

VCU Guidelines Concerning Safety and Liability Issues for Non-VCU Employees *(Summer Workers, Volunteers, Interns, Visiting Scientists, Grant Trainees, etc.)*

Each year, hundreds of individuals who are not directly paid by VCU enter our facilities. High school and college students are offered summer jobs or internships throughout the University as “summer workers.” Visiting scientists come from all over the world. Volunteers graciously support many of our efforts. Interns and grant trainees paid through outside sources work in our labs. Many of these individuals will enter areas with restricted access. Liability and safety concerns need to be addressed.

All individuals who are paid by the University/Hospital (receive a paycheck issued by the payroll office) are covered under workers' compensation. If an individual is not being paid or paid by an entity other than VCU, but is performing under the supervision of a University faculty or staff member, he/she would not be covered under workers' compensation but he/she may be covered by the Commonwealth's risk management plan for liability the same as any other employee. If, on their own, they elect to act outside the scope of their instruction, coverage will depend on the individual circumstances. The risk management plan does provide up to \$10,000 in incidental medical payments if an authorized individual is injured while on the job.

Be aware that supervisors may be held liable for injuries that rise out of a failure to properly advise the individuals of safety requirements or provide appropriate personnel protective equipment.

All individuals working in restricted areas must be provided with the same safety training, protective equipment, and emergency training as staff members who perform the same assigned responsibilities. This training needs to be documented.

Maintaining records, appointing a supervisor, and delineating the individual's tasks are necessary in order to provide proper coverage and minimize liability. Any minor (under age 18) who is working with or in the vicinity of hazardous materials must obtain written parental consent prior to initiating any work. This can be done in conjunction with the delineation of duties. If an accident does occur, report it as you would any other incident.

With proper direction and the exercise of common sense as to the assigned tasks, it should be appropriate to provide access to summer workers, interns or volunteers.

Questions regarding safety training or protective equipment should be addressed to the Office of Environmental Health & Safety at 828-6347. Questions concerning risk and liability should be addressed to Dave Mattox, the University Risk Manager, at 828-7531.