

Safety Note #118

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY: EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY



*Photograph Courtesy of  
Desert REC*

The University of California (UC) Policy on Management of Health, Safety and the Environment, dated October 28, 2005, indicates UC is committed to achieving excellence in providing a healthy and safe work environment that ensures the protection of students, faculty, staff, visitors, the public, property, and the environment. Accomplishing this task is the responsibility of every member of the UC community, with supervisors having particular responsibility for the activities of those people who report to them.

### Regulatory Background

Section 6423 of the California Labor Code states supervisors can be found guilty of misdemeanors if they:

1. Knowingly or negligently violate any standard, order, special order, or provision which is deemed to be a serious occupational safety and health violation.
2. Repeatedly violate any standard, order, special order, or provision which creates a real and apparent hazard to employees.
3. Knowingly fail to report a death.
4. Fail or refuse to comply, after notification and expiration of any abatement period, with any standard, order, special order, or provision which creates a real and apparent hazard to employees.
5. Directly or indirectly, knowingly induce another to commit any of the above-listed acts.

Misdemeanor punishments range from imprisonment in a county jail for terms not to exceed six months up to one year or fines not to exceed \$5,000 up to \$15,000 or both imprisonment and a monetary fine.

While all members of the university community have responsibilities to ensure a safe and healthy workplace, specific individual responsibilities are described below:

### Supervisor Responsibilities

- Assure effective implementation and enforcement of the seven Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) requirements in their supervisory work environment(s), including employee training, hazard communication, and procedures to investigate accidents and communicate with employees.
- Evaluate, identify, and correct workplace hazards.
- Assure employees and others within the supervisory work area follow safe work practices.
- Documentation of employee training and recognition of safe work practices.

### Employee Responsibilities

- Ensure their individual safety and report any workplace hazards.
- Support and assist with implementation of the IIPP or other safety plans and procedures.
- Promote a safe, healthy, and environmentally sound workplace.
- Follow safe work practices and approved task procedures and protocols.

### Safety Coordinator Responsibilities

- Act as a health and safety resource for co-workers.
- Ensure a department-specific IIPP is in place and up to date.
- Perform or coordinate annual and other workplace inspections.
- Assist with workplace injury investigations and review of the workplace safety program.
- Post safety information on bulletin boards and in common areas or break rooms.