

AGENDA

12th meeting of the Biosafety Committee of the University of Hong Kong 13th March 2014. (A sub-committee of the Safety Health and Environment Committee).

To be held via e-mail.

1. Minutes of the 11th meeting of the Biosafety Committee (3rd October 14th 2013)

The draft minutes of the 11th meeting of the Biosafety Committee are included as Appendix 1 for approval as an accurate record of the meeting.

2. Matters arising from the minutes of the 11th meeting (action points etc.)

i. Oversight of gain of function experiments (point 5).

Both Professor Bacon-Shone and Professor Jin agreed to be involved in the working group. Also see point 3.iii below.

ii. Police "Critical Infrastructure" unit (point 6).

The BSL3 facility was not in operation at the beginning of October, due to scheduled maintenance and it was decided in consultation with Dr Poon to invite the critical infrastructure unit to visit the laboratory. As the laboratory is now a Medical Faculty core facility the management team (Professor Peiris -acting head of the School of Public Health, Professor Wu - Head of Microbiology and the two departmental Safety Officers, Dr Honglin Chen and Dr Leo Poon) were consulted. On the 10th of October two police officers spent several hours discussing their remit and physically inspecting the laboratory. Following this an invitation was given from the unit to attend a seminar at police headquarters on security and the operation and remit of the critical infrastructure unit. Several University staff attended on the 5th of November and it is expected that there will be sporadic contact between the police and the BSL3 management committee.

3. For information

i. The second Introductory Biosafety Course was held on the 7th January 2014 and about 35 participants took part. The slides used have been uploaded to the Safety Office website.

ii. The Safety Health and Environment Committee met on 23rd January 2014 and approved the updated biosafety policy document and the guidance on risk assessment. Both documents will also be uploaded to the Safety Office website.

iii. One enquiry was received from the School of Public Health over whether a particular experiment needed to be considered by the "gain of function" working group. Following discussion it was felt this particular experiment fell outside the group remit because the starting virus was in effect a risk group 2 agent and might even form the basis of vaccine seed. Consequently any gain of function to this virus would only bring it nearer to the wild type human H7N9.

4. Date of next meetings.

It was agreed to schedule the next committee meeting for the 9th of October 2014. It was also agreed that the date would be flexible and confirmed nearer the time by e-mail.