Importing and Transferring Pathogens

In Canada, any controlled activity that involves human and animal pathogens and toxins is regulated by two federal agencies: the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Controlled activities include possessing, handling, using, producing, storing, transferring or importing a pathogen as defined by PHAC and/or CFIA.

SFU has a licence from PHAC to permit SFU personnel to conduct these controlled activities with regulated biohazardous materials, provided they have an SFU-issued Biosafety Permit.

PHAC and CFIA regulate the importation of human and animal pathogens into Canada, and the transfer of human and animal pathogens within Canada. Depending on the nature of material to be imported or transferred, different regulations may apply. As a condition of SFU’s licence to conduct controlled activities with regulated biohazardous materials, the SFU Biosafety Officer (BSO) must be notified before arrangements are made to do the following:

- import a human pathogen or toxin;
- receive a human pathogen or toxin from another facility within Canada;
- transfer a human pathogen or toxin to another facility within Canada.

Please contact the BSO, Monica Szczepina at 778-782-7265, if you plan on importing or transferring regulated materials.

IMPORTS

SFU users must have a copy of the current SFU license in order to import regulated human pathogens and toxins, and terrestrial animal pathogens from another country, or order them from some domestic suppliers. If a pathogen affects terrestrial animals, a CFIA-issued Compliance Letter may be required. Contact the SFU BSO for assistance.

Please be aware that a separate importation permit from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is required for the following pathogens (these are not regulated by PHAC):

- pathogens that cause a foreign animal disease,
- an emerging animal disease, or
- any terrestrial animal pathogen when imported in a live animal, animal product, or by-product (e.g., blood, serum, tissue, cell line).

DOMESTIC TRANSFERS

SFU users must have an SFU-issued Biosafety Permit in order to transfer (receive or supply) regulated human pathogens and toxins, and terrestrial animal pathogens. To transfer human/animal pathogens either from SFU to another Canadian facility/institution, or from another Canadian facility/institution to SFU, the PI must complete the Biohazardous Agent Transfer Notification Form.

This form must be signed by the SFU PI, the SFU BSO, the recipient institution PI and the recipient institution’s BSO. A copy of completed forms must be forwarded to SFU’s BSO.