

13.8 Institutional environment

The institution takes reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all members of the campus community.

Compliance Judgment: In Compliance

Rationale

The University of South Carolina Aiken takes reasonable steps to provide a healthy, safe, and secure environment for all members of the campus community. At USC Aiken, the safety and well-being of our community members is always at the top of our agenda. A truly safe campus can be achieved only through the cooperation of all students, faculty, and staff.

Safe Work Environment. USC Aiken is committed to providing a safe work environment that is free of recognizable hazards. The administration expects all employees to comply with all applicable state and federal standards, codes and regulations, including the standards established by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Several divisions share administrative responsibility for a healthy, safe, and secure campus environment. The academic laboratories are under the direction of the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration has administrative oversight for the Campus Police Department and Operations which includes the facilities staff and environmental safety. The administration recognizes that the health, safety, and security of the campus involves the use and care of equipment and facilities as well as the environment for employees, students, and visitors.

The University of South Carolina Environmental Health and Safety Office has developed a comprehensive training program for all personnel on campuses of the USC system. The Environmental Health and Safety Program encompasses many areas of safety and environmental issues. In addition, USC Aiken has appointed an

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) manager to act as liaison with USC EHS and to serve as the principal contact for faculty and staff to address all university safety issues and concerns. The USC Aiken EHS manager works with faculty, management, and supervisory personnel to identify potential hazards associated with their operations and activities. The EHS conducts a [safety orientation presentation](#) ^[1] with all new employees.

Routine inspection of buildings and grounds is performed by the USC Aiken facilities and maintenance staff. Formal program audits are conducted annually by USC Environmental Health and Safety inspectors to include: Occupational Safety and Health Administration departmental review, laboratory safety audit, hazardous waste audit, and environmental audit. It is the goal of the campus administration to ensure that employees will at no time suffer any adverse health effects or injuries related to their work environment.

Emergency Plan and Procedures. The USC Aiken [Emergency Plan and Procedures](#) ^[2] outlines the procedures that employees are to follow in the event of an emergency. The campus has implemented e2 Campus, an emergency notification system that allows the administration to issue immediate safety related notifications simultaneously to all registered mobile phones, Blackberrys, wireless PDAs, pagers, Smart or Satellite phones, and all email addresses, as well as posting notifications on the USC Aiken Website, thereby delivering safety-related messages to all students and staff regardless of location. USC Aiken has seven Emergency Evacuation Devices located in the multi-story buildings on campus. These devices are designed to allow a rescuer to safely descend stairwells at his or her own pace with the evacuee safely restrained inside the unit in a vertical, seated position. The design of these devices allows them to travel down narrow stairs, through small door frames, and across outdoor terrain.

University Police. Campus security is the responsibility of the USC Aiken Police. The department is comprised of law enforcement officers appointed and commissioned by the Governor of South Carolina. They are empowered to enforce the laws of South Carolina, including the power of arrest, anywhere in the state. The USC

Aiken Police Department offers on duty personnel 24 hour a day, with immediate response to calls for service. USC Aiken police officers provide escort service upon request for students arriving on or moving around campus after dark. Requests for assistance or escort services are arranged with a simple phone call to the Police Department. Yellow emergency phones which connect directly to the Police Department are available across the campus and can be used in an emergency or for afterhours building access. The Police Department publishes an [annual security report](#) ^[3] on the University's website that includes crime statistics that must be reported under the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act.

Housing Safety. Students residing on campus must sign a Housing Contract that specifically prohibits firearms, bows and arrows, paint-ball guns, slingshots, explosives, fireworks, candles, halogen lamps, gas grills, incense, flammable fluids, dangerous chemical mixtures, propelled missiles or similar items that can endanger persons and property. Entrances to the housing community areas are regulated by a card access system. Guests must be escorted by the host resident. Regulations alert students that disciplinary action will be taken against students who prop open doors or allow others to follow through security doors without proper authorization. All residents are required to lock their windows and doors when sleeping or during periods of absence. For personal safety, ground floor windows are required to be kept locked at all times and security screens left in place.

Cyber Security Training. Today's wealth of technology has introduced extraordinary convenience and efficiency to our campus community. It is important to remember that this same technology introduces many threats as well. Modern cyber threats can jeopardize financial health, safety and even the future of the university. It is everyone's duty as computer users to protect themselves and others. Computer Services periodically emails reminders of [cyber security protocols](#) ^[4] and provides a series of cyber security training videos that include, among other things the safe use of social networks and protecting children online. The videos are made available to faculty, staff and students via the Help desk website.

Health-related Protocols. The University of South Carolina Aiken encourages students to follow the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the American College Health Association (ACHA) in regard to immunizations. All incoming students must provide proof of immunization against Measles, Mumps, and Rubella as a condition of enrollment. Students who are applying to reside on campus must also provide evidence of being vaccinated against bacterial meningitis (Menactra) and are strongly urged to be immunized against both tuberculosis and Hepatitis B. Immunization forms must be submitted prior to orientation. Students entering the Nursing Program must have several additional immunizations and follow health protocols as stipulated in the [Nursing Student Handbook](#).^[5]

To protect the campus community and to intervene when there are reports of student behavior that is disruptive, erratic, self-injurious, or potentially threatening to others, the University has established the [Behavioral Intervention Team](#).^[6] The team consists of highly trained professionals with the skill set to effectively intervene.

In response to Covid-19, the university implemented an emergency relocation of instruction, placing all instruction online and ordering faculty and staff to work remotely from home. Using virtual meeting technologies, Taskforces immediately were established to create plans to return to the campus in a safe and effective way. The institution is currently conducting classes on campus with appropriate safety protocols and monitoring. A [mitigation plan](#) ^[7] has been created, implemented, and disseminated via a [Covid-19 website](#).^[8]

The University of South Carolina Aiken is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy work environment and exerts an ongoing effort to protect each employee, student, and visitor from potentially hazardous or unsafe conditions.

Supporting Documentation

1. [New Employee Safety Orientation Presentation](#)
2. [USC Aiken's Emergency Plan and Procedures](#)
3. [Annual Security Report](#)
4. [Cybersecurity Protocols](#)

5. [Nursing Student Handbook](#)
6. [Behavioral Intervention Team](#)
7. [COVID-19 Mitigation Plan](#)
8. [USC Aiken's COVID-19 Website.](#)