

THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Biosafety sub-committee of the Safety Health and Environment Committee

The 4th meeting of the biosafety committee will be held on **Thursday, 15th January 2009 at 11.00 a.m. in the 1st Floor Library of the Main Safety Office, Cheung Yuet Ming Physics building.**

1. Minutes of the 3rd meeting (20th September 2007)

To confirm the minutes of the 3rd meeting which are included as Appendix A.

2. Matters arising from the minutes.

3. The future direction of biosafety in HKU.

At the previous meeting a variety of issues were discussed which Dr Lim felt might be addressed together. He indicated that he would put a scheme together and circulate it to committee members for discussion. This he did some time ago. The scheme is contained within Appendix B. The new Director of Safety, Dr Edmund Hau will give a verbal briefing on a strategic plan for safety within the University and how this might affect any plans the committee decides upon. Comment from members on the need for and monitoring of risk assessments, the approval of laboratories for certain activities, training etc, is solicited. Advice is also sought on what further guidance and policy documents the committee feel might be appropriate – a preliminary list is contained within the final part of Appendix B. For information Appendix B1 is included to show what is expected of a new PI starting at Yale in the USA and illustrates international best practice.

4. Quarantine and Prevention of Disease Regulations 2008.

Appendix C contains a brief on these new regulations which control import and export of potentially infectious materials. The committee is asked for comment and assistance in drafting a letter to the Department of Health to clarify some issues on what agents require a license.

5. Implementation of the Cartagena protocol in Hong Kong.

This item (Appendix D) is included for information on the progress of the Hong Kong government in implementing the protocol and a summary of a public consultation meeting held by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department on Tuesday 16th December. This prospective legislation will set up a mechanism for approval of deliberate release in Hong Kong as well as further regulate the trans-boundary movements of what is termed Living Modified Organisms.

6. Code of Practice for use of the neurotoxin MPTP in the Laboratory Animal Unit (LAU).

This Code of Practice (Appendix E) has been produced by collaboration of the UHS, the Department of Medicine, the LAU and the Safety Office. It is included in the agenda mainly for formal approval by the committee but comments are welcome and can be incorporated into the final approved version of the document.

7. Guidance on work in Hong Kong University with virus vectors.

Appendices F-H are included for comment and approval. The documents include guidance on work with retroviruses (Appendix F), adenoviruses (Appendix G) and vaccinia and other poxviruses (Appendix H). They add to previously approved guidance on the use of adeno-associated virus vectors.

Comments are particularly sought on the format and content of the documents including considerations such as whether a few diagrams would improve the clarity of the documents and whether a 1 or 2 page summary for each document would be appropriate.

8. Guidance on work with naked DNA or RNA in HKU

Appendix I contains guidance on work with naked DNA or RNA in HKU. Comments are particularly sought on the format and content of the documents including considerations such as whether a 1 or 2 page summary for the document would be appropriate.

9. Work with potentially infectious samples including blood, blood products, human tissues and other clinical specimens

Appendix J contains guidance on the handling of clinical specimens in HKU. Comments are particularly sought on the format and content of the documents including considerations such as whether a 1 or 2 page summary for each document would be appropriate. Does the different format of this document detract from the guidance?

10. Horizon Scan on Synthetic Biology a HSE (UK) short report.

Appendix K is a two page HSE short report on synthetic Biology - for information. This report indicates that this field has the potential to develop quickly in the next ten years and may in the future have implications for biosafety.

11. Any other business

To consider any other business not otherwise on the agenda.