Welcome to Week 4 of Biosafety Month! This week’s focus is on Research Registration and the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC).

Week 4 of Biosafety Month 2018 serves as an opportunity to discuss the various levels of biological materials registration at UMD.

What is the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC)?

The UMD IBC was created as a requirement under the *NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules (NIH Guidelines)*, which states "Each institution conducting or sponsoring recombinant DNA research which is covered by the *NIH Guidelines* is responsible for ensuring that the research is conducted in full conformity with the provisions of the *NIH Guidelines*. In order to fulfill this responsibility, the institution shall: ... establish an Institutional Biosafety Committee..." The committee strives to work cooperatively with researchers, faculty, and staff while assuring compliance with the *NIH Guidelines*.

Why does research need to be registered with the IBC?

If an institution receives *any* NIH funding the entire institution is held to ensuring all applicable research is performed in compliance with the *NIH Guidelines*. The *NIH Guidelines* detail safety practices and containment procedures for basic and clinical research involving recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules, including the creation and use of organisms and viruses containing recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules.

A current registration encompassing all research and staff in the laboratory allows for compliance with the *NIH Guidelines* and the UMD Biosafety Policy, quicker approval of Material Transfer Agreements (MTAs), grant award reviews, and USDA import permits, and streamlined IACUC review. It will also assist with emergency response in the event of an injury or potential exposure event.
What needs to be registered?

The UMD IBC Charter instructs the Committee to:

- review recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecule research conducted at or sponsored by the institution for compliance with the NIH Guidelines and approving those research projects that are found to conform to the NIH Guidelines;
- review research involving infectious agents conducted at or sponsored by the university to ensure compliance with the guidelines in the Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories (BMBL), current edition; and
- review and approve all registrations of Select Agents and Toxins; and
- review research sponsored by the University but conducted off-campus.

Additionally, if laboratories are working with biological materials NOT covered by the above list they are expected to register the work in BioRAFT for “acknowledgement” by the Biosafety Office. Some examples of this work include studies using non-recombinant mouse cell lines, work with algal water sampling, research with plants and insects, etc. Registration of this work permits campus-wide risk assessment and response planning, resource allocation, and targeted communication about specific research related topics.

Who is the IBC?

Chaired by Daniel C. Stein, PhD, the IBC is comprised of researchers with varying subject matter expertise, scientific and facility staff, animal care specialists, health care providers, and members of the Biosafety Office. The NIH Guidelines also requires the IBC to have at least two members from the local community. The Committee meets monthly to review protocols and discuss current issues. Meetings are open to the public.

How to register your work in BioRAFT:

BioRAFT is UMD’s online platform for registering laboratories using biological materials and for managing Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) protocols. BioRAFT allows the PIs to manage training, laboratory audits, staffing, and research registrations in one central place.

Each PI using biological materials should have their own “Bio” page in BioRAFT. If you do not have this “Bio” tab, and you feel you should, contact biosafety@umd.edu.
Creating a registration is as easy as clicking “add project”! You can also add materials in use such as cell lines, plasmids, bacteria, and viruses in your Biological Summary. Remember to click “certify” at the bottom of the Biological Summary page (NOTE: Only a PI can certify; a designee can edit the registration but can only “notify” a PI that a registration is ready for review and submission).

**Do you need to make changes to the IBC registration?** Just click edit, modify the registration, and hit certify! The Biosafety Office will be notified of the change and route it for approval as applicable.

**What actions can I take now?**

1. Check out [NIH’s Office of Science Policy](https://www.nih.gov/funding/offices-science-policy)
2. Do you perform work with human materials, infectious agents, or recombinant or synthetic nucleic acids? **What is your IBC approval number?** Have you read the IBC protocol? Contact your PI or biosafety@umd.edu with any questions.
3. Take the [NIH Guidelines Training](https://www.nih.gov/)
4. **For PI’s** – log into [BioRAFT](https://bioRAFT.umd.edu) and see if your information is up to date! **Certify** the registration if any changes have been made.
5. **For PI’s** – when does your IBC protocol expire? Registration expires four years after the initial approval. Mark the date on your calendar! Be sure to resubmit a few months prior to the expiration date to allow for questions and revisions.

Did you miss a [previous week’s email](https://www.nih.gov/)? Don’t forget to send a picture or an email of your actions for Biosafety Month for a chance to **win a prize**! Email us at biosafety@umd.edu.