How do I know if my research involves a biohazard?

Biohazards are defined at Ohio State as infectious agents (i.e., pathogens) or materials produced by living organisms that may cause disease in other living organisms. This includes human pathogens and materials that can cause disease in humans, animals or plants.

What is the Institutional Biosafety Committee?

The Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) is responsible for reviewing and approving all research involving the use of biohazards. The IBC reviews research involving recombinant or synthetic molecules to ensure compliance with the National Institutes of Health Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules. The IBC, in conjunction with the Office of Environmental Health and Safety, provides guidance to researchers regarding the proper acquisition, handling, transfer and disposal of potentially hazardous or regulated biological materials.

If your research involves a biohazard it should be registered if it includes:

• Creating or inserting recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules into cell lines, tissue cultures, animals, humans or plants
• Using a microorganism that is pathogenic to humans, plants or animals
• Collecting or using human or non-human primate source materials (e.g., body fluids, tissues, cells)
• Human gene transfer or human stem cells
• Using or creating transgenic or knock-out animals

For more information, see investigator guidance posted at orrp.osu.edu/ibc/investigator-guidance.
Are there any additional requirements?

Depending on the nature of your research, each individual working with biohazards will be required to complete (and update as necessary) one or more of the following prior to review:

- Basics of NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules. More information is available at orrp.osu.edu/ibc/training-requirements
- Occupational health registry available at go.osu.edu/riskassessment
- Conflict of interest disclosure available at orc.osu.edu/regulations-policies/coi/ecoi
- Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) training available at orc.osu.edu/regulations-policies/rcr

Additional training may be required if your research requires the use of lentiviral vectors, bloodborne pathogens, biological safety cabinets or other biosafety level 2 or 3 practices.

For more information, see ehs.osu.edu/research-biosafety-training.

How do I register and get approval for my biosafety research?

Submit protocols for IBC review electronically at eprotocol.osu.edu. The IBC chairperson or the institutional biosafety officer will review and approve or forward to the IBC for review depending on the biohazards being used.

Where can I get assistance?

The Office of Responsible Research Practices (ORRP) is a team of professionals within the Office of Research. ORRP provides administrative support to the IBC and is committed to delivering excellent customer service.

Consult the ORRP directory at orrp.osu.edu/contact for specific staff member contact information or visit the ORRP website at orrp.osu.edu or send an email to ibcinfo@osu.edu.

For More Information Contact:
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