

BIOSAFETY POLICY

Effective Date: May 29, 2018

Originating Office: Office of the
Vice-President, Services

Supersedes/Amends: March 4, 2016

Policy Number: VPS-52

PURPOSE

Biological Materials have the potential, if not managed in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, to have adverse effects on public health and safety, the environment or national security. The purpose of the Biosafety Policy is to ensure that all activities involving Biological Materials at Concordia University comply with federal, provincial and municipal legislation, and conform to standards of practice. This Policy also provides an overview of the mechanisms that are in place to administratively manage and control Biosafety and Biosecurity risks. Proper implementation of this Policy will serve to protect Members of the University Community, the public, and the environment.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Members of the University Community undertaking Controlled Activities involving Biological Materials, on or off University Property.

This policy also applies to Members of the University Community who will access areas where Controlled Activities involving Biological Materials will take place.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

“Authorized User” is a Member of the University Community who is listed on an Internal Biohazard Permit and who is authorized to conduct Controlled Activities with Biological Materials in approved locations.

“Biological Material” refers to pathogenic and non-pathogenic microorganisms, proteins and nucleic acids, as well as any substance or material that may contain them. Examples

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include bacteria, viruses, fungi, prions, toxins, genetically modified organisms, cell cultures, environmental samples, and tissue, blood and body fluids of human or animal origin. Biological Materials include Biohazardous Materials, as defined in the Biosafety Manual.

“Biosafety” is the application of containment principles, technologies and practices to prevent unintentional exposure to potentially hazardous Biological Material, or their accidental release.

“Biosecurity” refers to the Security measures designed to prevent the loss, theft, misuse, diversion, or intentional release of potentially hazardous Biological Material and other related assets (e.g., personnel, equipment, non-infectious material, and animals).

“Controlled Activities” include possessing, handling or using, producing, storing, permitting any person access to, transferring, importing or exporting, releasing or otherwise abandoning, or disposing of human and animal pathogens and toxins or any other Biological Material that has the potential to have adverse effects on public health and safety, the environment or national security.

“Internal Biohazard Permit (IBP)” is issued by the Biosafety Officer on behalf of the University Biosafety Committee to a University Faculty or Staff member. An IBP authorizes conducting/performing controlled activities with biological materials in compliance with the University’s Pathogen and Toxin Licence and other applicable regulations, standards and guidelines.

“Internal Biohazard Permit Holder (IBPH)” is the faculty or staff member who holds a valid Internal Biohazard Permit (IBP) and is authorized to conduct Controlled Activities with Biological Materials in approved locations. In addition, the IBPH may have Authorized Users to which they may delegate some of these responsibilities.

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“Members of the University Community” refers to:

- a) Worker - a person, including a student in the cases determined by regulation, who, under a contract of employment or a contract of apprenticeship, even without remuneration, carries out work for the University. An Undergraduate, Graduate or Postgraduate student carrying out work for the University is per definition, a worker.
- b) Contract Worker - a person hired by another employer but carrying out work on University Property.
- c) Student - an individual who is registered at the University for an academic purpose.
- d) Visitor/Volunteer - an individual who is present on University Property who is neither a worker, contract worker nor a student.

“Pathogens” are microorganisms, nucleic acids or proteins than can cause disease or infection in humans, animals and/or plants.

“Toxins” refer to biological toxins (poisonous substances naturally produced by living organisms), and microbial toxins (poisonous substances produced by microorganisms).

“University Property” refers to premises owned or leased by the University.

POLICY

Biosafety Program

1. The University shall maintain a Biosafety Program that complies with all federal, provincial and municipal legislation, and conforms to recognized codes and standards of practice, including but not limited to:
 - Canadian Biosafety Standard (CBS)
 - Containment Standards for Facilities Handling Aquatic Animal Pathogens

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- Containment Standards for Facilities Handling Plant Pests
- Health of Animals Act (HAA)
- Health of Animals Regulations (HAR)
- Human Pathogens and Toxins Act (HPTA)
- Human Pathogens and Toxins Regulations (HPTR)

1.1. Biosafety Manual

The Biosafety Manual provides the framework for the Biosafety Program and specifies requirements for conducting Controlled Activities with Biological Materials.

The University shall ensure that the Biosafety Manual is available to all Members of the University Community and that it is reviewed periodically and updated whenever there are changes in legislation, university operations, recognized codes and standards of practice.

1.2. Designation of Biosafety Officer

The University shall designate a Biosafety Officer (BSO) to oversee the Biosafety Program. The BSO has the authority to immediately suspend or terminate all or any operations involving Biological Materials that he/she judges to be an immediate or significant threat to public health and safety, the environment or national security. This authority cannot be modified or revoked except as permitted by applicable law or regulation.

1.3. Biological Materials Inventory

The University shall maintain an up-to-date inventory of all Biological Materials on University Property.

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1.4. Internal Biohazard Permit

An Internal Biohazard Permit (IBP) is issued on behalf of the University Biosafety Committee (UBSC) by the Biosafety Officer to a faculty or staff member and authorizes him/her to conduct Controlled Activities with Biological Materials in approved locations, in compliance with the Pathogen and Toxin Licence issued to Concordia University by the Public Health Agency of Canada and with all other biosafety and biosecurity-related legislations, standards and guidelines.

1.5. Biosafety Training

All individuals conducting Controlled Activities with Biological Materials shall receive appropriate training, as stipulated in the Biosafety Manual.

1.6. Concordia University Biosafety Committee

The Concordia University Biosafety Committee (UBSC) shall be maintained to fulfill the responsibilities of an Institutional Biosafety Committee as described in the Canadian Biosafety Handbook.

The UBSC shall establish Terms of Reference that sets out the administrative and operating procedures for the UBSC. The Terms of Reference shall include information on membership, terms of office, roles and responsibilities of members, quorum and voting, appointment of Chair(s), and meetings. The Terms of Reference are approved by the Vice-President, Services and are reviewed at least every three (3) years.

Responsibilities

2. The University's *Environmental Health and Safety Policy* ([VPS-40](#)) designates responsibilities for health and safety. This section summarizes additional responsibilities related to the Biosafety Program. For complete details, please refer to the Biosafety Manual.

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2.1. Vice-President, Services

The Vice-President, Services shall have administrative responsibility for the Biosafety Policy and Program. The Vice-President, Services is responsible for maintaining the University Biosafety Committee and ensuring sufficient personnel and resources for the administration and enforcement of the Biosafety Policy and Program.

2.2. Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies

The Vice-President, Research and Graduate Studies is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Biosafety Policy and Program.

2.3. Director, Environmental Health and Safety

The Director of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) is responsible for managing the development, administration and enforcement of the Biosafety Program, and ensuring that the program is compliant with all federal, provincial and municipal legislation, and the standards of practice. The Director of EHS is responsible for reviewing and monitoring compliance with the Biosafety Policy and Program.

2.4. The Biosafety Officer

The Biosafety Officer (BSO) is responsible for the administration of the Biosafety Program on a day-to-day basis, including conducting risk-based assessments, training, updating the Biosafety Manual, issuing Internal Biohazard Permits and maintaining the Biological Materials Inventory. The BSO ensures that all Controlled Activities with Biological Materials at the University are conducted in accordance with applicable legislation, internal procedures and recognized codes and standards of practice.

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2.5. University Biosafety Committee

The UBSC assists the BSO with verifying that all Controlled Activities with Biological Materials at the University are conducted in accordance with applicable legislation, internal procedures and recognized codes and standards of practice.

The UBSC supports the BSO with risk assessments, biosafety protocol reviews and approvals, disputes about biosafety matters, or other biosafety or biosecurity concerns.

2.6. Deans, Chairs and Research/Unit Directors

Deans, Department Chairs, and Research/Unit Directors are responsible for ensuring compliance with the Biosafety Policy and Program within their respective areas.

2.7. Internal Biohazard Permit Holders and Authorized Users

Internal Biohazard Permit Holders (IBPH) and Authorized Users are responsible for complying with the Biosafety Policy and Program requirements.

2.8. Members of the University Community

Members of the University Community who are not IBPH or Authorized Users are not permitted entry into areas where Controlled Activities with Biological Materials are taking place unless they have received University-specified training and information and appropriate supervision is provided.