

University of Victoria Biosecurity Plan

1. Purpose:

This biosecurity plan details the measures in place and the actions to be taken to prevent the theft, misuse or intentional release of biological pathogens. This plan addresses the requirements outlined in section 2.6 of the Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines published by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

2. Responsibilities:

All individuals have a responsibility to ensure a safe working environment and to protect University resources from unauthorized access, misuse or removal. In laboratories, this obligation rests primarily with the Principal Investigator; however, all laboratory personnel have a responsibility to take reasonable precautions. Any extraordinary laboratory security measures should commensurate with the potential risks and be imposed in a manner that does not unreasonably hinder research.

Specific responsibilities are outlined below:

Principle Investigator (PI)

- Ensure biosecurity plan is implemented.
- Ensure employees are aware of biosecurity plan.
- Ensure employees receive biosafety training.

Lab workers

- Follow biosecurity procedures.
- Complete and follow biosafety training.

Biosafety Officer who is designated as the RO (Responsible Official) for the purpose of biosecurity

- Work with lab to implement biosecurity plan.
- Contacted if there is theft or loss of a biological agent.
- Contact appropriate agencies if there is a biosecurity threat or spill.
- Perform biosafety training.

Campus Security (CSEC) staff

- Available 24hrs, 7 days a week.
- Respond to all emergencies on campus.
- Secure area and contact necessary personnel for assistance.

Maintenance staff

- Trained to recognize laboratory signage.
- Provided with awareness training on lab hazards.

3. Risk Assessment:

Researchers working with biohazardous materials must apply for a permit from the University Biosafety Committee. All applications are reviewed by members of the committee before approval is granted. This permit specifies the containment level of the lab required for the risk level of the organisms being used. Any applications determined to have increased biosecurity risk will have additional operational procedures outlined upon biosafety permit approval.

The following lists examples of low and increased biosecurity risks:

Low biosecurity risk agents, identified as risk group level 1, include but are not limited to:

- Level 1 bacteria, virus, protozoa and fungi
- Non-infectious plant material
- Genetic material
- Proteins
- Non-infectious rodents or animals

Increased biosecurity risk agents, identified as risk group level 2, include but are not limited to:

- Level 2 bacteria, virus, protozoa and fungi
- Biological toxins
- Prions
- Any human source material

Note: If working with risk groups higher than risk group level 2 material a standard operating procedures manual needs to be created and approved by the Public Health Agency of Canada, please see the Biosafety Officer for more information.

4. Mitigation Strategies:

At a minimum, the University expects all laboratory personnel to comply with the following security procedures:

- Question the presence of unfamiliar individuals in laboratories.
- Report all suspicious activity immediately to Campus Security by calling 7599.

Laboratory building exterior doors are secured after normal business hours. To minimize the likelihood of unauthorized access, all after-hours building users should:

- Avoid providing building access to unfamiliar individuals.
- Secure doors behind them.
- Immediately report any building security problem to Campus Security at 7599.

For increased biosecurity risks, the following mitigation strategies shall also be implemented.

Physical Protection

- Access is restricted to labs through the use of signage.
- Room doors are locked when unoccupied.
- Separate keys are required to access buildings and labs.
- Freezers/fridges are locked when in an accessible area or they are stored in a locked room.
- Personal protective equipment and/or biosafety cabinets are used in the lab.

Personnel suitability/reliability

- All personnel in secured area are experienced and trained in biosafety.
- Students/staff have photo ID cards.
- Names of employees permitted to work in labs is maintained with the Biosafety Officer.
- Visitors must be accompanied by a UVic lab employee in order to enter a lab.

Pathogen accountability

- Inventories of all pathogens and locations are kept in a central database maintained by the Biosafety Officer. This inventory is updated at least annually.
- Biosafety registrations are approved by the Biosafety Committee, who ensure all biosafety/biosecurity protocols are in place prior to granting biosafety approval.
- All samples are labeled with content information.
- All biological storage locations are marked with biohazardous signage.
- Waste pathogens are removed from campus through a waste contractor. The contractor transports the biological waste to a facility to be hydroclaved or incinerated.
- All biological waste is tracked through bar codes or certificates of destruction.
- Discrepancies in inventories are reported to PI and RO.

Related Incident and Emergency Response

- Spill response procedures and equipment are available in every lab.
- Biological disinfectants are available in all biohazard labs.
- Campus Security is available 24 hours, 7 days a week. They are provided with contact information to call for assistance with a biohazardous incident.