

Agenda for the 6th meeting of the Biosafety Committee of the University of Hong Kong. (A sub-committee of the Safety Health and Environment Committee).

To be held on **Thursday, 20th May at 9.30 a.m. in the 1st Floor Library of the Main Safety Office, Cheung Yuet Ming Physics building.**

1. Minutes of the 5th meeting of the Biosafety Committee (November 2009)

To confirm the minutes of the 5th meeting which are included as Appendix A.

2. Matters arising from the minutes of the 5th meeting.

3. Membership of the Biosafety Committee.

The paper presented as Appendix B summarizes the role of the Biosafety Committee and the original terms of appointment of members as discussed in the first biosafety committee meeting. Although all members have now been on the committee for much longer than was initially envisioned, the number of meetings has also been less than was anticipated. Members are encouraged to discuss their views on committee membership and length of service.

4. Revision and review of guidance on the use of AAV (Adeno-Associated Virus) vectors

A number of papers on the potential of AAV vectors to cause insertional mutagenesis have been published since the initial guidance was approved. As the review date for this guidance has passed it seemed appropriate to both revise and review the guidance. The original guidance (found on the Safety Office website at <http://www.hku.hk/safety/pdf/BAAV.pdf>) is included as Appendix C1 and a revised version of the discussion on insertional mutagenesis is included as Appendix C2.

5. Guidance on Fluorescent Activated Cell Sorting (FACS) of unfixed cells

There is evidence to suggest that FACS sorting of unfixed cells has been a responsible for significant numbers of laboratory acquired infections with Hepatitis B virus. The University now has a number of FACS machines and the safety of those operating the machines is of concern. The International Society for Analytical Cytology have produced a document [Schmidt et al (2007), Cytometry (A) 71(6):414-37] that is a thoroughly informative attempt to set a standard for sorting unfixed cells. It is proposed that the University adopts this publication (included in the papers as Appendix D) as its own guidance because it is an extremely thorough document. It has several introductory sections including one on possible infections in human blood, one on general biosafety as well as another on the selection and use of disinfectants (see item 6 on the agenda). Along with this is practical advice on minimizing droplets and aerosols, operation of the sorter and methods for assessing aerosol containment. Approval to adopt this document and any comments would be welcome from members.

Please note that the International Society for Analytical Cytology has formulated a survey with the primary goal of updating the standard and in particular clarifying the risk assessment procedures for the assignment of bio-safety practices when sorting infectious or potentially infectious samples, i.e. to match engineering controls with potential risk.

The main operators or those in charge of FACS machines are encouraged to visit <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/WEB22AEMDPQVPH> to participate in the survey.

6. Guidance on Decontamination

Appendix E is tabled as guidance on decontamination with emphasis on the selection and use of disinfectants. Members are invited to make comments and suggest areas for improvement. Members views are sought on whether a section on cleaning and a further section on the operation of autoclaves would be appropriate.

7. Risk assessment forms for deliberate work with infectious agents and virus vectors. (This item follows on from point 5 considered at the last meeting)

Comments are sought on the format and content of the risk assessment Form RA4 (for work with adenovirus vectors) included as Appendix F. This completes a set of guidance and risk assessment forms for commonly used viral vector systems. An example of the use of RA3 is included for your information as Appendix G. The secretary is keen to improve/simplify the layout of the forms and to be able to emphasize the relationship between risk and the control measures taken. Comments and suggestions on these aspects would be particularly welcome.

8. CDC-APHIS project on competencies of BSL2,3,4 workers (for information)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL) were mandated with a project to develop competencies for laboratory staff at Biosafety Level 2, 3, and 4 by the US "Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act, 2006" They ask for review and comment on these competencies and also to propose additional competencies we think might be missing. In June, the list will be revised and published later this year. These finalized competencies will be useful in recruiting and orienting new staff, training current staff, assessing the competency of the current workforce, and evaluating them. They estimate the survey review will require more than an hour to complete! The deadline for completion is May 24, 2010.

To comment: SurveyMonkey direct link: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/bslcompetencies>

To print: BSL Survey PDF :

http://www.aphl.org/profdev/el/Documents/EL_2010April21_SurveyBSLCompetencyPrintable.pdf

9. Any other business.

To consider any business not otherwise on the agenda.

10. Date of Next Meeting.

Several international reviews along with recommendations to enhance biosafety are due to report towards the end of this year. It seems appropriate to review our Biosafety Policy in the light of these initiatives. Hence a meeting in early 2011 is proposed to fit in with the timetable of these reports being released.