

Operations Policies for the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene*

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1. Introductory Statement

This policy document describes operational practices of the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene (JOEH)*, including reporting and assessment of conflicts of interest.

The individuals and groups affected by these policies include:

- The Editor-in-Chief, who is ultimately accountable for everything published in the *JOEH* and has final authority with respect to submissions and retractions;
- Authors, who submit materials for publication in the *JOEH*;
- Reviewers, who provide critical evaluation of submitted materials;
- The *JOEH*, LLC Board of Directors, which provides administrative and financial oversight of *JOEH* operations; and
- The *JOEH* Editorial Review Board, which provides advice about the scientific content of the *JOEH* to the Editor-in-Chief.

2. Aims and Scope

The *JOEH* is a joint publication of the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA[®]) and the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH[®]). The *JOEH* is a peer-reviewed journal devoted to enhancing the knowledge and practice of occupational and environmental hygiene and safety by widely disseminating research articles and applied studies of highest quality. The *JOEH* provides a written medium for the communication of ideas, methods, processes and research in core and emerging areas of occupational and environmental hygiene. Core domains include, but are not limited to: exposure assessment, control strategies, ergonomics, and risk analysis. Emerging domains include, but are not limited to: sensor technology, emergency preparedness and response, changing workforce, and management and analysis of “big” data.

3. Categories of Submission

The journal considers the following categories of submissions:

- **Technical Manuscripts.** Technical manuscripts report scientific investigations on a topic of interest to the readership, and present new findings. Technical manuscripts should have a clearly stated aim or objective, well-defined methods for the collection and analysis of evidence, transparent presentation of results, and conclusions supported by the presented evidence. The suggested word limit is 5000 words.
- **Short Reports.** Short reports are similar to technical manuscripts but are of narrower scope. A short report, for example, may address a specific technical issue, present a case study, or present a pilot-scale study with a relatively small number of measurements. The suggested word limit is 3000 words.
- **Review Articles.** Review articles compile and describe existing scientific evidence addressing a specific topic, but do not present original research. Review articles should have a clearly defined scope, a methodology for identification of evidence reviewed, and present a comprehensive summary or synthesis of the evidence. The suggested word limit is 6000 words.
- **Letters to the Editor.** A letter may be submitted to the editor on any topic of interest to the readership, including comments on papers that have been previously published in *JOEH*, or corrections by authors.
- **Commentaries.** Commentaries provide a perspective or opinion but must be grounded in evidence.

Submissions must be original work that has not been previously published nor is under consideration for publication elsewhere.

4. Peer-Review Policies

All articles are subject to initial review by the Editor-in-Chief for technical quality, clarity of writing, correct submission category, and relevance to the *JOEH* scope. For each submission, the Editor-in-Chief must choose among the following options:

- reject the submission,
- reject the submission but recommend re-submission with revision,
- arrange for peer-review of the submission, or,
- for Letters to the Editor and Commentaries only, accept the submission without peer-review, although revisions for clarity may be requested.

The *JOEH* uses double-blind reviewing, which means that the identities of authors and reviewers are not disclosed to one another. All submissions, except Letters to the Editor and Commentaries, are subject to peer-review by two or more reviewers. At least one reviewer must be a member of the *JOEH* Editorial Review Board. Any exceptions to this policy must be documented, with the rationale, by the Editor-in-Chief in the manuscript tracking system and described in his or her annual report (in summary form) to the Board of Directors and Editorial Review Board.

Letters to the Editor are not subject to peer-review. The Editor-in-Chief will share Letters to the Editor with affected parties and define a reasonable timeline for submission of a response. The goal is to publish both the Letter to the Editor and the response, if any, in the same issue of *JOEH*.

Commentaries may be subject to peer-review at the discretion of the Editor-in-Chief. However, since Commentaries reflect the personal opinion and perspective of the author, the role of peer-review, if any occurs, is to consider the quality of evidence used to support the opinion or perspective of the author, and/or the significance for the readership.

The Editor-in-Chief is the ultimate arbiter of all submissions and may request revision of any submission for content, language and/or length prior to acceptance.

5. Manuscript Withdrawal and Retraction Policies

Authors may withdraw a manuscript at any time by sending a withdrawal request to the Editor-In-Chief. Potential reasons for withdrawal may include an honest error.

Prior to publication, the Editor-in-Chief may withdraw a manuscript. Potential reasons for withdrawal by the Editor-in-Chief may include violations of ethical codes, such as identified below for retraction.

If the manuscript has not been published, the Editor-in-Chief will note withdrawal in the manuscript management system and stop the peer-review process, if it had been initiated. If the manuscript has been published, the Editor-in-Chief will communicate the withdrawal request to the publisher. The Editor-in-Chief will report the withdrawal in routine reporting to the *JOEH* Editorial Review Board and the *JOEH*, LLC Board of Directors.

After publication, a manuscript may be retracted from *JOEH*. Any person may recommend a manuscript be considered for retraction to the Editor-in-Chief by communicating directly with the Editor-in-Chief. The Editor-in-Chief has authority to retract an article but may consult with members (a subset or entirety) of the *JOEH* Editorial Review Board and/or the *JOEH*, LLC Board of Directors. The Editor-in-Chief will notify the *JOEH* Editorial Review Board and the *JOEH*, LLC Board of Directors of any retraction decision immediately.

Criteria for retraction may include, among other things:

- data fabrication, falsification, and misrepresentation,
- redundant publication of content,
- unethical research,
- plagiarism, and
- undisclosed conflict of interest.

6. Public Accessibility of Data

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) states,¹ “Data should be made as widely and freely available as possible while safeguarding the privacy of participants, and protecting confidential

¹ National Institutes of Health (2003) NIH Data Sharing Policy and Implementation Guidance. https://grants.nih.gov/grants/policy/data_sharing/data_sharing_guidance.htm Accessed March 23, 2017

and proprietary data.” Consistent with the expectations of the NIH, data used in manuscripts published in *JOEH* must be made publicly accessible to the extent possible. The intent of the policy is to increase transparency and usability of data. Data sharing should comply with Institutional Review Board and other legal/contractual research requirements.

At a minimum, data analyzed or presented in a manuscript should be available upon request from the Corresponding Author, while best practices include access to the data files through a repository. Small data sets may be included in Supplementary Materials. Data files should be made available in an accessible digital format (e.g., .txt not .docx, .csv not, .xlsx, etc.) and accompanied by an informative, accurate data dictionary and metadata.

The Editor-in-Chief will determine the adequacy and appropriateness of the plan for public accessibility of data.

7. Appeal of Editorial Decisions

Editorial decisions may be appealed to the President of the *JOEH*, LLC Board of Directors. If the basis of the appeal is scientific merit, the Board of Directors will consult with the Editorial Review Board. If the basis of the appeal is administrative processes or other matters, the Board of Directors will decide the appeal.

8. Conflict of Interest

Every individual involved in the submission and evaluation of manuscripts for the *JOEH*, or administrative oversight of the *JOEH* operations (those individuals and groups identified in Section 1) must disclose real and perceived personal and financial conflicts of interest that may interfere with their ability to discharge their editorial and fiduciary responsibilities to the *JOEH*.

- Authors must complete the on-line conflict of interest disclosure for any real or perceived conflicts that may arise on publication of a submitted manuscript. Such potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:
 - Any significant financial support obtained from organizations outside the authors’ affiliations (e.g., consultancies, employment, advocacy groups),
 - Any fees or honoraria, patents, royalties, stock or share ownership that would be affected by items relevant to the subject of the manuscript, and
 - Any legal action or potential legal action to which the manuscript pertains and to which any author or coauthor has any interest or role, including as participant or as advisor or consultant to participant(s).

The Editor in Chief will determine whether a real or perceived conflict of interest exists, and whether such a conflict of interest may preclude publication of the manuscript, or if such information must be disclosed when publishing the manuscript.

- Reviewers must disclose to the Editor-in-Chief or editorial staff any conflicts of interest at the time of review or recuse themselves from reviewing manuscripts with which a potential for bias exists; and must not use information gained through manuscripts for personal gain.
- The Editor-in-Chief and editorial staff, including Guest Editors, must recuse themselves from making editorial decisions about manuscripts with which a potential for bias exists; must not use information gained through manuscripts for personal gain; and must provide disclosure statements about potential conflicts of interest to the *JOEH*, LLC Board of

Directors at the time of appointment that includes a commitment to inform the Board of Directors if any future conflicts arise.

Authors with real or perceived conflicts of interest must disclose those interests in the acknowledgements section of the manuscript, declaring:

- Authors' conflicts of interest, or "The authors have declared no conflicts of interest."
- Source of financial support for the study, or "The authors have declared no financial support."
- Role of an individual who is not an author or an organization, if any, involved in design of the study, collection of data, analysis of data, interpretation of data, and preparation of the manuscript.
- Public accessibility of the study data, or "The authors will not provide access to the study data."