

EHS Management System External Audit

MIT has implemented a comprehensive and integrated Environment, Health and Safety Management System (EHS-MS), a highly collaborative effort that draws on the leadership and expertise of faculty, researchers, students, administrators, and staff. The EHS Management System is helping to reshape how members of the MIT community view their environment, health, and safety responsibilities, and carry out MIT's EHS commitment in their day-to-day activities.

As a measure of our commitment to the success of the Institute's EHS Management System, external auditors, in conjunction with the MIT Audit Division, will conduct an Institute-wide audit. The auditors will examine the overall implementation and effectiveness of the EHS Management System as required by MIT's EPA and Department of Justice consent decree.

You may already be familiar with many facets of the EHS Management System, such as required EHS training, weekly self-inspections (Level I) done by your EHS Representative, and inspections (Level II) done by your departmental EHS Committee and Coordinator.

A pilot audit is slated for the fall of 2005. This pilot audit is in preparation for the Institute-wide external audit required in the spring of 2006.

To be successful, MIT needs you to make the difference. Use the following FAQ to increase your awareness of the EHS Management System audit.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is an external (Level III) audit?

The external audit is an Institute-wide systems audit, examining the overall implementation and effectiveness of the EHS Management System. Many of you already know that Level I self-inspections and Level II inspections are fully implemented.

Who does this affect?

The entire MIT Community.

Where will the auditors be inspecting?

The pilot team will have free range of MIT. They will try to visit as many areas as possible, but will focus on areas that use hazardous materials or processes.

Who performs the external (Level III) audit?

The MIT Audit Division in conjunction with an external audit team comprised of professionals with intimate knowledge of the environment unique to a university.

How does this affect me?

The pilot team will be assessing your familiarity and compliance with the EHS Management System.

What can I do to prepare?

Be informed and understand your role in MIT's EHS Management System. Read the EHS-MS Policy. Verify that you are complete and up to date on required EHS training. Ask questions of your Supervisor, EHS Coordinator and the MIT EHS Office. Familiarize yourself with the EHS-MS web site available at <http://mit.edu/ehs-ms/>.

What should I do if the auditors ask me questions?

Be candid. Answer the questions to the best of your knowledge. If you do not know the answer to a question, say so and indicate with whom you would consult to get the information.

What types of questions will be asked?

For most, the questions will pertain to EHS training, safe work practices and hazardous waste management. Questions will be asked to assess your knowledge about your EHS Representative and EHS Coordinator, and your understanding of their role. Other individuals such as PIs/Supervisors, EHS Coordinators, and EHS Representatives may be asked more specific questions about the elements of the EHS Management System.

Will they talk to my PI/Supervisor?

The pilot audit team may ask questions of all members of the MIT Community. Since PI/Supervisors are responsible for you and the area you work in, it is reasonable to assume the inspectors will have a significant interest in talking with them.

What happens if I don't give the right answer or know the answer to a question?

The pilot program is designed to assess your familiarity and compliance with the EHS-MS. If you do not know the answer to a question, do not be afraid to tell the auditor. You will not be fired, penalized, or otherwise subject to disciplinary action if you do not know an answer.

Will I get advance notice?

There will be a series of campus wide reminders to increase awareness of the EHS Management System and the upcoming audit. Individual sites to be visited will not be notified in advance.

What happens if I am in the middle of an experiment and the auditors want to speak with me? (Or will this interrupt my lab?)

The auditors on the pilot team were chosen specifically because of their intimate knowledge of the inner workings of the university environment. They are aware that you may be in the middle of something important and will be as accommodating as possible.

What if I am a UROP?

Explain that you are an undergraduate student working under direct supervision, and ask them to wait while you locate your supervisor and the two of you can answer the questions together.

I am an office worker, how does the audit affect me?

While office areas may not necessarily have the same chemical or equipment hazards as those present in laboratories, there are still general safety concerns that individuals should be aware of. Any special events (e.g., barbecues, concerts, etc.) should be cleared through the EHS office.

Where can I find my EHS Coordinator's contact information?

Contact the EHS Office for information regarding your Coordinator.

How can I find out who my EHS Representative is?

Contact your PI/Supervisor or your EHS Coordinator for the name of your EHS Representative.

What is the EHS Policy and where can I find it?

The MIT EHS Policy, approved by the Academic Council, signals MIT's commitment to environmental, health, and safety stewardship in research, teaching and operations. The Policy was developed by an Ad Hoc EHS Subcommittee of MIT's EHS Council. Co-chaired by the Vice President for Research and Associate Provost and Managing Director for Environmental Programs/Senior Counsel, this subcommittee includes senior faculty and administrators. All of MIT's EHS activities - compliance, good practices and positive initiatives - are directed toward achieving the goals described by the policy.

The Policy can be viewed online at:
<http://mit.edu/ehs-ms/>

Need more information?

Contact the MIT EHS Office.
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EHS Office <http://mit.edu/ehs>

EHS-MS <http://mit.edu/ehs-ms>



AUDIT FAQ

ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

