

P&LMS SAFETY PLAN

1. **PURPOSE:** To establish a safety program within the Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Service (P&LMS) that provides a safe environment for patients, visitors, and employees by identifying, reducing and eliminating workplace hazards.

2. **POLICY:** P&LMS will strive to eliminate accidents and injuries within the service and the facility through the establishment of safe practice protocols, safety equipment and training on its use, annual continuing education, the creation of an active Service Safety Committee, and continual Supervisor oversight.

3. RESPONSIBILITY:

a. **The Chief, P&LMS** has overall responsibility for the safety, fire and environmental training provided to laboratory supervisors and employees and to ensure compliance within each department of hospital safety regulations; and for the implementation of a Service Safety Committee and its overall training, management and maintenance.

b. **Laboratory Supervisors** will oversee the training and the actions of its employees, and patients or visitors in their area to ensure that safety, fire and environmental protocols are followed.

c. **Employees** will participate in safety training, and be responsible for their actions regarding maintenance of a safe work environment, and compliance with all safety, fire and environmental programs within the VAMHCS.

4. ACTION:

a. **The Chief, P&LMS will:**

(1) Appoint a Lab Chemical Hygiene Coordinator to chair the Service Safety Committee.

(2) Establish a Service Safety Committee comprised of representatives from each section and actively support and implement initiatives the Committee provides to the Chief's Office.

(3) Request a Service Safety Report at all staff meetings, to include details of any fire incidents, safety concerns, and employee and visitor injuries/illnesses within the Service.

(4) Oversee the reporting process for any employee injury/illness incident via the Automated Safety Incident Surveillance Tracking System (ASISTS) Program and Employee Health.

(5) Oversee the reporting process for any patient or visitor injury/illness incident via the Electronic Incident Reporting page accessible from the VAMHCS Intranet Homepage.

(6) Oversee corrective actions needed to prevent recurrence of a negative safety event within the Service.

(7) Actively support and promote all safety, fire prevention and environmental programs established within the VAMHCS.

(8) Ensure the maintenance of a P&LMS Emergency Preparedness Plan, which addresses the laboratory's response to an emergency or disaster event, including the Laboratory Cascade Callback Plan.

b. P&LMS Supervisors will:

(1) Immediately provide all new employees with training on safe work practices, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), all VAMHCS and P&LMS safety policies and procedures.

(2) Provide time for all employees to attend or participate in the facility's annual safety training programs. At a minimum, the laboratory safety SOP's and Policies, as well as the following training topics are to be provided to each employee:

(a) Fire Safety protocols, including Fire Drills (RACE), and Fire Extinguisher Use (PASS).

(b) Emergency Preparedness Plan and Code Alerts, Cascade Callback Plan, Evacuation Plan.

(c) Hazardous and Biohazard Materials, Hazardous and Biohazard Waste and Mixed Waste handling and disposal requirements.

(d) General Safety (Job-Specific) that will include at least one of the following subject matter topics: Back Safety, Electrical Safety, Ergonomics, Natural Rubber Latex Allergies, Infection Prevention, Bloodborne Pathogens, Preventing Tuberculosis, and the Green Environmental Management System (GEMS) environmental protection program.

(3) Maintain the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) needed to perform the duties of the laboratory safely, to include liquid-resistant lab coats, nitrile and/or vinyl gloves, chemical-resistant gloves, face shields, goggles, biologic safety hoods, chemical fume hoods, bottle carriers for transport of toxins and flammables in glass containers, disinfectants, sharps containers, glass discard boxes, bactericidal soap, skin ointment/cream, etc.

(4) Maintain a First Aid Kit for the emergency treatment of minor injuries, and instructions on access to the Employee Health Service and the Emergency Department (ED).

- (5) Train employees on the use of Eye Wash stations and Showers for minor and major chemical splashes.
- (6) Maintain a Chemical Spill kit at locations close to wherever hazardous chemicals exist, and train employees on its use.
- (7) Orient employees on the use of the Automated Safety Incident Surveillance Tracking System (ASISTS) program (found on the VAMHCS Desk Top page) which collects data following an 'on the job' injury or illness of an employee. These events will be discussed at Laboratory Staff Meetings with the goal of prevention in the future.
- (8) Will provide light or alternative duty for injured or incapacitated employees.
- (9) Regularly follow-up with an employee injured on the job to monitor their status and notify the Office of Workers' Compensation Program (OWCP) when their duty status changes.
- (10) Maintain a list of all chemicals stored or are in use in their laboratory section, and have Safety Data Sheets available for these chemicals.
- (11) Identify hazardous chemicals and hazardous waste streams in their work area and ensure these are disposed of in accordance with VA as well as state, local and federal regulations.

c. **P&LMS Safety Committee will:**

- (1) **Be composed of a representative from each section (or the supervisor, in lieu of):**
 - (a) Anatomic Pathology
 - (b) Blood Bank
 - (c) Chemistry
 - (d) Hematology
 - (e) Microbiology
 - (f) Perry Point (General Lab)
- (2) Make periodic inspections of the entire P&LMS facility for operational, safety, fire, environmental and health deficiencies, as well as safe work practices. They will notify supervisors and monitor to ensure compliance, and submit repair work orders for identified structural defects to Facilities and Engineering Service as needed.
- (3) Report findings of deficiency with recommendations at all staff meetings, carrying unresolved issues in an 'open status' until completely resolved. Safety issues will be discussed to resolve or correct deficiencies or unsafe work practices in the laboratory.

d. P&LMS Employees will:

(1) Actively participate in the facility's annual safety training programs including fire drills.

(2) Adhere to the safety policies and procedures in the Laboratory to safeguard themselves, others and the work environment from unsafe or hazardous conditions, including the proper use of PPE, primarily the use of liquid-resistant lab coats and nitrile or vinyl gloves for handling all potentially infectious material, as well as hazardous materials and waste.

(3) Know the CODE RED emergency response plans for the work area including locations of fire extinguishers, manual fire pull stations, emergency exits and fire evacuation routes.

(4) Follow explicit instructions in response to chemical splashes, injuries and spills.

(5) Report all accidents and injuries immediately to the supervisor. Report to Employee Health Service or the ED for immediate triage and follow-up care. Following personal injury or accident, document the event in ASISTS and go to OWCP as soon as possible.

(6) Report all unsafe environmental issues to the supervisor, or contact the Safety and Occupational Health Office at Baltimore (ext. 7020) and at the Perry Point (ext. 6575).

(7) Submit Work Orders in VistA to correct any safety issues identified within the service.

- 5. REFERENCES:** VAMHCS Policy Memorandum 512-001/OPS-134, subject: Safety, Occupational Health and Fire Protection Program
VAMHCS Policy Memorandum 512-01/OPS-108, subject: Safety Management Plan
VAMHCS Policy Memorandum 512-001/OPS-112, subject: Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).
VAMHCS Policy Memorandum 512-001/OPS-113, subject: Hazardous Materials and Wastes Management Plan
VAMHCS Policy Memorandum 512-001/OPS-114, subject: Life Safety Management Plan
VAMHCS Policy Memorandum 512-11/COS-IC-002, subject: Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan

6. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: The Chief, Pathology, and Laboratory Medicine Service (113/PL) is responsible for the contents of this standard operating procedure.

7. RESCISSION: SOP NO. 113/PL-006, subject: P&LMS Safety Plan, dated March 2013.

8. **RECERTIFICATION:** This document is scheduled for recertification on/before the last working day of March 2019.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dong H. Lee', written in a cursive style.

DONG H. LEE, M.D.
Chief, Pathology & Laboratory Medicine Service