

# UC Irvine Safety Practices

March 2006

Dear Colleagues:

Safety is a shared responsibility in a research university, where so many of our activities are interdependent. Overall, UC Irvine has an excellent safety record. Safety experts know that there are few "freak accidents." Rather, most workplace accidents are preceded by numerous near-misses and precursor events -- often unrecognized as such. Therefore, employees and supervisors need to be able to speak frankly about workplace risks and near-misses in order to recognize hazards and to make changes before precursors evolve, unnoticed, into tragic accidents.

In a safety-conscious environment employees feel empowered to stop work processes that are unsafe, and to immediately bring safety problems to a supervisor's attention. In such an environment everyone understands the need for safety equipment and protective clothing, the necessity of training before doing risky procedures, and the importance of discussing workplace risks before-the-fact and taking steps to mitigate them. Good supervisors are approachable by employees with safety concerns, and they ensure that these concerns -- and particularly observations about near-miss occurrences -- are discussed openly so that all members of an organization can benefit.

President Dynes recently approved a new safety policy for the University of California, which can be viewed at:

<http://www.ehs.uci.edu/UCOPSafetyPolicy.html>

Accordingly, we ask supervisors to now review safety practices and conditions; and ask employees to participate in safety discussions, to seek needed training, to use safe practices and protective gear, to bring safety concerns to supervisors' attention, and to expect co-workers' involvement in workplace safety as a shared responsibility. If you need help in evaluating your unit's readiness, training, and physical environment from a safety standpoint, we urge you to contact [Environmental Health and Safety Director Marc Gomez](mailto:magomez@uci.edu) (magomez@uci.edu, (949)824-6889).

Thank you for your role in fostering a safe campus and Medical Center.

Michael V. Drake, M.D.  
Chancellor

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