



Policy

Biorisk Management

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1. SCOPE

- 1.1. This policy applies to all work with biological agents, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), other potentially infectious material (OPIMs) and biological toxins conducted by London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) staff and students, including at the Medical Research Council (MRC) Unit The Gambia at LSHTM and MRC / Uganda Virus Research Institute (UVRI) & LSHTM Research Unit.
- 1.2. This policy applies to the storage, handling or disposal of biological agents and GMO of any classification, biological toxins and of materials that are known or are suspected of being contaminated with any of these.
- 1.3. This policy does not apply to live animals or plants, except when genetically modified or when deliberately infected with a biological agents or GMOs.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. **'Biorisk'** is the combination of harm occurring and the severity of that harm when the source of harm is a biological agent, GMO or toxin, whether genetically modified, or not.
- 2.2. **'Biological agents'** are defined here as viruses, bacteria, fungi, parasites or any other micro-organism which may cause infection, allergy, toxicity or otherwise create a hazard to humans or to animals. This includes those animal pathogens listed in Schedule 1 of the Specified Animal Pathogens Order.
- 2.3. **'Genetically modified organisms (GMOs)'** are all viruses, bacteria, fungi, parasites, cells, animals (including insects) or plants that have had their genetic material altered in a

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way that does not occur naturally by mating, selective breeding or natural recombination. 'Genetically modified' in this context is therefore as defined within the Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) Regulations.

2.4. 'Other Potentially Infectious Materials (OPIMs)' are tissues, cells, bodily fluids or excreta from humans or animals that are potentially contaminated with biological agents.

2.5. 'Biological toxins' are toxins originating from an animal, bacteria, fungi, plant or any other biological source.

3. PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

3.1. Work with biological agents, GMOs, toxins and material that may be infected or contaminated with these can present a substantial risk to the worker and, in the event of a loss of containment, other staff, students and visitors, or even the wider public. Such work is highly regulated in the UK, not only under the general principles of the Health and Safety at Work Act and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, but also by a number of specific regulations (see 4.1.8) and non-compliance with these presents a substantial financial and reputational risk to LSHTM.

3.2. This policy describes how LSHTM will conduct its work with such material in a safe and compliant manner.

4. POLICY

4.1. It is LSHTM policy to;

4.1.1. Not use hazardous biological agents, GMOs or toxins, where safer alternatives are available.

4.1.2. Protect staff, students, contractors, visitors, community and environment from biological agents, toxins or GMOs that are stored or handled within LSHTM.

4.1.3. Reduce the risk of exposure to, or release of, hazardous biological materials, by conducting adequate risk assessments and implementing the required control measures.

4.1.4. Provide competent staff with adequate resource so as to manage biorisk at LSHTM.

4.1.5. Ensure the provision of all necessary levels of health surveillance, health screening and vaccination before and during normal work activities and the provision of all necessary health support in the event of an exposure incident.

4.1.6. Continually improve Biorisk management performance.

4.1.7. Conduct its work activities so as to comply with the [LSHTM arrangements for Biorisk management](#) for work in London, the MRCG Laboratory Safety Handbook for work in the MRC Unit The Gambia the LSHTM and the Health and Safety Security handbook for work at the MRC / UVRI & LSHTM Uganda Research Unit.

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4.1.8. Conduct its work activities so as to comply with all national legal requirements applicable to the biological agents, toxins and GMOs that will be handled or stored. Where no local legislation exists, the principles of UK legislation will be applied where practical. Relevant UK H&S legislation includes (but is not restricted to):

- the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations
- the Genetically Modified Organisms (Contained Use) Regulations
- the Specified Animal Pathogens Order
- Importation of Animal Pathogens Order 1980 (IAPO) Animal By-Products Regulation (EC) No.1069/2009
- Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act
- The Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Enforcement) Regulations 1997

4.1.9. Monitor, and ensure, compliance with this policy and LSHTM Biorisk management arrangements.

5. PROCEDURES AND ARRANGEMENTS

5.1.1. LSHTM's Arrangements for Biorisk Management will be applied in the implementation of this policy in the United Kingdom. The principles of these procedures will be applied for all other LSHTM activities except for MRC Unit The Gambia at LSHTM and MRC/UVRI & LSHTM Research Unit, which both have their own standards and procedures for the delivery of this policy.

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