Biosecurity Plan for Simon Fraser University

1.0 Purpose

The Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines published by the Public Health Agency of Canada requires all facilities that handle infectious agents to have a Biosafety program and a Biosecurity plan in place. Generally, Biosafety programs deal with all aspects of containment to prevent exposure to and accidental release of pathogens. Biosecurity plans are implemented to prevent the theft, misuse or intentional release of pathogens.

The Biosecurity Plan for Simon Fraser University specifies security requirements for all research and teaching laboratories working with biohazardous materials. The main components of the biosecurity plan include: physical protection, personnel suitability/reliability, pathogen accountability, and incident and emergency response.

2.0 Designation of a Responsible Official

The Laboratory Safety Guidelines recommend that a “Responsible Official” (RO) be assigned at all facilities handling biohazardous materials. At SFU, the Biosafety Officer is the RO. The RO is responsible for the development, training and implementation of safety, security and emergency response plans relating to biohazardous materials. As such, the RO is contacted as soon as possible in the event of any theft, loss or release of biohazardous materials.

3.0 Identification of Biohazardous Materials with a Biosecurity Risk

All researchers must apply for a Biosafety permit prior to commencing work with biohazardous materials at SFU. All permit applications are reviewed by the Chair of the Biosafety Committee to determine whether the proposed handling of biohazardous materials conforms to the standards outlined in SFU policy R20.02 and the Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines, and to assess the required containment level. The permit application will also be reviewed for biosecurity risk. Factors such as weaponization risk, consequence of release and level of threat will be considered when assessing the biosecurity risk of a biohazardous material.

All researchers working with biohazardous materials must follow the protocols outlined in the Biosecurity Plan. For those researchers working with biohazardous materials that have been identified as having a biosecurity risk, additional operational procedures may be required. These procedures will be clearly outlined on the biosafety permit.

The Biosafety Committee has the right to restrict or prohibit the use and storage of biohazardous agents at SFU.
4.0 Physical Protection

Different strategies have been implemented at SFU to ensure the security of labs containing biohazardous materials. These strategies are based on the level of containment of a lab.

For containment level 1 labs, doors must be closed at all times. For containment level 2 labs, doors must be closed and lockable. The doors must be locked when the lab is unoccupied. Fridges and freezers which are located in shared rooms must be either locked or stored in a locked room if they contain biohazardous materials of risk group 2 or higher. For containment level 3 labs, access is restricted by card lock and key pads.

Campus security conducts regular patrols of the hallways of all buildings on campus and will investigate any suspicious behaviour.

5.0 Personnel Suitability & Reliability

Personnel access to all research labs on campus is restricted to lab occupants\(^1\), maintenance and janitorial staff, and escorted visitors. Biosafety and biosecurity training is mandatory for all students and staff working in labs that contain biohazardous materials. Hazardous materials awareness training is required for all maintenance and janitorial staff accessing labs on campus. Visitors may enter a lab only if they are given permission by the lab’s Principal Investigator and are escorted by a trained lab occupant. A log book should be maintained of all visitors to the lab.

Background checks and security clearances may be required for employees accessing level 3 containment labs and/or labs containing biosecurity agents of concern.

6.0 Biohazard Accountability

An inventory of all biohazardous materials should be maintained from acquisition to disposal. The inventory should include the type, quantity and location of the material and should be updated on a regular basis. When determining the quantity of biohazardous materials, it is sufficient to report a volume threshold for a specified period of time.

All biohazardous materials must be clearly labeled. A record should be maintained of the inactivation and disposal of cultures after use. Also, all individuals who have access to the material should be documented. Loss, theft, or misuse of a biohazardous material must be reported immediately to the RO.

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\(^1\) “Lab occupants” includes faculty, staff and students under the direct supervision of the Principal Investigator or Lab Instructor responsible for the lab.
7.0 Incident and Emergency Response

All researchers working with biohazardous materials must report all security incidents to the RO and Campus Security as soon as possible. Security incidents include, but are not limited to, breach of containment, unauthorized removal of pathogens, and unauthorized personnel in restricted areas.

Please refer to the Laboratory Safety Training Manual for information on biohazard spill response procedures and other emergency procedures (e.g., earthquake, fire).