

Duties of Departmental Safety Officer (DSO)

Last update: 14 July 2026

- The DSO assists the Head of Department in managing health and safety within the Department by coordinating with appropriate supervisory personnel.
- The DSO should bring health and safety issues requiring support or direction to the attention of the Head of Department.
- Specific duties of a DSO may vary from department to department, depending on the nature of departmental activities. The following are typical functions expected of a DSO.

Specific Functions

Liaison with Health, Safety and Environment Office (HSEO)

Act as a point of contact between the Department and HSEO.

- Disseminate information and messages from HSEO to concerned members in the Department.
- Coordinate and convey feedback from members of the Department to HSEO and other departments concerned.

Establishment and Operation of Departmental Safety Committee

- Assist the Head of Department in establishing a Departmental Safety Committee (or similar committee) and facilitate its operation.

Safety Orientation for New Members

- Safety responsibilities of staff members
- Relevant emergency procedures
- Fire escape routes
- Specific safety procedures for specific hazardous operations
- Requirements for mandatory safety training
- Safety resources

Safety Training

Coordinate enrollment for safety classes:

- Mandatory training classes for members who need to conduct certain operations.
- Other safety classes organized by HSEO from time to time.
- Other safety classes as considered necessary by the Department.

Information Available

Departmental Health and Safety Management Guidelines

HSEO Staff Directory

Safety Poster

HKUST Emergency Procedures Booklet

Administrative Requirements for Hazardous Operations

List of safety courses

Safety Inspections/Risk Assessments

- Assist with the establishment and implementation of a risk assessment/inspection program of work areas within the Department (with the support of the Head of Department and, preferably, with agreement from the Departmental Safety Committee as to the frequency of and responsibility for conducting risk assessments, inspections, etc.).
(It will be more effective for supervisory personnel in charge of an area to conduct regular self-inspections of their own area. HSEO can be involved in conducting less frequent inspections to offer independent recommendations.)
- The DSO or Deputy DSO may need to lead inspections of common work areas.
- Coordinate remedial actions to address safety problems identified during inspections.
- Bring to the attention of Head of Department any unresolved safety issues.

*Safety inspection
checklists*

Accident/Incident Reporting and Investigation

- Coordinate efforts with appropriate supervisory personnel to ensure that accidents/incidents are reported promptly in accordance with the University procedures, and that appropriate investigation and follow-up actions are carried out.

*Accident/Incident
Report Form*

Other Safety Coordination Efforts

- Fire drills
- Fire escape routes maps
- First-aid facilities
- Licensing arrangements for specific equipment or installations, such as irradiating apparatus, boilers, pressure vessels, and lifting appliances

Annual Fire Drill

Other Helpful Reference Sources

- [Health, Safety and Environment Office Webpage](#)
- [Safety and Environmental Protection Manual](#)

Deputy DSO and Other Safety Support Personnel

A Deputy DSO should be appointed in the Department. The Deputy DSO can share some of the duties of the DSO and be the Acting DSO when the DSO is on leave.

Depending on the distribution of work areas and complexity of activities of the Department, additional safety support personnel may need to be appointed. For example, laboratory/office safety representatives may need to be appointed to take care of individual laboratories/offices or groups of laboratories/offices.