

The Biohazards Committee

The Biohazards Committee is responsible for:

- ❖ Serving on behalf of the University as the reviewing agency for all existing and planned work potentially involving biohazards, and acting as the certifying body concerning the *Biohazard Risk Group* and *Containment Levels* involved in the work and the adequacy of the procedures and facilities associated with the conduct of the work:

The Queen's University Biohazards Committee reviews all research studies to:

- ✓ Determine the nature of the biohazardous work in progress or proposed;
 - ✓ Accredit the facilities on an ongoing basis;
 - ✓ Assist with the design of appropriate laboratories and training of personnel; and
 - ✓ Serve as an educational resource to members of the University community.
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- ❖ Developing and maintaining University policies for handling biohazardous material, based on the "*Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines (3rd edition)*" produced by the Public Health Agency of Canada and its Office of Laboratory Safety;
 - ❖ Making recommendations to the University on specific aspects of biohazard matters as they arise;
 - ❖ Developing appropriate procedures for the handling of all kinds of emergency situations relating to biohazards;
 - ❖ Advising the University, its faculties, departments, and researchers of these policies and of the special requirements of Schedule 13 of the Tri-Council Memorandum of Understanding with the University relating to biohazardous research funded by the three federal granting agencies (CIHR, NSERC, and SSHRC) and other granting and contracting agencies;

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- ❖ Providing at appropriate intervals to the University and to external agencies, as required, reports on situations and activities involving *Containment Levels*, incidents and accidents that require reports on safety aspects, and safety procedures and equipment used in various levels of work, as a result of direct inspection by the Committee;
- ❖ Acting as a resource body for the University and its staff to provide up-to-date information regarding *Biohazard Risk Group* and *Containment Levels*, containment facilities, training procedures and other related matters as they arise.

Any researcher conducting studies involving biohazardous material must apply separately to the Biohazards Committee for approval, in addition to the Queen's University Health Sciences and Affiliated Teaching Hospital Research Ethics Board. This includes work that could result in exposure to biological agents (regardless of the risk group to which they have been assigned), cell lines, tissue or fluids of human origin, and biological toxins. *The Biohazards Committee must approve all research studies involving biohazardous material prior to the commencement of the research study.*

For more information regarding the Biohazards Committee and their approval process, please consult their website (http://www.safety.queensu.ca/gi_bio.htm).

A Queen's University Biohazard Permit is required for all research and teaching activities which involve the use, manipulation and storage of biohazardous material (including, but not limited to, viruses, bacteria, fungi, parasites, recombinant DNA, biological toxins, prions and other micro-organisms/genetic systems, and human and animal tissues, cells, blood and body fluids), and which are:

- ❖ Supervised or conducted by employees or members of the University, or
- ❖ Conducted on University premises, or in a building or location administered by or under the control of the University, or;
- ❖ Supported by funds provided by or through the University

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An application for a Queen's Biohazard Permit is a two-stage process. The first stage is the review and approval of the research or teaching activity. The second stage is the inspection and approval of the laboratory or facility where the work will be conducted. *An approved permit is valid for a maximum of four years, authorizes usage of and protocols involving only those biohazardous materials listed in the permit, and requires annual renewal for each of the three years following the first year. A new application is required after three renewals.*

The Biohazards Committee requires completion of the following documents for approval of new applications:

- ❖ Biohazard Permit Application Form
- ❖ A separate summary statement showing how you are fulfilling the requirements of the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) for your laboratory. Included should be a detailed risk assessment to determine the biohazard containment level for both facilities and operational practices for the biohazardous agents in use. Your biohazard risk assessment should describe the biohazard risks of the material, the risks associated with the techniques or procedures that will be used to manipulate it, and the methods employed to mitigate these risks. A carefully written one to three page document should generally be sufficient to summarize the required risk assessment

Submit the completed documents to the Department of Environmental Health & Safety. A list of meeting dates and corresponding application submissions deadlines is available online. Applications are reviewed by the Biosafety Officer first, and if needed, amended, prior to being reviewed by the Biohazard Committee, therefore all applications must be submitted by the deadline, which is four weeks before the next scheduled meeting. Failure to meet the application deadline will result in the application being deferred to the next meeting. Once approval has been obtained by the Biohazard Committee, a Biohazard Permit will be issued to the Principal Investigator. The covering letter containing information related to granting agency, grant number

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and title of the approved project will be copied to the Office of Research Services. A copy of the Biohazard Permit and the original copy of the application will be placed on file in the Department of Environmental Health & Safety.

The issuance of a Biohazard Permit is conditional on an inspection of the laboratories or facilities where the research or teaching activity will be conducted. Inspections will be conducted by members of the Biohazards Committee using the Public Health Agency of Canada Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines (3rd Edition), and/or the Containment Standards for Veterinary Facilities (Canadian Food Inspection Agency). ***Failure to have the laboratory or facility inspected before work with the biohazardous material begins will result in the suspension or revoking of the Biohazard Permit, and the Queen's Office of Research Services will be notified.***

When approval to use or possess biohazardous material is granted and the laboratory or facilities listed in the application has a current inspection record on file, then no further action is necessary and the research or teaching activities can proceed.

The Biohazards Committee requires completion of the following documents for renewal of applications already approved. Renewals of applications are required annually and full review (completion of the *Biohazard Permit Application Form*) is required every four (4) years:

- ❖ Biohazard Permit Renewal Application Form

The Biohazards Committee requires the following document for amendments to applications already approved. Changes would include the addition and/or deletion of research project titles, changes in approved laboratory space (new laboratory space is subject to an inspection to approve the space), the addition and/or deletion of biohazardous material (if it is similar in nature/type to the material listed on the permit), or the addition of personnel. The request to amend a biohazard permit must include assurance that the new protocols do not differ in the type or level of associated risk than those previously approved:

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- ❖ Biohazard Permit Amendment Application Form:

A significant amendment would require the completion of a new *Biohazard Permit Application Form*, and would include:

- ❖ New biohazardous material that differs in type from that already approved;
- ❖ Material that requires a containment level higher than the current permit stipulates;
- ❖ Significant changes to experimental protocols and/or procedures.