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Universität Hamburg

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Occupational safety obligations at the University of Hamburg (excluding the UKE)

# **EXECUTIVE UNIVERSITY BOARD DIRECTIVE ON OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY, ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, AND FIRE SAFETY**

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## Introduction

Occupational safety in companies and institutions to continuously protect and improve the health and safety of staff. This includes adapting measures to the conditions on-site.

Occupational safety also specifically includes preventive fire protection and environmental protection measures.

The primary aim of occupational safety and fire protection at the University of Hamburg is to make sure employees, students, and others present are safe. Our environmental protection measures thus ensure that no harmful substances or radiation are released into the environment and pose a risk to the living environment. In their respective area of authority, managers are also obliged to ensure that the relevant requirements of environmental legislation are observed and that necessary measures are implemented.

Within the University, public occupational safety regulations and regulations of the statutory accident insurance provider apply as well. These regulations are relevant to both staff and students. The University creates specific organizational structures and assigns responsibilities to satisfy statutory requirements. In addition, specific functions are assigned, for example, to security officers, radiation protection officers, first aid officers, and biological safety officers. These individuals are certified and offered ongoing training.

The Safety and Health at Work Act (Arbeitsschutzgesetz, ArbSchG) and other statutory instruments—such as the hazardous substances ordinance (Gefahrstoffverordnung, GefStoffV) and the Ordinance on Safety and Health Protection at Workplaces Involving Biological Agents (Verordnung über Sicherheit und Gesundheitsschutz bei Tätigkeiten mit Biologischen Arbeitsstoffen, BioStoffV) among others—impose the need for regular risk assessments. A risk assessment should identify and evaluate the risks involved for a specific task in a specific workplace, and establish the required protective measures.

According to the relevant workplace safety provisions, responsibility for occupational safety rests with the management of an institution (also referred to as employer or undertaking). Employers have extensive decision-making autonomy in running an enterprise and thus also bear the statutory responsibility for occupational safety. This responsibility is inextricably intertwined with the power and authority to direct and instruct others. At universities, employer responsibilities are carried out by university management. University management is responsible in particular for establishing a workplace environment that is fit for health and safety and environmental protection purposes (organizational obligations) and the selection and appointment of officers to specific roles (duty of selection).

While University management is responsible for organizing general occupational safety, environmental protection, and fire safety, managers of individual University areas are responsible for organizing occupational safety, environmental protection, and fire safety in their domains. Managers at the University of Hamburg include heads of departments and units, administrative managers, professors, and heads of other institutions, and—with regard to student safety and well-being—other teaching staff.

They play a key role in occupational safety, environmental protection, and fire safety and in ensuring the working conditions for staff and students in accordance with their individual duties and skills. They have the authority to act, advise, and make decisions that determine work procedures, applications, and the use of equipment and materials, thus directly setting specific work and study conditions for their areas. Leadership staff thus influence the operating procedures not directly controlled by University management, such as the conduct of risk assessments and the determination and monitoring of measures for preventing accidents and health hazards in the workplace and emergency schemes for the respective work area.

## **1. General responsibility for occupational safety at the University of Hamburg**

University management is responsible for the organization and monitoring of workplace health and safety and environmental protection for the whole University. This includes operational responsibility for all buildings used by the University.

It is responsible for inducing other bodies, committees, and functionaries as well as all members and staff of the University of Hamburg to fulfill their duties. University management must ensure that technical, organizational, and staffing structures are in place—as well as the financial means for the enforcement of occupational safety, environmental protection, and fire safety—and that internal University regulations are defined and updated.

### **1.1. President**

The University of Hamburg is represented by its president pursuant to Section 81 subsection 2 Hamburg higher education act (Hamburgisches Hochschulgesetz, HmbHG).

### **1.2. Head of Administration**

The head of administration determines the measures required for occupational safety, environmental protection, and fire safety at the University of Hamburg. These duties are considered matters of state and certain areas or specific cases may be delegated to third parties. Should tasks be delegated, the head of administration remains responsible for organization and supervision. The head of administration establishes the organizational and staffing structures to implement the provisions.

This includes, in particular:

- delegating of occupational safety, environmental protection and fire safety rights, obligations, and duties to professors, department heads, and the leadership of organizational units and central operating units, including delineating areas of responsibility through general or individual regulations

- properly notifying the responsible persons about current legal provisions and amendments thereto pertaining to occupational safety, environmental protection, fire safety, and, where required by law, issuing more specific orders for special areas of regulation
- providing expert advice (including establishing and equipping an occupational safety and environmental protection team with skilled employees for occupational safety and qualified personnel for operational environmental protection), introducing all reasonable and necessary centralized precautionary and defensive measures for anticipated risks as well as mitigating loss and damage (in particular the organization of preventive fire safety)
- ensuring the safe and environmentally sound condition of buildings and operational facilities including all matters directly associated with buildings, such as ventilation systems, elevators, permanently installed safety devices, electrical installations, and so forth (to be carried out by Department 8: Property Management)
- coordinating occupational safety, environmental protection, and fire safety measures between the University and other businesses and companies that use the same facilities as the University of Hamburg
- organizing the Occupational Safety Commission (ASA) and presiding as chair of this commission for University management
- organizing a prescribed occupational health screening scheme (carried out by the City of Hamburg's occupational medical service)
- continuing to improve and adapt occupational safety, environmental protection, and fire safety measures based on new insights.

## **2. Responsibility in organizational units and positions of sole management**

Responsibility for occupational health and safety within the University—that is, establishing and maintaining safe and secure conditions—is a function of management that is largely determined by a position of authority over allocated staff and control over the disposition of resources. More specifically, this means the authority to specify the duties and tasks employees are to undertake, the realization of work outcomes, and the scope and manner of work as well as the authority to prioritize how resources are used.

### **2.1. President and vice presidents**

The president and vice presidents of the University of Hamburg are responsible for the occupational safety, environmental protection, and fire safety in their operational areas in the University Administration. This notwithstanding, the president has overall responsibility for the entire University.

## **2.2. Head of administration**

The head of administration is responsible for the areas within the University Administration assigned to them, notwithstanding their responsibilities within the scope of the duties associated with the overall responsibility of University management.

## **2.3. Deans**

Deans of the faculties of the University of Hamburg are responsible for occupational safety, environmental protection, and fire safety for their respective office of the dean and all facilities and organizational units assigned to them. The offices of the dean may delegate occupational safety, environmental protection, and fire safety obligations to the heads of organizational units or institutions.

## **2.4. Professors**

Professors are directly responsible for their respective areas of research and teaching and bear responsibility for the occupational safety and fire safety of their employees and students. They must organize their research and teaching in conformity with environmental protection provisions.

As part of their courses, they inform participants about escape and rescue routes, assembly points, and behavior in the event of an alarm and take into account regulations for people in need of special assistance. They also ensure that safety regulations are adhered to and, in the event of an alarm, instruct people to leave the room and building as required.

## **2.5. Other teachers**

Other teaching staff (e.g., research associates, adjunct lecturers) are also responsible for informing participants about escape and rescue routes, assembly points, and what to do in the event of an alarm as well as explaining regulations to people who may need help as part of their courses. They also ensure that safety regulations are adhered to and, in the event of an alarm, instruct people to leave the room and building as required.

## **2.6. Heads of organizational units or central operating units**

Heads of organizational units or central operating units of the University of Hamburg are responsible for workplace safety in their respective facilities and institutions.

## **2.7. Other managers**

Every manager or person with teaching duties at the University of Hamburg acts on behalf of the president or the head of administration or on behalf of the management of a University institution and is responsible for their area of instruction with regard to the occupational safety, environmental protection, and fire safety of University of Hamburg employees and students.

### 3. Occupational safety rights, duties, and tasks of managers and supervisors

#### 3.1. Duties and tasks

Rights, duties, and tasks cover the entire respective area of management and are upheld autonomously by those responsible. If resources or the scope of authority are insufficient, the superordinate authority for occupational safety and health must be informed regardless of any continuing responsibility.

Each person is responsible for ensuring that

- work processes are organized in line with the occupational safety, environmental protection, and fire safety provisions
- the affected employees are involved in establishing risks and in conducting and updating the risk assessment
- employees, students, and other members of the University of Hamburg are informed of and trained on the potential dangers in their workplace, aspects of fire prevention, and the required safety measures before their start of work as well as at least once per year, and in the event of specific incidents
- in courses, participants are made aware of escape and rescue routes, assembly points, and “What to do in the event of danger” notices and arrangements are made for any persons in need of assistance
- in courses, emergency exits and routes to exits and emergency exit are kept clear and the maximum number of people allowed in the room is not exceeded
- only safe and appropriate equipment is used, which is inspected and serviced regularly
- the necessary personal protective equipment is procured and made available, is regularly reviewed for functionality, and is used and worn by employees or students in compliance with the regulations
- any safety issues identified are rectified without delay or the according information or measures are introduced for their rectification
- all activities are stopped in the event of imminent danger
- instructions (e.g., on how to use machines or handle hazardous substances) are prepared for the responsible area, affected employees trained in these, and their application and implementation monitored;
- an effective contingency plan (first aid, fire safety, and evacuation) is drawn up and the required personnel (e.g., fire safety officers, first aiders, evacuation assistants) are appointed and provided with the appropriate training
- the rescue of persons in need of assistance is taken into account
- safety officers are appointed and trained
- occupational medical care and other health measures are implemented
- employment restrictions for youths and pregnant women are adhered to
- work-related accidents are reported

- third parties (e.g., external service providers, visiting scholars) are instructed.

### **3.2. Delegation of responsibility**

Managers may delegate duties for their respective areas of responsibility. Any delegation must include all requisite authority to carry out duties (e.g., commitment of resources and decision-making authority). The delegator must reasonably believe that the delegatee has the ability to properly execute the duties delegated to them (i.e., this person must possess the requisite competence to handle the task because of their education, professional experience, and/or training). The delegator must ensure that the delegation is properly documented.

The delegator remains responsible for supervision when delegating duties. They must be satisfied that the delegated duties are being carried out.

### **3.3. Training and briefings**

Expertise in occupational, environmental, and fire safety includes knowledge of the University's occupational safety organization and the ability to understand the corresponding laws, regulations, and downstream regulations that apply in one's own area of responsibility. Participation in appropriate training—for example, that offered by the Occupational Safety and Environmental Protection Unit or specific on-site instructions by those responsible—ensures that the persons to whom duties relating to occupational safety, environmental protection, and fire safety have been delegated are able to meet these requirements.

## **4. Rights and obligations of employees and students**

Within the scope of their abilities and in accordance with instructions and directives from their superiors or instructors, employees and students must take steps to preserve their own occupational safety, environmental protection, and fire safety in the workplace or place of study.

Employees and students must use machines, equipment, tools, substances, means of transportation, sundry implements, safety devices, and the personal protective equipment supplied to and for them as designated. Employees and students must report any immediate and material endangerment to safety and health as well as any malfunction of any safety devices or equipment they discover to the responsible manager or instructor. Employees and students may propose suggestions to managers and instructors about anything associated with occupational, environmental, and fire safety issues.

## **5. Expert advice, supervision, and support**

### **5.1. Occupational safety specialists**

All qualified occupational safety specialists at the University of Hamburg are assigned to the Occupational Safety and Environmental Protection Unit. They provide support and assistance to persons in charge of occupational safety within the faculties, University Administration, and the central facilities on issues of accident prevention, occupational safety, and the humane organization of the workplace. The Occupational Safety and Environmental Protection Unit is assigned directly to the head of administration and is an instrument for enforcing the head of administration's responsibility for organization and supervision.

### **5.2. Fire safety officers**

The University of Hamburg fire safety officers are appointed in writing by the head of administration (fire safety manager) and are based in the Occupational Safety and Environmental Protection Unit. They advise and support the University management and University members in all matters of preventive, defensive, and organizational fire protection. Besides advising, fire safety officers draw up and update the fire safety regulations. They are involved in structural, technical, and organizational measures relating to fire safety and in compliance with fire safety regulations for new buildings, conversions and extensions, changes of use, rentals, and procurements. They are involved in the creation of fire safety concepts and the development of measures. Another key task is to organize the training and professional development of fire safety assistants.

### **5.3. University medical officer**

The University medical officers are responsible for providing support and advice to their employers on all issues associated with occupational safety and health and accident prevention. Moreover, they are responsible for carrying out prescribed occupational health screenings.

The University of Hamburg receives its medical assistance from the City of Hamburg's state occupational medical service.

### **5.4. Safety officers**

Safety officers are employees who, in addition to their primary job duties, volunteer to be appointed as safety officers by their manager in collaboration with the Staff Council. They do not have any authority to issue instructions or directives in this capacity, nor do they have a supervisory function. They work with the occupational safety specialists from the Occupational Safety and Environmental Protection Unit. Their duties include, among other things:

- determining whether or not their colleagues are acting in a safe manner—for example, with regard to the correct use of personal protective equipment and technical safety devices—and providing them with advice and instructions to that effect
- drawing attention to accident and health hazards
- raising awareness of potential dangers and providing advice and support.

## 6. Special safety aspects

### 6.1. Hazardous goods

The University of Hamburg is considered a dispatcher, shipper (this includes packing and loading), transporter, and receiver of hazardous goods. The University's hazardous goods officer is appointed by the head of administration. The duties of a hazardous goods officer include:

- monitoring compliance with provisions for the transportation of hazardous goods
- advising University management and members on activities associated with the transportation of hazardous goods
- preparing an annual report for the head of administration about the activities of the business concerning the transportation of hazardous goods
- reviewing processes and procedures with regard to the tasks in question
- introducing measures informing on the dangers relating to the transportation of hazardous goods.

### 6.2. Genetic engineering facilities

The University of Hamburg, represented by its president, is the operator, as defined in the Genetic Engineering Act (Gesetz zur Regelung der Gentechnik, GenTG), of the genetic engineering facilities, genetic engineering work, and the release of genetically altered organisms at the University. These duties have been delegated to the head of administration. The Occupational Safety and Environmental Protection Unit is responsible for coordinating administrative tasks. The obligations and duties of project managers<sup>1</sup> and biological safety officers as well as the administrative channels for notices, reports, and applications for genetic engineering facilities are set forth in the document entitled “*Directive on the Application of Genetic Engineering at the University of Hamburg.*” With respect to the scope of responsibility for control and supervision, project managers are not subject to the authority of the respective institute. They are subject to the exclusive authority of the head of administration who has the organizational responsibility, in the discharge of distinct project manager obligations pursuant to Section 27 of the genetic engineering safety ordinance (Gentechniksisicherheitsverordnung, GenTSV). A central biological safety officer is appointed to assist the head of administration

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<sup>1</sup> The term *project manager* is used here and in the following as a fixed legal term in the sense of the function and not the person.

and advise the head of administration, genetic engineering facility project managers, and on-site biological safety officers on technical issues. The administration of the respective institute does not have any authority to dictate instructions to project managers to the extent this would affect the execution of obligations arising from the operation of genetic engineering facilities.

### **6.3. Laser safety**

University management appoints in writing qualified laser safety officers if class 3R, 3B, and 4 lasers and/or other artificial optical radiation sources similarly dangerous for eyes and skin are in operation. The head of administration, with participation of the staff councils, appoints laser safety officers defining the scope of the tasks and internal decision-making on the recommendation of the relevant head of the institution in which the applicable managed/supervised activities are to be conducted. Laser safety officers shall provide support and assistance to their respective managers for implementation of the requisite safety measures, monitor proper and safe operation, and cooperate with the Occupational Safety and Environmental Protection Unit and the University's medical officer. See also the Laser Safety Regulations at the University of Hamburg.

### **6.4. Radiation protection**

University management is responsible for radiation safety as per the radiation protection ordinance (Verordnung über den Schutz vor Schäden durch ionisierende Strahlen, StrlSchV). The head of administration is responsible for carrying out the duties and obligations pursuant to Section 83 Hamburg higher education act (Hamburgisches Hochschulgesetz, HmbHG). The head of administration delegates duties to the authorized radiation safety representative, for example, the administration of operational and administrative organization within the scope of StrlSchV or supervision of the discharge of duties by radiation safety officers. The authorized radiation safety representatives appoint in writing qualified radiation safety officers to manage and supervise activities subject to StrlSchV and set forth the scope of radiation safety officers' duties, the scope of their internal decision-making authority, and the scope of the requisite authority to implement the duties delegated to them. Radiation safety officers have the authority to issue instructions and directives within their own assigned work area in an institute or working group when applying their technical knowledge as well as in matters involving radiation safety and protection. Radiation safety officers may not be hindered from discharging their duties or discriminated against for discharging their duties. Also see the University of Hamburg's radiation safety instructions.

## 7. Occupational safety, health and environmental protection management system (AGUM)

AGUM—the occupational safety, health, and environmental protection management system—describes processes and contexts relevant to occupational safety, health, environmental and fire safety in numerous areas of activity at the University of Hamburg and names the functionaries or areas responsible for each. AGUM institutes the organizational and operational occupational safety structure at the University of Hamburg.

**Organizational structure** The organizational structure describes the structures of the University of Hamburg from the perspective of occupational safety, environmental protection, and fire safety. An organizational chart includes all relevant functionary groups. The rights, duties, and tasks in occupational safety, environmental protection, and fire safety are described behind each function.

**Process organization** In contrast to the static organizational structure, the process organization describes necessary processes/steps for the implementation of occupational safety, environmental protection, and fire safety. These pages also follow a standardized scheme.

Date, 23.02.2026



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Univ.Prof. Dr. Hauke Heekeren



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Dr. Martin Hecht

## Annex: Regulations

The legal basis is premised predominately on the following statutes and regulations as amended:

- Act on the Implementation of Measures of Occupational Safety and Health to Encourage Improvements in the Safety and Health Protection of Workers at Work (Arbeitsschutzgesetz, ArbSchG)
- German health and safety regulations for artificial optical radiation (Verordnung zum Schutz der Beschäftigten vor Gefährdungen durch künstliche optische Strahlung, OStrV)
- Act on Occupational Physicians, Safety Engineers and Other Occupational Safety Specialists (Gesetz über Betriebsärzte, Sicherheitsingenieure und andere Fachkräfte für Arbeitssicherheit, ASiG)
- Ordinance on Workplaces (Verordnung über Arbeitsstätten, ArbStättV)
- Working hours act (Arbeitszeitgesetz, ArbZG)
- Industrial safety and health ordinance (Verordnung über Sicherheit und Gesundheitsschutz bei der Verwendung von Arbeitsmitteln, BetrSichV)
- Ordinance on Safety and Health Protection at Workplaces Involving Biological Agents (Verordnung über Sicherheit und Gesundheitsschutz bei Tätigkeiten mit Biologischen Arbeitsstoffen, BioStoffV)
- Building codes (HBauO)
- Chemicals act (Chemikaliengesetz, ChemG)
- Chemical prohibition ordinance (Verordnung über Verbote und Beschränkungen des Inverkehrbringens und über die Abgabe bestimmter Stoffe, Gemische und Erzeugnisse nach dem Chemikaliengesetz, ChemVerbotsV)
- German Social Accident Insurance Regulation 1 (Deutsche Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung Vorschrift 1, DGUV, Vorschrift 2)
- German Social Accident Insurance Regulation 2 (Deutsche Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung Vorschrift 2, DGUV, Vorschrift 2)
- Hazardous goods officer ordinance (Verordnung über die Bestellung von Gefahrgutbeauftragten in Unternehmen, GbV)
- Ordinance on the supervision of the transportation of hazardous goods (Verordnung über die Kontrollen von Gefahrguttransporten auf der Straße und in den Unternehmen, GGKontrollV)
- Hazardous substances ordinances (GGVSee, GGVSEB, GGAV, ADR)
- German genetic engineering act (GenTG)
- Genetic engineering safety ordinance (GenTSV)
- German hazardous goods transportation act (Gesetz über die Beförderung gefährlicher Güter, GGBefG)
- Hamburg higher education act (Hamburgisches Hochschulgesetz, HmbHG)
- Act on the prevention and control of infectious diseases (Gesetz zur Verhütung und Bekämpfung von Infektionskrankheiten beim Menschen, IfSG)
- Act governing the protection of youths in employment (Gesetz zum Schutze der arbeitenden Jugend, JArbSchG)
- German recycling management act (Gesetz zur Förderung der Kreislaufwirtschaft und Sicherung der umweltverträglichen Bewirtschaftung von Abfällen, KrWG)
- Ninth product safety ordinance for machines (Neunte Verordnung zum Produktsicherheitsgesetz, 9. ProdSV)

- Protection of mothers at work and during training or studies act (MuSchG)
- Occupational safety and health ordinance for the proper use of personal protective equipment (Verordnung über Sicherheit und Gesundheitsschutz bei der Benutzung persönlicher Schutzausrüstungen bei der Arbeit, PSA-BV)
- Book V of the German Social Security Code (Sozialgesetzbuch Fünftes Buch, SGB V)
- Book VII of the German Social Security Code (Sozialgesetzbuch Siebtes Buch, SGB VII)
- Twelfth emissions incidents ordinance (Zwölfte Verordnung zur Durchführung des Bundes-Immissionsschutzgesetzes, 12. BImSchV)
- Radiation protection act (Gesetz zum Schutz vor der schädlichen Wirkung ionisierender Strahlung, StrlSchG)
- Radiation protection ordinance (Verordnung über den Schutz vor Schäden durch ionisierende Strahlen, StrlSchV)
- Ordinance on Occupational Health Care (Verordnung zur arbeitsmedizinischen Vorsorge, ArbMedVV)
- Hamburg ordinance for the building and operation of locations of assembly (Verordnung über den Bau und Betrieb von Versammlungsstätten, VStättVO)
- Water resources act (Gesetz zur Ordnung des Wasserhaushalts, WHG)

## Annex: Links to further information

[Occupational Safety and Environmental Protection Unit website](#)

AGUM: <https://uni-hamburg.agu-hochschulen.de/startseite>

Waste disposal: <https://www.kus.uni-hamburg.de/themen/arbeitssicherheit-umweltschutz/abfall.html>

Fire safety: <https://www.kus.uni-hamburg.de/themen/arbeitssicherheit-umweltschutz/brandschutz.html>

Risk assessment: <https://www.kus.uni-hamburg.de/en/themen/arbeitssicherheit-umweltschutz/arbeitssicherheit/gefaehrdungsbeurteilung.html>

Hazardous goods: <https://www.kus.uni-hamburg.de/themen/arbeitssicherheit-umweltschutz/arbeitssicherheit/gefahrgut.html>

Genetic engineering: <https://uni-hamburg.agu-hochschulen.de/aufbauorganisation/gentechnik-projektleitung>

Laser safety officers: <https://uni-hamburg.agu-hochschulen.de/index.php?id=311>

Safety officers: <https://uni-hamburg.agu-hochschulen.de/aufbauorganisation/sicherheitsbeauftragte>

Radiation safety: <https://uni-hamburg.agu-hochschulen.de/index.php?id=323>