

*Policies and Procedures Governing the Use of Hazardous Biological Agents  
in Research or Instruction Under the Faculties of Arts and Sciences,  
Medicine and Public Health*

Voted by the President and Fellows of Harvard College  
March 7, 1977 and December 11, 1978

1. Research involving hazardous or potentially hazardous biological agents shall be specially controlled.
2. Hazardous biological agents include:
  - a. Known pathogenic bacteria, viruses, and other infectious agents
  - b. Oncogenic viruses
  - c. Infected, or potentially infected, human and animal cells
  - d. Strains of bacterial, viruses, etc. whose pathogenicity is uncertain or whose use in the laboratory is not well established
  - e. High concentrations of infectious agents
  - f. Infectious nucleic acids
  - g. Hybrids of two or more agents or recombinant DNA molecules
3. Principal investigators shall be responsible for:
  - a. Estimating the potential biohazards associated with experiments performed in laboratories under their direction
  - b. Instituting the appropriate safeguards within these laboratories
  - c. Developing procedures for minimizing the effects of accidents
  - d. Training and ensuring the proficiency of relevant personnel in the application of these safeguards and procedures
  - e. Informing personnel both of the potential hazards and of the basis on which these hazards have been estimated
  - f. Maintaining these practices on a continuing basis.
4. Principal investigators shall secure the approval of the Committee on the Regulation of Hazardous Biological Agents before introducing a hazardous biological agent into their laboratories. The principal investigator shall be responsible for maintenance of records and incident reports related to all such agents in the laboratory.
5. Principal investigators shall consult with the Departmental Biohazards Safety Officer on questions regarding biohazards policy and shall seek the advice of the Committee on the Regulation of Hazardous Biological Agents on problems or questions that cannot be resolved by the Departmental Biohazards Safety Officer.
6. Principal investigators shall immediately notify the Committee on the Regulation of Hazardous Biological Agents of accidents or incidents in laboratories utilizing hazardous biological agents which raise doubts about the adequacy of the safeguards used.
7. These policies and procedures, so far as they are relevant, shall govern also instructional exercises which utilize hazardous biological agents.

## PROCEDURES

1. There shall be appointed a Standing Committee on the Regulation of Hazardous Biological Agents which shall be authorized to review and approve or disapprove, or state conditions for, the conduct of any research involving hazardous biological agents by an officer or other employee of the Faculty, or by a student.

2. Supervision and evaluation of the program of biohazard control shall be the responsibility of the Committee. It will formulate general safety related policy and will provide advice and direction regarding safety equipment, general procedures, training and information. The Committee will maintain permanent records of all potentially hazardous agents in use under the Faculty and of any significant laboratory accidents or illnesses. It will maintain appropriate health records and survey the Faculty, as needed, to keep such records up to date. It will conduct an annual survey of principal investigators whose research might include use of hazardous biological agents. The Committee will ensure the maintenance of a library of reference materials, books, articles and other background information relevance to biohazards safety. It will oversee the preparation and dissemination of educational materials needed by principal investigators and ensure proper liaison with the Fire and Police Departments and other service units which may require entry to areas in which hazardous agents are in use. To assure a minimum level of knowledge among all personnel using hazardous biological agents the Committee will sponsor preparation of a basic lecture and demonstration program which shall be presented to all new personnel before they begin work with such agents, and repeated annually for those already employed. Finally, the Committee shall ensure the conduct of frequent, on-site inspections of laboratories using hazardous Biological agents noting in its records the dates of such visits and the observations made.

3. The Division of Environmental Health and Safety of the University Health Services shall maintain an Office of Biohazards Health and Safety adequately staffed with individuals familiar with biohazards safety procedures to assist the Committee in carrying out its function.

4. In each department where laboratory investigations involving hazardous biological agents are under-way, or in prospect, a member of the Faculty with knowledge of microbiology and interest in biohazards control shall be appointed Departmental Biohazard Safety Officer. This individual's primary responsibility is to serve as liaison between principal investigators, the Committee and the Office of Biohazards; he or she will advise investigators on prevailing policies and procedures and will advise the Committee about problems and difficulties relevant to biohazard control which may arise within the department.