

MEDICAL SURVEILLANCE - BIOSAFETY

INTRODUCTION

Medical screening and surveillance are an integral part of the University's biosafety program.

The medical surveillance program includes:

- an *Agreement on Biosafety*
- Self- identification as being at a higher risk than the general population;
- Counselling; and
- Periodic follow-up medical assessments as required.

SCOPE

This module applies to University of Guelph personnel handling biohazards within their research, teaching, or operational activities including but not limited to employees (staff, faculty and post-doctoral scholars) and graduate students herein referred to as Investigative Staff.

LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

[Human Pathogens and Toxins Act](#)

[Canadian Biosafety Standard](#)

[University of Guelph Safety Policy – Biosafety 851.11.01](#)

[University of Guelph Safety Policy – Bloodborne Pathogens 912](#)

MEDICAL CONDITION CRITERIA

Prior to handling biohazards under the Biosafety program, investigative staff must review the requirements associated with *the Agreement on Biosafety* form. While all investigative staff is

able to seek further medical counsel if a concern arises, personnel meeting any of the following criteria, will be required to participate in a medical assessment through Occupational Health and Wellness:

- Immunocompromised condition e.g. rheumatoid arthritis, cancer, HIV, lupus
- Diabetes
- Prolonged use of corticosteroid(cortisone) medications by mouth or by injection
- On immunosuppressive treatment
- Severe allergic reactions
- Any medical condition that may be impacted by working with biohazardous materials, e.g. pregnancy, splenectomy, chronic lung disease, eczema.

In addition, there may be some instances whereby vaccinations are recommended for the materials handled. This includes but is not limited to work with untreated (raw) sewage and human blood, body fluids, tissues or cell lines.

RESPONSIBILITIES

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS (OHW)

- Review medical history and health status of investigative staff self-identified as meeting the aforementioned criteria and conduct further medical assessments and follow up as necessary;
- Receive and maintain records according to standard medical practice;
- Provide medical restrictions to the Principal Investigator for workplace accommodations and assist as required with modified work planning;
- Institute modified work requirements or restrictions as indicated by the health status of the individual in consideration of the work performed;
- Follow up with non-student personnel suspected of being exposed to a biohazard as per University incident reporting process;
- Provide guidance for any medical examination and testing .

BIOSAFETY OFFICER (BSO)

- Communicate medical surveillance requirements to University of Guelph personnel handling biohazards and ensure such requirements are outlined within the Biosafety program;
- Confirm Agreement on Biosafety forms are submitted for all investigative staff including the permit holder with the biosafety permit applications;
- Maintain all Agreements on Biosafety records;
- Provide regular reminders of medical surveillance requirements to current biosafety permit holders.

SUPERVISORS (PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS)

- Ensure all personnel whom they supervise and who are to be involved in biohazard use complete Agreement on Biosafety forms;
- Inform all personnel of any vaccinations recommended for work with the agents;
- Work cooperatively with OHW to provide information regarding the operational parameters;
- Accommodate any personnel requiring modified work due to medical restrictions;

Cover the costs associated with any accommodations, examinations, testing, vaccinations, etc. that are not covered by OHW

UNIVERSITY PERSONNEL INVOLVED WITH BIOHAZARDS (INVESTIGATIVE STAFF)

- Complete Agreement on Biosafety form. Contact OHW as applicable for further medical assessment as indicated by the self-screening medical condition criteria on the Agreement of Biosafety form prior to working with biohazards and following any change in health status that meets the outlined criteria
- Follow the University incident reporting procedures for any suspected incidents

METHODS/PROCEDURES

MEDICAL ASSESSMENTS

All investigative staff meeting the medical condition criteria outlined in the Agreement on Biosafety form shall self-identify and participate in further medical assessments as required through OHW.

FREQUENCY

The Agreement on Biosafety form is to be completed prior to any work with biohazards and is to be submitted with the biosafety permit application. Following a change in health status that may change the outcome of the medical condition criteria in the Agreement of Biosafety form, investigative staff shall contact OHW.

IMMUNIZATIONS

In accordance with the Canadian Immunization Guide, recommendations below are in addition to those included in Canada's recommended vaccination schedule. Additional vaccination protocols are based on recommendations for laboratory workers indicated by [Canadian Immunization Guide - Laboratory Workers](#). As per these recommendations, if an approved vaccination is available for the bacteria/virus being handled, it is generally indicated.

Table 1 provides examples of selected immunization protocols but is not intended to be a comprehensive list.

Table 1. Guide to Selected Immunization Protocols

Recommendations	Vaccine
Persons working with untreated (raw) sewage	Tetanus immunization status up to date. Consider typhoid, polio, hepatitis A and B vaccine if work is being conducted in a geographical region with high prevalence
Persons working with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • human blood, body fluids, tissues, or cell lines • Hepatitis B virus 	Hepatitis B
Persons handling vaccinia virus or recombinant vaccinia materials	Smallpox

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

All incidents shall be reported using the University's incident reporting process.

OHW and the Occupational Health Physician are available for consultation for personnel that have had a suspected biohazard exposure and/or incident.

RECORDS MAINTENANCE

All personal medical records are maintained confidentially according to accepted medical practice by Occupational Health and Wellness.