

A background image showing a student from behind, walking on a paved path. The student is wearing a blue and white checkered shirt, khaki pants, and a backpack. The path is lined with trees, some with autumn-colored leaves. In the background, there is a brick building with windows.

MANAGING ENVIRONMENTAL RISK IN HIGHER ED

TO ENSURE STUDENT SAFETY AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE



“Are You Aware of Your Campus’ Environmental Risk?”

Too often, the answer from the administration is: “No.” That can be a serious problem, one that can put students and staff in danger and compromise regulatory compliance. What’s needed to avoid these risks is a proactive plan designed to maintain high levels of environmental safety and compliance campuswide.

This guide provides an overview of environmental risk management on today’s higher education campuses and the steps for mitigating these complexities.

A close-up, slightly blurred image of a person wearing a blue hard hat, looking down at a circular gauge or clock face. The background is dark and out of focus.

The Dangers of Ignoring Environmental Risk

While many of the country's higher education institutions are located on beautiful, historic campuses that attract hundreds or thousands of students every year, this idyllic scenario often comes with potential issues behind the scenes—including aging buildings, equipment and infrastructure. When left unmanaged, a wide variety of environmental risks may exist—for example, asbestos in outdated building materials, air pollutant emission, neglected fuel tanks, chemical and waste disposal issues and inadequate water treatment. Even relatively new campuses face similar environmental risks.

Falling behind on environmental safety and compliance on today's campuses is more common than many realize. One reason is that managing environmental risk falls outside of institutions' core function of educating students. Administrators deal with pressing work demands, priorities and issues within their programs, which means that compliance is often an afterthought—maybe even a “check mark” exercise. Also, many campuses view it as a nice-to-have add-on service versus as essential core function of campus maintenance.



However, ignoring environmental risk and leaving it unmanaged is itself a significant risk.

It only takes one environmental disaster to go from running a safe and secure campus to dealing with an environmental, public relations and regulatory nightmare. What's more, campuses face significant financial risk when they experience a compromising environmental situation, including fines, penalties, corrective action and legal expenses.

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES FACE TWO CLEAR AND PRESENT THREATS FROM ENVIRONMENTAL INCIDENTS.



Regulatory Non-Compliance Penalties. A long list of federal, state and local environmental agencies require higher education campuses to adhere to their regulations. Failure to comply can have significant repercussions.

Additionally, regulations are constantly changing, which makes it challenging for institutions to stay up to date and, therefore, in compliance. Falling out of compliance can result in costly corrective action and penalties.



Public Relations Impact. When the public learns that a campus has put the community and students in harm's way, the fallout can result in a negative public image, lack of community support and impaired recruitment efforts. Reputational damage is particularly acute today because a growing number of students is actively concerned about environmental issues in the world at large. Environmental protection and sustainability are important to them—and they expect their college campuses to be sensitive to this trend.

Clearly, to keep students safe, preserve their reputations and stay compliant with all regulations, today's higher education institutions need a centralized, continuously operating environmental risk management and compliance program. Creating one takes a proactive plan and an experienced partner who has deep expertise in managing these risks.



Higher education institutions are under more scrutiny than other industries because of the populations they serve. Students are passionate activists for environmental and sustainability issues—and hold their institutions to higher standards.

— Lara Malatesta, Director of Environmental Risk and Compliance for Aramark



What Environmental Regulations and Penalties Do Higher Ed Institutions Face?

Compliance in the higher education sector is incredibly complex. Colleges and universities must comply with a long list of environmental regulations from multiple federal, state and local agencies. Any single higher education institution could easily be subject to hundreds of compliance requirements.

The leading federal regulatory body that protects our air, water and land is the Environmental Protection Agency or EPA. Congress provides the EPA with the authority to establish national regulations through laws, such as the Clean Air Act (CAA), Clean Water Act (CWA) and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), to name a few. The EPA also authorizes states to set their own environmental requirements at least as stringent as federal regulation.

Together, the EPA and state agencies enforce environmental regulations through routine inspections of college campuses and have the authority to issue enforcement action against institutions for noncompliance, such as:

- ▶ Administrative penalties
- ▶ Administrative orders requiring abatement
- ▶ Civil actions with injunctive relief
- ▶ Civil penalties per violation, per day of violation
- ▶ Criminal sanctions against organizations and individuals

The EPA uses statute-specific policies to calculate noncompliance penalties. For example, under RCRA—the most common violation found on college campuses—the EPA considers the potential for harm and the extent of deviation from the legal requirement. RCRA violations can range from \$129 to \$37,500 per violation, per day.

What’s more, noncompliance financial penalties are on the rise. For example, the civil penalty increases for violating regulations imposed by the following agencies are:

EPA'S CLEAN AIR & CLEAN WATERS ACT	CLEAN WATER ACT	SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT
rose from \$93,750 to \$95,284 per day, per violation	rose from \$51,570 to \$52,414 per day, per violation	rose from \$53,907 to \$54,789 per day, per violation

Examples of actions that have led to noncompliance penalties on college campuses include:

- ▶ Violations of federal hazardous waste emergency, storage, handling and labeling regulations.
- ▶ Failures to keep opacity monitors on waste incinerators in working order.
- ▶ Failure to report requirements relating to the use of fuels in power plants.
- ▶ Not having an adequate and fully implemented oil spill prevention plan.

Beyond financial penalties, colleges and universities also face other negative outcomes—including student program restrictions, potential lawsuits, damage to the institution’s reputation and weakening of its financial stability. Many times, the money spent to fix environmental issues and pay regulatory penalties siphons funds from educational programs. Compounding the financial loss is the negative public image and resulting reduction in enrollment, which could have a long-term impact.

REAL-WORLD RISK.

Most universities, especially older campuses in colder climates, have underground storage tanks to fuel heating systems. These tanks have a life expectancy of typically 20 to 30 years. Fuel leaks are an ongoing risk over the life of these tanks. If they leak into the ground, remediation costs can be steep. Further, if leaked fuel reaches groundwater, remediation costs typically climb into the millions of dollars for a multi-year cleanup project.

Simplify the Complexities of Environmental Risk Management on Today's Campuses

WORK WITH YOUR EXPERIENCED FACILITIES SERVICES PROVIDER

Clearly, there are high-risk complexities involved in managing environmental liabilities with higher education. While many campuses have not yet developed sophisticated and effective risk management programs, many other campuses have partnered with facilities management outsource partners who have the resources and expertise to effectively manage your environmental risk. In fact, the most sound approach to environmental risk management on today's campuses is working with a partner who incorporates it as a fundamental component in facilities operation and maintenance.

This option gives administrators peace of mind, knowing that their environmental risk is being managed effectively. It also frees them to focus on their core mission—educating students and preparing them for the future.



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Many college and university administrators are not aware that environmental risk management is an embedded specialty of today's leading facilities service providers—but it is a skill of leading outsource service providers. When looking for a facilities partner to also manage your environmental risk, look for outsource providers with these qualifications:

- ▶ **Higher Ed Experience:** a background operating in a compliant manner specific to the higher education space
- ▶ **Environmental Risk Expertise:** understands the full scope of environmental risk management—from identifying and mitigating risks to cleaning up environmental incidents—including the ability to gauge where facility and asset improvements are needed for maintaining compliance
- ▶ **Regulatory Expertise:** well versed in every environmental regulation impacting colleges and universities and possesses the skills to maintain compliance across the board
- ▶ **Resource Network:** has either an internal or external network of experts in environmental risk management to draw on
- ▶ **Advanced Resources:** services include advanced capabilities, such as an engineering assets solutions team
- ▶ **Holistic Operational Approach:** brings a campus-wide operational improvement, efficiency and cost reduction methodology to environmental risk management—for example, replacing old underground storage tanks with above-ground propane tanks, which use cleaner fuel, or upgrading power plants for greater efficiency
- ▶ **Continuous Improvement Philosophy:** practices a continuous improvement approach by continually developing best practices—such as, consistently integrating compliance elements into facility standards and training tools
- ▶ **True Partnership Approach:** understands the “shared liability” inherent in an environmental risk partnership, where the property owner and facilities operator are both responsible for environmental protection
- ▶ **Fiscally Responsible:** possesses a history of helping campuses execute the highest quality risk management programs as cost effectively as possible
- ▶ **Risk Prevention Culture Advocate:** supports a culture that prevents compliance failures by encouraging ethical conduct and a commitment to compliance campuswide

Working with Aramark

A HIGHER ED FACILITIES EXPERT IN MANAGING ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Aramark has been a trusted partner protecting people and the environment on hundreds of higher education campuses for more than 40 years. Colleges and universities trust Aramark to integrate environmental safety and risk control into their campuses, including identifying risks, remediating issues and putting long-term improvement and preventative strategies in place. Aramark employs a robust risk management program, known as “**Aramark SAFE – Safety Assurance in Food and Environments**”—a holistic, process improvement and culture-building approach to risk management campuswide.



Managing environmental risk is only one element in the future success of your facilities management program. Discover more reasons why you should consider Aramark for facilities management.

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