II. Responsibilities

The basic safety principle is that **all injuries are preventable.** Management, from the university President to the Principal Investigator/Supervisor, has a responsibility to encourage the university’s safety effort in a sustained and consistent manner by establishing safety goals, demanding accountability for safety performance, and providing the resources to the safety program.

II.1. Office of Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS)

OEHS has an institutional responsibility to help promote the safety and health of university employees. OEHS personnel serve as safety consultants to the departments and other units of the university and provide information on applicable safety-related regulations or guidelines. OEHS personnel are involved in the development of safety practices and procedures for the university. They also provide guidance to personnel in safety matters through consultation. The unit also has the responsibility of ensuring, through the auditing of laboratory facilities and work practices, that the work of the university is completed in a safe and environmentally sound manner.

OEHS has institutional responsibility for the disposal of radioactive materials, hazardous chemicals and infectious wastes. Training in specific areas of safety concerns is provided by OEHS personnel, including those associated with the collection and disposal of biological wastes.

Use, possession and transfer of select agents and toxins at the university must be in accordance with federal regulations. Select agents and toxins are biological agents and toxins that have the potential to pose a severe threat to the public, animal or plant health, or a threat to animal or plant products. The Office of Environmental Health and Safety oversees the use, possession and transfers of select agents and toxins to ensure compliance with federal regulations. Appendix B contains additional information on select agents and toxins. Questions about select agents and toxins should be directed to the Responsible Official (RO) or the Alternate Responsible Official.

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II.2. Office of Responsible Research Practices (ORRP)

The Office of Responsible Research Practices (ORRP), a unit of the Office of Research, provides support for review committees, many of which are federally mandated, including a Biomedical Institutional Review Board (IRB), a Cancer IRB, a Behavioral and Social Sciences IRB, the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), and the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC). The Office of Responsible Research Practices also supports the institution by promoting ethical conduct of research and educating OSU students, faculty, and staff regarding research regulations. Copies of application forms, information on policies and procedures, and Statements of Assurance can be obtained through the ORRP website (http://orrp.osu.edu/).

II.3. Institutional Biosafety Officer (IBO)

The Institutional Biosafety Officer (IBO) is responsible for the development, implementation, and direction of the comprehensive biological safety program at the institution. The biosafety program includes work with human tissues, fluids, cells or cell cultures, recombinant or synthetic nucleic acids, transgenic plants/animals, infectious agents, work with animals known to be vectors of zoonotic diseases, gene transfer, xenotransplantation, etc. This individual serves as the Institutional Biosafety Officer as defined by the NIH Guidelines and thereby serves on the Institutional Biosafety Committee. The membership of this committee reviews and approves protocols involving the use of biohazards, recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid and gene transfer. The IBO assists investigators and staff with all matters related to biosafety. The IBO audits laboratories and work practices for compliance with university policies and procedures.
II.4. Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)

The Ohio State University is committed to the safe, legal, and ethical use of biologically-derived hazardous materials. Acting as the agent for the university in such matters, the Institutional Biosafety Committee acts to assure that activities involving recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules and biohazards meet the legal and ethical requirements for the responsible use of these agents, that safety levels are appropriately classified, and that work is performed in accordance with good safety practices. Additionally, the committee membership works to establish policies and make recommendations to the university regarding such activities, maintain and promote an open and cooperative relationship with investigators and other university committees, and educate the university community concerning the regulatory requirements of biosafety.

The IBC reviews all aspects of research involving recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules, vectors, and host cells that cannot be classified as human or animal biohazards. The committee also has responsibility for traditional research activities that utilize biohazards and for recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid projects that include biohazards (including mammalian viral vectors, pathogenic organisms, and the use of human blood, tissues, body fluids, cells, blood products, human stem cells and other potentially infectious materials). All human gene transfer protocols and those animal gene transfer protocols not exempted from review by the NIH Guidelines and potential dual use research of concern is also reviewed by the IBC.

The IBC retains the authority to refuse permission for a principal investigator to work with specific biological agents if, in the opinion of the committee, public health or the environment would be compromised by granting such use.

II.5. President and Vice Presidents

The university President and Vice Presidents encourage a climate of
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compliance with federal, state and local regulations and support an ongoing commitment to this compliance.

As needed, an ad-hoc committee may be formed to consider policy implications for the university of emerging technologies and processes that have a biosafety component. This committee will work with the standing university committees and administrative units with responsibilities for biosafety issues in research and teaching to provide advice to the Vice President for Research.

II.6. Deans

Deans encourage compliance with safety, health and environmental practices by departments within their jurisdiction. All academic and non-academic departments, schools and divisions shall participate in all applicable required programs.

II.7. Department Chairs, Center Directors and Other Facility Directors

Department Chairs/Directors shall:

- Develop emergency and evacuation plans for buildings, appoint building safety committees, departmental biosafety officers, and appoint building safety managers and alternates in cooperation with the university (in some cases with the associate dean for research and research officers);

- Maintain discipline, enforce rules and regulations, and take prompt, effective corrective action when necessary. The departmental chair shall also provide assistance to OEHS and ORRP staff when investigations arise involving the conduct or work practices of PIs and/or other personnel in the department;

- Ensure the compliance of principal investigators and other supervisory personnel with federal, state, and local regulations and university policies applicable to the department’s work, including enrollment of individuals in the
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Occupational Health program. Regulatory and policy documents are available from OEHS and ORRP. The department chair may delegate safety- and health-related responsibilities to principal investigators or other supervisors, but it is the department chair’s responsibility to understand the regulations and to see that the requirements are met;

- **Take corrective actions** to halt any violations should violations of university biohazard policies occur, in concert with the Institutional Biosafety Officer, OEHS, the department safety officer and the appropriate university standing committee.

**II.8. Principal Investigators (PIs) and Supervisors**

Direct responsibility for compliance with the university’s safety and health programs is assigned to the Principal Investigator. This means that the PI shall provide a safe workplace and shall implement university health and safety programs. This includes ensuring that personnel are adequately trained, research protocols/safety plans are prepared and submitted to the IBC for review, and laboratories are submitted to periodic inspections. PIs are responsible for maintaining good working order of equipment in their laboratories (including the appropriate certification of biological safety cabinets, [BSCs] required annually or whenever the BSC is moved).

**Principal Investigators shall:**

- **Communicate** to those in the laboratory the university’s high priority regarding health and safety and concern for the environment and shall ensure that environmental, health and safety obligations are fulfilled by all personnel in the laboratory;

- **Analyze work procedures for hazard** identification and correction and implementation of measures to eliminate or control workplace hazards;

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- **Ensure** that all laboratory personnel, maintenance personnel and visitors who may be exposed to any biohazard be informed in advance of their potential risk and the behavior required to minimize that risk;

- **Correct deficiencies** noted during the periodic laboratory inspection and respond in writing with the corrective action and date of implementation, to OEHS within the required time period;

- **Submit a research protocol (Safety Plan)** covering the use of biohazard agents for review and approval by the Institutional Biosafety Committee before laboratory work commences and submit the laboratory to periodic inspections by a representative of Environmental Health and Safety;

- **Submit** any significant changes in the research protocol to the IBC for review and approval;

- **Ensure** any research projects covered by the *NIH Guidelines* that require prior agency approval before initiation, be reviewed by the IBC before seeking or obtaining agency approval.

- **Encourage regular self-assessment inspections** by employees in order to review work habits and correct deficiencies. Prompt reporting of health and safety problems by project personnel is to be encouraged. Persons who file reports concerning laboratory shortcomings in good faith will be protected from retaliatory actions based on such filings;

- **Ensure that all individuals in the laboratory** know how to access the *Institutional Laboratory Biosafety Manual* available on the OEHS website and maintain a written acknowledgment of understanding by these individuals;

- **Ensure training** of all individuals involved in the handling and
disposal of biohazard agents and that all training records are maintained as directed by the standards;

- **Create** and foster an environment in the laboratory that encourages open discussion of biosafety issues, problems, and modifications of procedures;

- **Ensure that Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** appropriate to the biohazard agent(s) is available, is in good condition, and is utilized appropriately;

- **Ensure the participation** of all personnel in a Medical Surveillance Program (i.e. Occupational Health Registry). EHS should be informed of all biohazard agents used in the laboratory;

- **Ensure** that all accidents and biohazard exposures are reported as required under OSU policy in a timely manner to the Institutional Biosafety Officer and the Chair of the Institutional Biosafety Committee. The Biohazard Incident Reporting policy and forms can be found at http://orrp.osu.edu/ibc/osuibcpolicies/incidentreporting/.

- **Notify** the Institutional Biosafety Officer if a laboratory-acquired infection is known or suspected;

- **Stop any work posing imminent danger**. Prudent practices are to be employed by those working in the laboratory;

- **Ensure that appropriate signage** is used at the entrance(s) to and within the laboratory. Signage must be in place in the vivarium before beginning animal experiments which include hazardous materials (consult with the animal vivarium supervisor for more information);

- **Develop** (with the Institutional Biosafety Officer) plans for handling emergencies (accidental spills, fires, riots, etc.);
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- **Ensure that the animal vivarium supervisor is notified** via the eProtocol system at least three working days before animals under the care of ULAR staff are treated with biohazardous agents. Consultation with ULAR and OEHS personnel may be needed to ensure the risks and required PPE (personal protective equipment) are understood by all individuals involved. Post Animal Hazard Safety Protocols on applicable door when using hazardous agents for the duration specified on the form.

**II.9. The Individual**

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY!!!

The health and safety of each employee is extremely important. Employees should bring their concerns to their supervisor, the departmental biosafety officer, department chair, the Institutional Biosafety Officer, the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC), or OEHS.

Each employee is expected to be conscientious in assuming personal safety responsibility from the first day on the job at the university. Each employee must understand that he or she is responsible for working safely.

**The individual shall:**

- **Comply with the university’s safety policies and rules** and follow both oral and written instructions from the principal investigator or supervisor. The individual shall report to the principal investigator any unsafe conditions and/or any accident or exposure to chemicals or biological agents. If the individual receives no response or an unsatisfactory response, he/she should contact the department chair, OEHS or the chair of the IBC;

- **Know the hazards of the chemicals and biological agents** in the workplace as well as proper handling and...
disposal procedures. Training shall be provided by the principal investigator or designee prior to the commencement of work. The individual must minimize all potential exposures to infectious materials or contaminated items. He/she will learn what precautions and protective equipment are needed for specific jobs and practice good hygiene.

II.11. Students, Visitors and Guests

The Ohio State University is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment to its employees that, in turn, fosters a safe learning environment for students. The university encourages students, visitors and guests to abide by applicable safety guidelines when using campus facilities. It is the policy of OSU to ensure that all students who might be exposed to hazardous materials in the course of their activities at the university are adequately protected.