



University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Biosafety Program

Biosafety Program Newsletter Spring 2023

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Reminder: Sharps disposal

Due to recent issues identified across campus, the Biosafety Program is reminding all labs about proper procedure for disposal of Sharps.

- **What are Sharps?** Sharps are any items that can easily cut or puncture the skin. They include, but are not limited to, the following items *regardless of what they were used for*:
 - Needles
 - Scalpels
 - LancetsSharps may also include certain types of broken glass waste that are contaminated with a biological hazard, such as:
 - Contaminated glass microscope slides & cover slips
 - Contaminated glass Pasteur pipettes
 - Other contaminated broken glass or broken rigid plastic
- **How are Sharps disposed of?** [The State of Wisconsin considers Sharps to be Infectious Waste](#). Because certain types of Sharps are considered Infectious Waste even when clean, [they must be shredded for disposal](#). Disposable Sharps should *not* be autoclaved or disinfected after use, as additional handling may lead to injury.
- **How is Sharps waste managed at UWM?** In laboratories that use Sharps, Sharps should be immediately placed in a puncture-proof, leak-proof container that is properly designated and labeled for Sharps disposal. When the container is **no**

more than ¾ full, close the container and [contact UWM Environmental Protection to request a pickup](#).

You can learn more at the [UWM Biosafety](#) and [Environmental Protection](#) program websites. If you have questions about proper disposal of Sharps or other biological waste, [contact the Biosafety Office](#).

New web resource: Guidance for recombinant materials, infectious agents, cell lines, and more!

The Biosafety Program is actively updating its website to provide better guidance for all labs on campus. Now, you can find a quick-access summary of requirements, recommendations, and resources depending on the specific types of materials you work with on the [Biological Materials webpage!](#) [Explore all of the materials information here](#), or click on the specific materials you work with below:

- [Recombinant & Synthetic Nucleic Acids](#)
- [Biohazardous Agents](#)
- [Primary Cells & Cell Lines](#)
- [Prions](#)
- [Viral Vectors](#)
- [Biological Toxins](#)

If your materials aren't represented yet, let us know! You can submit a request for additional materials to be listed by [emailing the Biosafety Office](#).

Spring IBC Meeting Schedule

The Institutional Biosafety Committee has two more meetings on its spring semester schedule. Meetings are held on the **second Friday of the month at 1:30-3:30pm**. Upcoming meeting dates and protocol submission deadlines are listed below, and Summer meeting dates will be posted soon to the [IBC's website here](#).

Meeting Date	Deadline to Submit
April 14, 2023	March 31, 2023
May 12, 2023	April 28, 2023

As a reminder, **all work with biohazardous materials and/or recombinant/synthetic nucleic acid materials needs to be submitted in a biosafety protocol** to the IBC. [Click here for instructions on the protocol submission process](#); or if you are already familiar with the process, [log in directly to I-Manager here](#). If you have questions about how to submit a protocol or whether your work requires one, [contact the Biosafety Office](#) for assistance.

CDC guidance for fecal, respiratory, and sewage samples that may contain poliovirus

Because of the recent discovery of [circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus \(cVDPV\) in Rockland County, NY](#), the CDC National Authority for Containment of Poliovirus (NAC) has published [new guidance for individuals who may handle fecal, respiratory, and sewage samples in poliovirus-circulating areas](#). **Note that the Rockland County area of New York is the only region in the U.S. currently listed as a poliovirus-circulating area.** However, any laboratories at UWM that handle fecal, respiratory, or sewage samples should be aware of [CDC NAC requirements](#) for potentially infectious materials and take precautions as appropriate. If you have questions about the materials you work with, [contact the Biosafety Office](#) for guidance.

In the News: *Candida auris* in healthcare facilities

This week, the CDC published new information on the [spread of antimicrobial-resistant *Candida auris* in healthcare facilities](#). *Candida* species are yeasts that are often normal inhabitants of respiratory and gastrointestinal tracts. However, they can cause infection after exposure to antibiotics or after surgery and are relatively stable in the environment. [C. auris is particularly concerning](#) because of its innate resistance to many common antifungals, and the prevalence of strains resistant to all available antifungals is increasing.

This notice serves as a reminder that laboratories should be aware of circulating infections in their local area and healthcare systems when planning experiments. Public health or medical officials in your area may be able to provide important context and recommendations for working safely with an agent of concern and can ensure that healthcare systems are prepared should an exposure occur. Regardless of the agent you work with, [choosing appropriate disinfectants](#) & PPE and disinfecting surfaces regularly can help prevent unintentional release of agents that may be hazardous to immune-compromised populations.

The UWM Biosafety Program is always working to ensure your safety and the safety of our surrounding community. If you have any questions, concerns, or ideas to improve biosafety on our campus, please get in touch!

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