including maintenance activity commissioned directly by the Division meet the University’s safety standards and necessary resources are provided to ensure staff can carry out their duties safely.
- Ensure the appropriate appointment of ‘Appointed Persons’, ‘Responsible Persons’ and ‘Competent Persons’ as required by legislation.
- Co-operate and coordinate with Estates, Facilities and Commercial Services (including Sussex Estates & Facilities LLP (‘SEF’)) to ensure works do not present a hazard or risk to other estates work or facilities management.
- Follow all appropriate ‘permit to access’ and ‘permit to work’ procedures.

3.5 Line Managers, Supervisors, Technical Managers and Principal Investigators

3.5.1 Line Managers, Supervisors, Technical Managers, and Principal Investigators are responsible for ensuring that they and their teams are aware of all relevant operational arrangements in place within buildings or grounds where they work, teach and/or research and must ensure that:

- Risk assessments relating to work, teaching, and research activity within their areas of responsibility should consider potential hazards to persons other than just staff and students (i.e. visitors, contractors, research participants, SEF operatives etc). A permit to access process will be followed to control access to areas/spaces identified as remaining high risk following risk assessment, ensuring hazards can be mitigated or activities stopped whilst persons are present, and to ensure they receive all relevant safety information, instruction, and training as necessary before entering the space.

- Co-operate and coordinate with Estates, Facilities and Commercial Services (including SEF) to provide access for maintenance, refurbishment or other works to the building or grounds under their control, following permit to access/ permit to work processes as required.
- Communicate and ensure all persons under their control are fully aware of, and understand, building / grounds related risks and control measures (temporary or permanent) put in place by their Faculty or Division, including how to respond to an emergency.
- Develop, display, and maintain safety signage related to research / teaching and work activities (identified through risk assessment for instance) within their area of responsibility.

3.6 Associate Director of Technical Operations

3.6.1 In addition to the responsibilities detailed in Section 3.2 the Associate Director of Technical Operations is responsible for ensuring health, safety and hazard identification signage is displayed and maintained on the doors / entrances to laboratory, workshop, storage, and other high-hazard areas within the Science buildings.

3.7 All staff, students, contractors, third parties and visitors

3.7.1 Every individual (staff member, student, contractor, third party and visitor) has a responsibility to:

- Maintain clear access and egress to/from and within buildings and ensure emergency fire doors and exits remain clear.
- All visitors, staff, and students shall abide by any safety regulations in force, and shall not enter a hazardous area, without the authority of the Appropriate Person, or their representatives, or a valid permit to work or access as appropriate.
- Not bring any hazardous or noxious substance into buildings except where they are specifically required for research, work or teaching purposes following appropriate risk assessment, authorisation, and related controls.
- Not misuse or interfere with facilities and/or signage in place to ensure their safety or the safety of others.
- Comply with all local safety arrangements including building controls and not undertake, or engage others to undertake, any activities which could lead to the release of asbestos fibres (for example undertake works on building fabric or services) without first gaining authorisation from Estates/SEF and immediately report to Security and their line manager/supervisor if they believe that a release of asbestos fibres has occurred or could occur imminently.

- Report any accidents, incidents, or hazards/defects in buildings or within grounds, through the appropriate local reporting and escalation channels.
- 3.7.2 Staff and students acting in a manner that poses a risk to their safety, or the safety of others, may be subject to appropriate training, intervention, or disciplinary action. Individuals who are not members of the University of Sussex, deemed to be acting in such a manner, may be asked to leave the site.

4. Policy

- 4.1 Building and grounds should be managed, as far as is reasonably practicable, through the application of safety codes of practice which sit alongside this policy (as linked at the end of the document). Control measures must be implemented in line with the hierarchy of control, as well as the assessment of significant risks associated with building/grounds safety and only allowing those with the necessary competence to undertake related tasks.
- 4.2 This policy and related supporting documents also work to ensure that the University and the Vice-Chancellor, as the accountable person, meets legal responsibilities as outlined in relevant legislation. The policy should be considered in addition to relevant UK Health and Safety legislation.
- 4.3 Compliance with Health and Safety Regulations and requirement relating to the management of buildings and grounds is achieved by the following:
- 4.3.1 **Animals in buildings:** University Regulation 29 (section 1. (g)) outlines the requirements for managing animals in buildings: “Animals, other than assistive animals, and such animals as are required specifically for academic purposes, are not permitted in University buildings. Animals that have previously (before 1 August 2003) been permitted in University buildings with the consent of the Head of School, shall continue to be permitted, provided owners obtain the written permission of their Head of School, and a risk assessment for the handling of the animal whilst within University Buildings, is carried out. Retrospective applications will not be considered.”
- 4.3.2 For the purposes of Regulation 29 (section 1. (g)) and this Policy, “academic purposes” relate to research animals and animals involved in student experience activities and events, including (but not limited to) those relating to student mental health and wellbeing.
- 4.3.3 Animals at events relating to Graduation (including those undertaken off campus) are not included within the scope of ‘academic purpose’ within Regulation 29 and this Policy, and only ‘assistive animals’ will be permitted (see 4.3.4.)
- 4.3.4 The University accommodates ‘assistance dogs’, within the meaning of section 173(1)(a)-(d) of the Equality Act 2010. Other ‘assistance’, ‘therapy’ and ‘emotional support’ animals are not formally defined or classified in the UK, and do not have the same legal recognition as assistance dogs under the Equality Act. However, in exceptional circumstances, requests for an assistance, therapy or emotional support animal by staff and students with physical or mental impairments will be considered on a case-by-case basis, as a reasonable adjustment to permit access to university

buildings. Authorisation must be sought following University Safety Codes of Practice which require risk assessment, proof of insurance and minimum standards of accreditation, training, etc.

- 4.3.5 **Asbestos Management:** Appropriate arrangements for all asbestos containing materials ('ACMs') are managed through an asbestos management plan and asbestos register. Associated surveys will be included in facilities management service arrangements. A permit to works process to inform all workers, contractors/third parties of the presence of ACMs where there is a potential risk of exposure will be maintained. All works should be completed by competent staff or sub-contractors, with the appropriate professional accreditations, insurance cover and Health and Safety Executive licence.
- 4.3.6 Where practicable, asbestos will be removed before intrusive activity but in all cases where leaving it in place creates an unmanaged risk. Damage to existing protection (including encapsulation and protective surface coatings) will be remediated and reassurance air monitoring undertaken where necessary.
- 4.3.7 **Construction, Design & Management ('CDM'):** Appropriate arrangements to meet requirements of the CDM Regulations will be maintained to ensure the health, safety and welfare on construction projects involving the construction of new buildings, demolitions, refurbishments, extensions, conversions, repairs, and maintenance activities. Relevant University capital and/or long-term maintenance projects are overseen by the Director of Estates, Facilities and Commercial Services Director.
- 4.3.8 **Electrical and Gas Safety** – Appropriate arrangement for undertaking cyclical testing and inspections of electrical services as required by applicable legislation, and for ensuring the University's statutory obligations are met in terms of gas safety and landlord responsibility, including the coordination of servicing and inspection of gas appliances, will be included in facilities management service arrangements.
- 4.3.9 **Highways** – Appropriate arrangements for maintaining private roads, footpaths, and car parks in a safe and serviceable condition will be maintained and included in facilities management service arrangements. Access for vehicles and pedestrians will be managed with appropriate traffic controls including, but not limited to, speed limits, speed humps, pedestrian crossings, and parking rules. Clear, appropriate signage and enforcement measures will be in place to support safe and lawful use.
- 4.3.10 **Safety Signage** – All signage associated with highways, health and safety, means of escape identification and wayfinding will be maintained. An annual review of all statutory signage at the University premises will be undertaken to identify the condition of installed signage and the levels of compliance with all statutory requirements. Changes to/reinstatement of signage due to University project activity is managed by the relevant Project Team.
- 4.3.11 **Tree Safety** - A detailed tree condition survey will be maintained to monitor for signs of damage, disease, or other potential risk and to perform remedial work as required to ensure safety and to mitigate impact on street lighting and highway safety. Appropriate activity will be included in the facilities management service arrangements.

4.3.12 **Water Hygiene Management** - A 'Water Safety Plan for the Control of Water Borne Biological Hazards' will be maintained which sets out the University's strategy for compliance with statutory standards and current best practice, and outlines management responsibilities, systems and controls required to provide assurance on water safety, including the management of Legionella risk. Engineering Water Risk Assessments are applied to all properties operated by the University and are carried out during the construction phase of new projects, before and after renovations, regularly and when there is reason to suspect it is no longer valid.

4.3.13 **Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare)** – Minimum safety and health requirements and standards set within health and safety regulation, including 'welfare' factors relating to (but not limited to) workplace temperature, lighting levels, access to sanitary conveniences, supply of potable water, facilities to change clothing/store work clothing, rest and for eating meals, will be maintained. Access and egress to/from buildings and routes for pedestrians and vehicles will be maintained to ensure safety. Rooms will meet minimum statutory standards and ventilation requirements.

5. LEGISLATION AND GOOD PRACTICE

5.1 Legislation

5.1.1 Please see below for related key legislation relevant to this policy area:

- [The Construction \(Design and Management\) Regulations 2015](#)
- [Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012](#)
- [Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002](#)
- [Electricity at Work Regulations 1989](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#)
- [Health and Safety \(Safety Signs and Signals\) Regulations 1996](#)
- [Highways Act 1980](#)
- [Occupiers' Liability Act 1984](#)
- [Road Traffic Act 1984](#)
- [The Workplace \(Health, Safety and Welfare\) Regulations 1992](#)

5.2 Codes and Standards of Practice

5.2.1 Please see below for related key codes and standards of practice relevant to this policy area:

- [Approved Code of Practice Legionnaires' disease: The control of legionella bacteria in water systems \(L8\)](#)
- [BS 8580 Water Quality and Risk Assessments for Legionella Control - A Code of Practice](#)
- [The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 Guidance HSR25](#)
- [Legionnaires' Disease Technical Guidance HSG 274](#)
- [University Regulation 29](#)

Review / Contacts / References

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Related internal policies, procedures, guidance:	A to Z of health and safety : Health and Safety : Schools and services : University of Sussex University Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy Asbestos Management Business Continuity Electrical Safety Grounds Maintenance University Incident Reporting System Transport Safety Water Management and Waste Water Workplace Environment
Division:	Human Resources
Policy Owner:	Executive Director of Human Resources
Point of Contact:	Assistant Director Health Safety and Wellbeing University Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team, HR