



**The University of Western Ontario  
University Biosafety Committee Meeting**

**Minutes of March 1, 2012**  
**10:00 am – Noon, Robarts Conference Room 2201**

**Present:** Dr. J. Millar (Chair), Dr. S. Damjanovski, Dr. G. Dekaban (left early), Dr. T. Dzialoszynski, Dr. P. Ferguson, Dr. A. Margaritis, Dr. E. Ostrakhovitch, Dr. S. Siu, Dr. G. Thorn, Dr. I. Welch, T. Hammoud, M. Mics, R. Noseworthy, C. Pape, G. Ryder, J. Stanley, S. Tomlinson, J. Whitty, S. Xhiku

**Regrets:** Dr. S. Barr, Dr. T. deLangley, Dr. C. Pin, Dr. T. Rupar, J. McLachlan, Jane O'Brien, A. Scott, J. Tucker

**1. Introductions & Approval of Agenda (J. Millar)**

The Committee introduces themselves to Shawna Tomlinson.

Approval of the agenda:

**Motion:** Dr. A. Margaritis

**Seconded:** Dr. G. Thorn

**Approved:** Agenda approved as presented.

**2. Approval of Minutes, October 27, 2011 (VOTE) (J. Millar)**

**Motion:** Dr. P. Ferguson

**Seconded:** C. Pape

**Approved:** Minutes approved as presented.

**2.1 LHRI Training**

Dr. Ferguson inquired about the status of the LHRI training review. This was a follow-up item according to the October minutes. J. Stanley received the information from G. Ryder two days ago so the review is still pending.

**3. Business Arising (J. Millar)**

**3.1 Biohazards Subcommittee Update (J. Millar)**

The Biohazards Subcommittee has met 4 times since the last Biosafety Committee meeting and has been in the process of discussing changes to the biological form review process.

**3.2 DSB Level 3 Re-certification Update (J. Stanley)**

The DSB Level 3 recertification started in December 2011 and the facility re-opened for research on January 25<sup>th</sup> 2012.

**3.3 Sheep Unit (J. Stanley)**

The Sheep Unit was recertified starting last August and was open for research on the first week of January 2012.

**3.4 Level 3 Emergency Medical Follow-Up (J. Millar)**

The University has identified the potential problem of workers working in the Level 3 facility not being able to get priority treatment at the Emergency Room in the case of exposure. The matter was taken to the University Health and Safety Committee in November and J. Deakin sent a letter to the chief of emergency of LHSC in November to see if the problem could be resolved. There are no further updates at this time. The Committee may send a reminder letter to J. Deakin regarding this outstanding issue.

**4. New Business**

**4.1 Biosafety Committee Annual Report (J. Millar)**

The Biosafety Committee Annual Report was discussed. It will be submitted to the University Health and Safety Committee.

**4.2 Background Checks Update (M. Mics)**

Animal Care and Veterinary Services requires criminal background checks on potential new employees in order to be compliant with the University's Biosecurity Plan. Background checks are also required for Level 3 access. The checks were conducted through Campus Police in cooperation with London Police. From now, on the system will be more standardized across the province and the University's own background checks will no longer be accepted. Currently, Campus Police has an interim process in place.

Starting in April, the system will go online. A potential new employee/student will be provided with the website to fill the application form online and the website will require a credit card payment. It will be up to each department to decide if the individual is to be compensated for this expense or not. M. Mics will verify that the identity of the person is indeed the person named on the online form. The information will then be sourced out to a third party and the background check will be performed.

Campus Police still needs to clarify how the confirmation process will happen. When the procedure is completely finalized, M. Mics will notify the Committee members about the final product. In the future the University may need to expand the background check procedure to include incoming international students/employees as part of the application process.

#### **4.3 Animal Care Information Sheets**

**(I. Welch, J. Stanley)**

Occupational Health and Safety along with Animal Care and Veterinary Services, recognized the need to give safety information that is specific to the situations of the employees who are working with animals. Currently there are three information sheets have been drafted for Animal Care workers so that they have a better understanding on how to keep themselves safe. The documents were drafted by Animal Care and Veterinary Services and Occupational Health and Safety. They have been seen by the Biohazards Subcommittee and now the Biosafety Committee. More documents will be done in the future to address different situations. The goal is to standardize the process and ensure that the safety information is consistent.

#### **4.4 Potential Changes to Incineration Operations**

**(T. Hammoud)**

The current incinerator in the Dental Sciences Building is 15 years old and has been showing signs of deterioration. The University administration is considering whether or not they should purchase a new incinerator. The University has also considered other options such as hydroclaving. Hydroclaving, however, would not be able to do all of the University's waste. The University would like one company to do all of the animal and biomedical waste generated on campus.

To get a new incinerator, the Ministry of Environment (MOE) would require the University to get a new license. Facilities Management is working on this with the MOE. Facilities Management anticipates that the current incinerator will not last more than three years.

Should the MOE not approve Western's license application for a new incinerator, then the waste would have to be disposed of using various methods/companies.

As suggested by Dr. S. Siu, the University may look into a crematorium as a possible methodology. The Biosafety Committee is advised that changes may be coming to the University operations with regards to waste disposal.

#### **4.5 Biological Safety Cabinet Procedure**

**(VOTE)**

**(J. Stanley)**

The procedure was updated. The document now includes the requirement that after a filter has been changed in a biological safety cabinet, the filter must be decontaminated by HEPA filters prior to disposal. The Biosafety Officer must be changed to Biosafety Coordinator in Section 4 of the document.

There was a discussion around the term Biosafety Officer. The term Biosafety Officer is a role (not job title) designated by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

#### **4.5.1 Fumehoods at LHRI**

G. Ryder inquired about an issue involving fumehoods and ductwork maintenance at LHRI. T. Hammoud discussed the requirements, such as personal protective equipment, for performing ductwork maintenance at Western. G. Ryder was encouraged to discuss the issue with the LHRI engineers, since the LHRI ventilation systems may be different than those at Western.

**Motion:** Dr. T. Dzialoszynski

**Seconded:** C. Pape

**Approved:** Motion was approved unanimously.

#### **4.6 Biosafety Notification for H5N1 Viruses**

**(J. Millar)**

The H5N1 virus was aerosolized in a lab in the United States. There was some controversy surrounding how much of this information should be made public. In response to this event, PHAC sent out a notice. This notice emphasizes the role of the Biosafety Officer and the Biosafety Committee to do a local risk assessment on these types of experiments.

#### **4.7 Biosafety Review Update**

**(J. Millar)**

Researchers must have an approved and current Biological Agents Registry Form prior to the release of their research funds. Based on the regulations imposed on the University, if the Biological Agents Registry Form is not renewed by the expiry date, the research funds of the Researcher will need to be frozen. This was not in practice before, but in light of recent developments this will be the new procedure. The Biohazards Subcommittee has been discussing ways to make the review process more efficient to ensure that all forms that are up for renewal are approved before the expiry date. Some changes at the level of the Biohazards Subcommittee have already been done. Other proposed changes may be implemented in the future:

- The Biological Agents Registry form has been made more accessible and user-friendly.
- One of the Committee members who is an expert in the field of the research being reviewed will re-visit a form and approve it if all outstanding issues have been addressed. Thus not all forms will need to be seen again by the whole Subcommittee at the next meeting.
- Minor and/or typographical modifications to the forms will continue to be approved in-house post-Committee review.
- Advance notice will be given to PIs as a reminder to renew their forms.
- All forms must be submitted by the end of the month prior to the Subcommittee meeting the following month. This will ensure that the Subcommittee members will have sufficient time to review the forms.

The Researchers must take great care in completing their forms and should allow themselves enough time from the initial submission to have the form sent back to them and revisited if necessary. Researchers should also make sure that their forms are complete prior to submission, with no unanswered sections or omitted material. The Biohazards Subcommittee needs the cooperation of the PIs to make this process smoother and more efficient.

The proposal from the Biohazards Subcommittee will be presented to the Biosafety Committee once it has been finalized.

The process may be more electronic/web-based in the future, if resources such as time and money allow for it.

#### **4.8 Biosafety Program Update (Graph)**

**(J. Stanley)**

There was no substantial increase in the number of new permits from 2010 to 2011. The number of Level 2+ permits has been increasing. The number of Level 3 permits has remained stable.

### **5. Other Business**

**(J. Millar)**

#### **5.1 Posting of Biosafety Minutes**

Dr. Ferguson suggested that the minutes be posted the day after the meeting. J. Stanley mentioned that this was not possible given current resources. The minutes will be posted one month following the meeting.

#### **5.1 LHRI Safety Officer and Vacations**

G. Ryder mentioned that when she is on vacation, there is no one who can sign LHRI Biological Agents Registry Forms in her absence.

The University requires back-ups for processes considered critical to business continuity. At Western, the back-up can be a Safety Officer. It can also be a researcher. For example, Dr. Greg Dekaban is the back-up for Ron Noseworthy at Robarts. G. Ryder may be able to find an LHRI researcher to be a back-up at LHRI.

Regulatory authorities such as the Public Health Agency of Canada likely require a safety officer to be in place at all times. People working in laboratories need to have someone to consult when the biosafety officer is on vacation.

### **6. Next meeting: To be determined (June 2012)**

The next meeting will be held in June 2012.

### **7. Adjournment**

**Motioned:** Dr. I. Welch

**Seconded:** Dr. S. Damjanovski