

University of Pittsburgh Safety Manual	EH&S Guideline Number: 05-002	
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RESPONSIBILITY, AUTHORITY, AND RESOURCES FOR BIOSAFETY

1. Principal Investigators

The Principal Investigator (PI) is directly responsible for the safe operation of his/her laboratory. The PI must be knowledgeable of the guidelines described in this manual and must apply these principles and procedures to protect the health and well-being of the staff, students, and the general public against undesirable consequences of experimental work conducted under the auspices of the University of Pittsburgh. The responsibilities of the PI are:

- 1.1 Ensuring that laboratory practices and techniques, containment equipment, personal protective equipment, and laboratory facilities are commensurate with the biosafety level appropriate for the organisms and materials utilized
- 1.2 Registering with Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) via electronic Workbook the possession and use of any agents or materials requiring Biosafety Level 2 (BSL-2) or higher containment
- 1.3 Submitting documentation to the Institutional Biosafety Committee for written approval prior to conducting any experiments utilizing recombinant DNA.
- 1.4 Submitting documentation to the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) for written approval prior to conducting any experiments utilizing animals.
- 1.5 Establishing and maintaining the safety training of all personnel in the lab, including training on lab-specific procedures and the health hazards associated with the agents encountered in the laboratory.
- 1.6 Establishing a written emergency response plan to be followed in the event of a release of hazardous biological material(s) and verifying that all personnel have knowledge of their respective duties.
- 1.7 Communicating the hazards associated with the work area by posting the appropriate biohazard warning signs and assigning individuals to be notified in cases of emergency.
- 1.8 Reporting any spills, accidental release, potential exposures, and injuries involving biohazardous materials to the EH&S Biosafety Officer and implementing follow-up actions to prevent future recurrences.
- 1.9 Assuring that all potentially infectious waste, equipment, and clothing removed from the lab or site are properly disinfected.

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2. Department Chairpersons and Directors of Research Institutes and Research Centers

The chief administrator(s) or research director of each department, school, research Institute, or research center is responsible for the safe operation of all laboratories under his/her jurisdiction. The responsibilities of the chief administrator are:

- 2.1 Ensuring that all individuals in the responsibility center have appropriate biosafety training and the opportunity to enroll in required or available occupational health programs.
- 2.2 Assisting in the elimination of all known unsafe acts and practices.
- 2.3 Nominating qualified members to the University Biohazards Committee.

3. University Biohazards Committee

The University Biohazards Committee is a subcommittee of the University Environmental Health and Safety Committee. It is established to review and approve biosafety issues, including the maintenance of an active and effective biosafety program as developed by the Department of Environmental Health and Safety for all University of Pittsburgh faculty, staff and students.

Schools or departments with biological research activities may nominate qualified members to serve on the Committee. Additional faculty members may be recruited to serve on the Committee based on area of expertise. The Committee consists of a Chairperson appointed from the University's faculty, the Biosafety Officer, the University's Employee Health Physician, and representatives of University departments that are users of biological materials or that have administrative responsibilities for such activity.

The Biohazards Committee works closely with and serves as a resource to the Department of Environmental Health and Safety, the Institutional Biosafety/rDNA Committee (IBC), and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). The responsibilities of the Biohazards Committee include:

- 3.1 Oversee the registration of biohazardous material and/or biological agents (except recombinant DNA work) to ascertain if precautions are adequate to protect personnel and the environment, and recommend measures necessary for safely working with such materials.
- 3.2 Review and/or propose procedures for maintaining safe work environments and for compliance with federal, state, and local regulations involving the procurement, use, containment, decontamination, disinfection, and/or disposal of biological agents or biohazardous materials.

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- a. Oversee the commissioning and de-commissioning of facilities requiring containment above Biosafety Level 2 (BSL-2) and Animal Biosafety Level 2 (ABSL-2). Review and approve associated Standard Operating Procedures for such facilities with regard to the design, commissioning and approval.
 - a. Review medical surveillance programs aimed at preventing laboratory-acquired infections.
 - b. Review incident reports involving biohazardous materials or biological agents, and recommend corrective actions to prevent recurrence, eliminate hazards or provide appropriate follow-up for exposed individuals.
 - c. Provide consultation on emergency response planning involving the proper handling, disinfection and disposal of biohazardous agents.
 - d. Mediate disputes over the proper handling, use, or disposal of biohazardous materials, and/or the proper containment of biological agents.
 - e. Review and approve substantial revisions or additions to the University of Pittsburgh Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan.
 - f. Advise on training efforts developed to communicate relevant procedures and programs.
4. Biosafety Officer

The Biosafety Officer is a member of the Department of Environmental Health and Safety and interfaces with academic and research personnel utilizing biological materials for research or teaching activities. The Biosafety Officer ensures that biosafety programs are implemented throughout the University. Significant responsibilities of the Biosafety Officer include:

- 4.1 Reviewing plans and protocols for research, and approving biocontainment facilities, biocontainment equipment, and personal protective equipment.
- 4.2 Reviewing and approving standard operating procedures (SOPs) for research with BSL-3 materials and Select Agents.
- 4.3 Managing a program to conduct periodic audits on biocontainment, lab practices, lab and animal facilities, and equipment used in research.
- 4.4 Managing a program for investigating all accidents involving possible release and/or exposure to infectious or toxic materials and reporting findings and recommendations to prevent future occurrences to laboratory management and the Biohazards Committee.
- 4.5 Consulting with biological material users on decontamination procedures.

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4.6 Serve as a member of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) and Institutional Biosafety Committee.

4.7 Manage a program to review and assess health and physical hazards associated with IACUC protocols prior to approval

5. Institutional Biosafety Committee

Federal guidelines require the University to have an active expert committee to review the safety procedures for all research involving recombinant DNA. The Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC/rDNA) is comprised of faculty members from the University of Pittsburgh and two members from the surrounding community, and is responsible for reviewing and approving all work involving recombinant DNA (rDNA). Inquiries to the IBC/rDNA are coordinated by the rDNA Office (383-1768) which is supported administratively by the Research Conduct and Compliance Office.