



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER EL PASO

Operating Policy and Procedure

HSCEP OP: 73.15, Minors in Research Laboratories

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) Operating Policy and Procedure (HSCEP OP) is to provide guidance and assistance in the proper placement of minors in TTUHSC El Paso research laboratories or other research areas for the purpose of work, study, or other TTUHSC El Paso approved special programs and activities.

For the purposes of this policy, a minor is defined as an individual under the age of 18 years who may be an employee (including student employees), student, or visitor (including a volunteer or guest of the institution). TTUHSC El Paso has a responsibility to maintain a safe environment for its employees, students, patients, and visitors, some of whom may be minors.

REVIEW: This HSCEP OP will be reviewed in June of each odd-numbered year (ONY) by the Director of Safety Services or designee and the Vice President for Human Resources or designee with substantive revisions forwarded to the Vice President of Research (VPR).

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

1. Age Restrictions

- A. Underage (minor) individuals often seek and acquire opportunities to study or work under the sponsorship of TTUHSC El Paso or other sponsored educational programs. For safety reasons, TTUHSC El Paso has established age restrictions for minors seeking to learn, volunteer, or work in laboratory areas. No minor (including children of TTUHSC El Paso faculty or staff) is allowed in a TTUHSC El Paso laboratory, except in accordance with this policy.

Minors below the age of 14 years. Minors below the age of 14 years are not eligible for laboratory study or work experiences, or allowed to be present in laboratories or other hazardous work areas at the TTUHSC El Paso, with the following exceptions and guidelines:

- 1) Special observation only experiences may be arranged for minors (including those below the age of 14 years) through the TTUHSC El Paso institutional Office of Research. Safety Services must be notified in advance of such visits.
- 2) Special participatory/educational experiences involving minors under the age of 14 years may be considered on a case-by-case basis by the sponsoring department, if authorized in accordance with section 3 below, provided that the minor is:
 - a. Under the direct supervision of the sponsoring investigator,
 - b. Not involved in any activities that could be considered "particularly hazardous," (see Attachment B, Potential Hazards in Research Laboratories).
- 3) For purposes of (1) or (2) above, all minors under age 14 must be properly

supervised and accompanied by an adult while on TTUHSC grounds and within TTUHSC facilities.

- B. Minors of age 14 and 15 years. Minors of age 14 and 15 years may participate, if authorized in accordance with section 3 below, in laboratory study or work experiences that do not include work in areas or occupations considered to be “particularly hazardous” as defined in 29 CFR 570, “Child Labor Regulations, Orders and Statements of Interpretation,” or that may be considered to be detrimental to their health or well-being, including, but not limited to, the following:
- 1) Any work in any workroom where ionizing radioactive materials or ionizing radiation-producing devices are present or used;
 - 2) Any work in any workroom in which the following conditions may exist:
 - a. Potential presence or use of “highly hazardous” biological or chemical materials as defined by the TTUHSC El Paso Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC);
 - b. Potential presence of infectious diseases transmitted by an aerosol route;
 - c. Potential exposures to human blood, body fluids, tissues, or animals with infections potentially transmissible to humans;
 - d. Potential exposures to Level 3 or 4 biological agents (as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC);
 - e. Potential exposures to Level 3 or 4 chemicals (as defined by the Hazardous Material Identification System (HMIS) or National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) System);
 - f. Potential use of lasers or laser devices;
 - g. Hazards requiring special protective wear (not including latex or vinyl gloves, goggles, face shield, or dosimetry badges);
 - h. Potential presence or use of controlled substances;
 - i. Potential presence or use of select agents (as defined by the CDC and APHIS); and
 - j. Work in an area where there is a known risk of exposure to contagious diseases of human or animal origin.
- C. Minors of age 16 and 17 years. Minors of age 16 and 17 years may participate, if authorized in accordance with section 3 below, in laboratory study or work experiences that include work in non-hazardous jobs or activities. Minors of age 16 and 17 years:
- 1) Shall not work directly with any “particularly hazardous” materials, as defined in section c. above.
 - 2) Are prohibited from handling radioactive material source vials and must have prior written permission from the Radiation Safety Officer (RSO) to use other radioactive materials, including performing contamination surveys.
 - 3) Are prohibited from working directly with highly hazardous materials, including, but not

limited to, the following:

- a. Select agents (as defined by the CDC and APHIS);
- b. Controlled substances;
- c. Highly hazardous biological or chemical agents (as defined by the TTUHSC IBC);
or
- d. Potentially infectious animals or agents.

D. Individuals 18 years of age or older. There are no age-related restrictions on individuals of age 18 years or older.

1) Operational Responsibilities

- a. Minors shall be closely and directly supervised by the sponsoring investigator.
- b. Minors shall be provided with adequate and appropriate personal protective equipment.
- c. Minors shall successfully complete all required laboratory training, as appropriate, and any site-specific training required by the sponsoring laboratory prior to commencing work activities.
- d. Under no circumstances will minors be allowed to work or study with or around research materials in manners that pose a risk to their health or well-being.
- e. Supervisors overseeing hazardous work areas or laboratories are specifically responsible for the safety of all minors who are approved under institutional guidelines as employees, students, or visitors in their areas, and for compliance with this policy.

2) Authorization

- a. A parent or guardian must give written consent for minors of ages 17 to participate in laboratory study or work experiences, unless the minor is emancipated.
- b. The Office of Research, sponsoring investigator and department chairperson must also authorize the participation of a minor in writing. Authorization will be granted only for TTUHSC El Paso-sponsored or other recognized sponsored educational programs.
- c. Attachment A – Minors in Laboratories Consent/Signature Sheet of this policy shall be completed and provided by the sponsoring investigator/department to Safety Services or designee for approval prior to commencing the laboratory study or work experience. The original for each completed Attachment A will be forwarded to the Office of Research for final authorization by the VPR or designee. Copies will be maintained by the Offices of Research Resources and Safety Services, and the original will be returned to, and maintained by the sponsoring department/investigator.

3) Training Requirements

- A. The Office of Research is responsible for ensuring all minors authorized to participate in laboratory study or work experiences have completed the following training programs prior to commencing the study or work experience:
 - 1. TTUHSC El Paso New Employee Safety Orientation Program (NESOP), Safety Training and Education Program for Students (STEPS), or Volunteer Orientation Program, as appropriate;
 - 2. TTUHSC El Paso Laboratory Safety Training;
 - 3. Site-specific safety orientation training (conducted by the sponsoring laboratory).

4) Authority Invoked by HSCEP OP's

- A. Should there occur at any time a conflict between this policy and the policy or procedure as reflected in documents of a higher authority that is more restrictive (e.g., Regents' Rules, federal law, or state law), the policy or procedural document of the higher authority will prevail.
- B. Should there occur at any time a conflict between this policy and the policy or procedure of any other written or oral policy statement developed by an operating unit at TTUHSC, this policy will prevail.

5) Right to Change Policy

TTUHSC El Paso reserves the rights to interpret, change, modify, amend, or rescind this policy, in whole or in part, at any time without notice to or consent of its employees.