



INDIANA UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
FOR UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

University Environmental Health and Safety

ODOR INVESTIGATION PROTOCOL AND/OR WORK STOPPAGE GUIDANCE CRITERIA

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indiana University is committed to providing a work environment that is free of recognized hazards. Indiana University Environmental Health and Safety (IUEHS) will investigate non-obvious source odor complaints at the respective campuses in order to identify the source of the odors. Most mold odor concerns and other facility related odors (electrical, natural gas, trash, etc.) can be addressed by facilities personnel.

1.1. Purpose

This program has been established to identify procedures for the investigation of an odor complaint and to identify criteria for evacuating a building or stopping work.

2. AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

2.1. University Environmental Health and Safety (IUEHS) shall be responsible for:

- 2.1.1. Investigating odor complaints;
- 2.1.2. Interviewing individuals with complaints;
- 2.1.3. Referring recommendations for the control of odors to the appropriate administrative personnel for subsequent follow-up and abatement;
- 2.1.4. Informing appropriate department representatives of the results of the investigation; and
- 2.1.5. Maintaining records of odor complaints.

2.2. Departments shall be responsible for:

- 2.2.1. Complying with the requirements of this program;
- 2.2.2. Providing IUEHS with information related to the odor complaint;
- 2.2.3. Ensuring employees with symptoms related to the odor complaint report to the Medical Services Provider for their respective campus; and
- 2.2.4. Complying with IUEHS recommendations.

2.3. Employees shall be responsible for:

- 2.3.1. Notifying IUEHS or their supervisor of unusual or objectionable odors;
- 2.3.2. Seeking medical attention with the Medical Services Provider for the respective campus for symptoms related to the odor; and
- 2.3.3. Complying with IUEHS recommendations.

2.4. Medical Services Provider for the respective campus shall be responsible for:

- 2.4.1. Notifying IUEHS when an employee reports signs and symptoms related to an odor.

3. PROGRAM ELEMENTS

3.1. Odor Investigation Procedures

In the event of a notification of non-routine or unusual or objectionable odors, staff from the IUEHS for the respective campus will respond to and investigate the odor situation. NOTE: At the IUPUI Campus, odor investigations will be conducted jointly by EHS and Insurance, Loss Control, and Claims (INLOCC). Utilizing all reasonable resources available, these staff members will strive to identify the source of the odor and to quantify the exposure potential.

The following will be considered during the course of the odor investigation:

- 3.1.1. Employees in the areas(s) affected by the odor may be asked to relocate to a designated location while the investigation is ongoing. Cafeteria, break rooms, study and reading areas may be utilized for such a purpose.
- 3.1.2. Investigators may take into account the number of employees exhibiting health effects and the severity of the effects. In the event a minority of individuals (approximately 20% of the individuals potentially affected) exhibit mild symptoms, investigators may request that the affected employees be relocated while the investigation is ongoing.
- 3.1.3. Investigators may take into account the time of the odor occurrence. For events occurring within the last 90 minutes of a work, clinic or class schedule, investigators may recommend to department administration that affected individuals be released early while the investigation is ongoing.
- 3.1.4. Employees complaining of health effects (regardless of the severity) are to be presented with the opportunity to be examined by the health professionals at the designated medical service provider for the respective campus. Those with significant health effects should be strongly encouraged to be seen by the designated medical service provider.
- 3.1.5. All odor investigations involving complaints of health effects are to be reported to IUEHS for further evaluation.

IUEHS Investigators are to refer recommendations for the control of odors to the appropriate administrative personnel for subsequent follow-up and abatement. IUEHS Investigators are to inform appropriate department representatives of the results of the investigation.

The steps outlined in the following table will be followed to determine the course of action taken in each situation.

3.2. Work Stoppage

In the event the source of the odor is found to be related to University activities, IUEHS investigators have the authority to require that the activities generating the odor be ceased until such a time that the odors can be brought under control. Representatives from the Indiana University Police Department or Project Manager may be utilized as a resource should the offending party refuse to voluntarily cease activities.

The following guidance criteria are generic in design and are intended to define the scope of IUEHS responsibility when ordering evacuations or work stoppages.

It is anticipated that most major evacuations will be initiated by representatives of IUEHS. However, department administration officials retain the right and responsibility to initiate an evacuation or work

stoppage at any time they have reason to believe an immediate hazard or danger exists for their employees in the affected area, whether representatives of IUEHS are present or not.

IUEHS Ordered Evacuation and/or Work Stoppage	Department Ordered Evacuation and/or Work Stoppage
<p><i>For odor events which cause immediate, acute health effects for University employees.</i></p>	<p><i>For odor events which cause minimal or no immediate acute health effects for University employees.</i></p>
<p><i>In the event:</i></p> <p>Initial or subsequent investigations reveal a known source of hazardous materials which possesses a “significant” exposure potential and health threat.</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>On-site monitoring confirms exposure levels of concern, exceeding established exposure standards.</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>In the absence of the ability to monitor levels, responders have reason to suspect exposure levels may exceed established exposure standards.</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>Employees exhibit significant health effects (e.g. nausea, vomiting, dizziness, unconsciousness, etc.).</p>	<p><i>In the event:</i></p> <p>Initial or subsequent investigations indicate or reveal the odor to be a nuisance with little or no immediate or long-term health effects.</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>On site monitoring does not indicate exposure levels of concern.</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>In absence of the ability to monitor levels, responders do not have reason to suspect exposure levels exceed established exposure standards.</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>Faculty, staff, students, or visitors sporadically exhibit mild or no health effects (e.g. headache, eye or respiratory irritation, general discomfort).</p> <p>and/or</p> <p>Faculty, staff, students, or visitors do not complain or exhibit health effects but complain of the general aesthetics of the work environment (e.g. “The air just smells bad”).</p>
<p>then</p> <p>An evacuation and/or a work stoppage may be ordered by IUEHS.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>*Freon refrigerant leak in a confined area.</p>	<p>then</p> <p>The decision to issue a work stoppage rests with the department administration (e.g. chairman, department head, dean or person in immediate supervision).</p>

<p>*Vapors from a known chemical spill which impact adjacent areas.</p> <p>*Natural gas leak in the area.</p> <p>*Asbestos dust generated from demolition or construction activities.</p> <p>*Smoke from a known fire which impacts adjacent areas.</p>	<p>Examples:</p> <p>*Sewer gas odors originating from dry sewer traps.</p> <p>*Common odors originating from industrial sources adjacent to the campus.</p> <p>*Non asbestos dust generated from demolition or construction activities.</p> <p>*Smoke or odors from overheated air handlers, elevator motors or fluorescent light ballasts.</p>
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