

**UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY**

Policy No.: OS019	Approved by: Mike Liberty
Title: Odor Complaint Procedure	Date: 2/28/2017
Revision No.: 2	Page 1 of 3
Prepared by: Phil Rogerson	Reviewed 5/4/2021 w/No changes

I. PURPOSE

The University environment is ever-changing. Odors can come from many sources: construction projects, housekeepers using cleaning products, delivery vehicles, and system malfunctions, just to name a few.

This procedure establishes the processes University Employees, University Public Safety, University Facilities, and Environmental Health and Safety should follow if unusual/objectionable odors are noticed in the workplace.

II. PERSONNEL AFFECTED

University of Rochester Employees; University Facilities; University Public Safety; and Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S).

III. DEFINITIONS

None

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

University Employees:

- Making a preliminary investigation of unusual odors noticed in their work areas.
- Contacting Public Safety (275-3333) if smoking odors are noted.
- Contacting Facilities (273-4567) for any other unusual odors noted.

University Public Safety:

- Responding to complaints of odors from cigarettes or other smoking materials.
- Responding to situations suspected or determined to present a hazard to persons in the area.
- Contacting EH&S in emergency situations requiring staff to leave the area or involving medical response.

University Facilities:

- Providing routine response to odor complaints involving odors described as “rotten egg”, “sewer”, “fishy”, “exhaust or diesel”, “natural gas”, etc., and taking remedial steps as appropriate to address odor problems.

Environmental Health and Safety:

- Responding to emergency situations involving odors.

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V. PROCEDURES

Employees should be aware of any notices posted in their areas to inform them of building or system maintenance or shutdowns that may affect their work environment.

Employees noticing unusual odors should make note of when the event started, and then take a few minutes to make a preliminary investigation of the event, trying to narrow down the source of the odors, and making note of any construction projects, unusual conditions, activities or materials in their areas. If the odor is noticed repeatedly, the employee should make note of when it occurs and for how long.

If the odor is due to cigarettes or other smoking materials, the employee should contact Public Safety at 275-3333.

“Rotten egg” or “sewer” smells often result from drain traps that have dried out. All sinks in the area should be checked and water should be run for a few seconds to re-fill any traps that may have dried out. If the odor persists, the employee should contact Facilities at 273-4567 to report it.

“Fishy” odors usually result from leaks in the steam system and should be reported to Facilities at 273-4567.

“Exhaust” or “diesel” smells usually enter through building air intakes when motor vehicles are left idling or from construction equipment that may be working in the vicinity. These odors are normally dependent on the wind direction and most often will be of short duration. If this type of odor persists, the employee should contact Facilities (273-4567).

If a natural gas odor is detected, the employee should immediately contact Facilities at 273-4567 to report a natural gas odor and have a plumber paged to investigate and make any necessary repairs.

If, after the preliminary investigation, the employee is unable to identify the cause or source of the odor, Facilities should be called at 273-4567 to investigate.

When an odor call is received by the Facilities Work Control Center, the dispatcher will record any pertinent information and create a work order. A building mechanic/HVAC technician will be paged. If the odor is due to natural gas, a plumber will also be paged.

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In the event of an emergency or if the situation is suspected or determined to present a hazard to persons in the area, Public Safety should be contacted immediately by dialing x13. If Public Safety determines that the situation is an emergency requiring staff to leave the area or involving medical response, EH&S will be contacted and EH&S personnel will respond as necessary.

VI. REFERENCES

None

VII. APPENDICES/FORMS

None

VIII. REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revision No.	Description
12/20/2012	1	Update existing procedure and put into standard format
2/28/2017	2	Change Security to Public Safety