

Biosafety Program Manual

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Office of the Chief Risk Officer

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Version Control Table

Version Number	Owner	Approver	Change Summary	Status
1	OCRO	OCRO	New	N/A

1. Document overview

Purpose and scope

This Biosafety Program (BSP) Manual outlines the mandatory practices to manage biosafety at the University of Ottawa.

The manual sets out requirements ensuring that individuals working with biohazardous materials have the necessary knowledge and training to safely perform their work and comply with relevant legislation.

The manual applies to work performed at uOttawa or under the supervision or control of a uOttawa worker. It sets out the responsibilities and expectations for all uOttawa workers.

Users of this document must also comply with the minimum requirements and procedures outlined in the [General OHS Program Manual](#) and [Laboratory Safety Program Manual](#). This manual serves as a standard for biosafety matters only.

Non-compliance with requirements in this manual and associated procedures, or violation of permits, is subject to measures under Policy 2d (Disciplinary Measures for Reprehensible Acts) and Policy 115 (Responsible Conduct of Research). Individuals working with biohazardous materials must verify that the associated supervisor has obtained the proper licensing through the Office of the Chief Risk Officer (OCRO).

Terms and definitions

For occupational health and safety terms and definitions that apply to documents in the management system, see the [OHS glossary](#).

Responsibilities

For responsibilities associated with specific roles, see [Administrative Procedure 14-1](#) (Internal Responsibility Procedure for Health and Safety Issues).

In addition to the roles and responsibilities outlined in Procedure 14-1, additional roles and responsibilities are carried out by the following parties:

Biosafety Committee

The Biosafety Committee (BSC) oversees the Biosafety Program, acting as the University's decision-maker in areas pertaining to use of biohazardous materials. The BSC ensures that the University complies with the applicable regulations and licence conditions. Members are appointed by the VP research and innovation.

The BSC verifies that the necessary steps are taken to safeguard the health and safety of both biohazardous material users and non-users. It reviews and approves recommendations made by the biosafety officer.

For more information regarding the committee, including scope, membership, responsibilities and authority, meetings, voting and confidentiality, see the [Biosafety Committee Terms of Reference](#).

Biosafety officer

The Office of the Chief Risk Officer (OCRO) appoints the University's biosafety officer (BSO) from its staff. The officer reports to the Biosafety Committee and provides subject matter expert (SME) support in developing and implementing policies and programs (ultimately owned by OCRO) for the safe transport, handling, use, storage and disposal of biohazardous material.

The biosafety officer also oversees the biosafety specialist position, to verify that day-to-day operations follow Public Health Agency of Canada and Biosafety Committee requirements. The officer also liaises with federal, provincial and municipal governments to ensure the University follows applicable regulations regarding biohazardous material use.

The biosafety officer's work is authorized by the VP research and innovation and the Biosafety Committee.

Biosafety specialist

The biosafety specialist (BS) supports the day-to-day operations of the Biosafety Program, monitors and verifies compliance with regulations, and implements policies and programs developed by the biosafety officer. The specialist's tasks include:

- Providing biosafety training (BST)
- Implementing and monitoring the Biosafety Program
- Monitoring the purchase, use, storage and disposal of biohazardous materials
- Inspecting the facilities (labs) to ensure compliance with regulations

Permit holders / principal investigators

Permit holders are responsible for the safety of biohazardous material users (workers, students) and for the continued security of their permitted biohazardous material. They must establish and confirm that the acquisition, storage, handling, use, transfer and disposal of biohazardous materials under their supervision comply with relevant legislation and uOttawa policies and procedures.

Permit holders must also provide immediate supervision to individuals who are inexperienced in using biohazardous material. The biosafety officer must be consulted regarding any request for an underage individual to work or be present in a biohazardous material laboratory. Permit holders must ensure that underage individuals are accompanied and supervised by the appropriate skilled individual(s). If this isn't possible, the underage individual can't have access or be present.

Proposed new purchases and/or disposal of instruments (such as biosafety cabinets) working with biohazardous materials must be brought to the attention of the biosafety specialist to establish and confirm compliance with regulations relating to possession and disposal of these instruments.

Any purchase of monitoring instruments for biohazardous materials must also be brought to the attention of the biosafety specialist. The BS will help select appropriate equipment and add any acquired equipment to the Biosafety Program equipment database.

Permit holders must ensure that biohazardous material laboratories are properly decommissioned prior to departure or relocation from the University of Ottawa. When the research performed no longer requires the use of biohazardous materials and the lab is still in use, they must ensure that the lab is decommissioned, and Risk Group 2 and 3 agents are properly disposed of. The biosafety specialist facilitates this process and provides support to confirm that criteria requirements have been met.

In the event of non-compliance, the matter must be escalated to the Biosafety Committee and, if needed, for follow-up with the VP research and innovation.

Permit holders must conduct an annual visual inspection of the laboratory and document faults and deterioration. They must then implement corrective actions as soon as possible.

Permit holders whose view differ from those of Office of the Chief Risk Officer staff should discuss matters with the senior administrator of their faculty who sits on the Biosafety Committee. The administrator may choose to further discuss the issue with the chief risk officer or the Biosafety Committee. Should this not lead to resolution, the most senior levels of management (VP research and innovation, the Administration Committee) may be asked to assess the risk and liability.

Users

Users (e.g., workers, students) must comply with legislation, uOttawa requirements and the Biosafety Program in their work. They're responsible for their own safety and the health and safety of others, and share responsibility for the safe handling, transport, storage, use and disposal of biohazardous materials.

Users must understand and comply with the safe practices outlined in this program. They must learn about permit conditions and comply with the Biosafety Program (procedures, plans, work instructions, etc.). If there's doubt regarding any aspect of the program, they must verify matters with the biosafety specialist or biosafety officer.

If users have any concerns or issues related to the effective control of biohazardous materials, they should inform their supervisor or the biosafety specialist or biosafety officer.

New users should be appropriately supervised until they demonstrate the required skills to carry out the procedures and activities related to biohazardous materials they're allowed to perform.

Reference documents

- [Laboratory Safety Program](#)
- [Hazard Identification Risk Assessment Procedure](#)
- [OHS Incident Management Procedure](#)

2. Biohazardous material management

Persons working on projects or in workspaces performing activities on uOttawa premises that involve the handling, transport, storage, use and disposal of biohazardous material must, at a

minimum, follow the [procedures defined as part of the Biosafety Program](#) and applicable regulatory standards, whichever is more stringent.

Work performed must, at a minimum, comply with the following practices.

Supervisors working on projects or in workspaces must:

- Conduct and document a workplace hazard identification and risk assessment (i.e., local risk assessment), which is sent to the uOttawa biosafety specialist or officer for approval.
- Obtain University approval and necessary permits to acquire and use biohazardous material.

Persons working on projects or in workspaces must:

- Procure, inspect, provide and manage biohazardous material and appropriate control devices, in accordance with facility containment requirements and with the approval of the biosafety officer.
- Identify any reportable diseases or important considerations (e.g., pregnancy) among persons working with or exposed to biohazardous agents.
- Ensure persons working with or exposed to biohazardous agents are up to date on their vaccinations (where applicable).
- Develop and implement pre- and post-exposure control and monitoring plans, including ongoing reviews of biohazardous agent inventories and medical professional best practices.
- Provide onboarding, education and training to interested parties at the start of work and on an annual basis or when a major change in work scope has occurred, as applicable.
- Maintain biohazardous material inventories and necessary communication records
- Adhere to the following requirements when working with Risk Group 2 and 3 biohazardous materials and toxins:
 - Containment zone staff must immediately inform appropriate internal staff or authorities of any:
 - incident that may have resulted in exposure of an individual to a human pathogen or toxin in a facility
 - disease that may have been caused by exposure to a human pathogen or toxin in a facility
- Conduct the necessary medical surveillance for potential exposure to pathogens and toxins.
- Manage biohazardous waste and device (such as biosafety cabinets) decommissioning through appropriate methods.
- Maintain proper records after completion of any work, including facility work and maintenance or repair of lab equipment.

Additionally, emergency medical contact cards must be issued to containment zone staff handling non-human primates or pathogens identified by a local risk assessment.

3. Emergency response

Accidents or incidents must be assessed to determine potential exposure and the need for medical surveillance post exposure. This is done by the Human Resources Health and Wellness section.

Incidents must be reported in accordance with the [OHS Incident Management Procedure](#) and to the Public Health Agency of Canada. Reporting is done by the biosafety officer.

Details on control, containment, spill response and equipment alarms are outlined in the [biosafety procedures](#).