

THE HUMAN PATHOGENS & TOXINS ACT

Human Resources
Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)



Information Bulletin

July 20, 2009

The Human Pathogens & Toxins Act is a new law passed June 23, 2009.

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) website, this law “contains prohibitions and requirements relating to a full range of laboratory activities. A new program and regulatory framework will be based on requirements of the Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines”. These guidelines have existed for years and can be found at the website: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ols-bsl/lbg-lbmb/index-eng.php>

According to PHAC, before this law, there was “no inventory of who has what pathogen and in what quantity, nor knowledge of how safely they are being handled”.

The Act will be implemented in three phases. The first phase has already begun. Phases II and III will likely take years – they will require extensive consultations with stakeholders and detailed regulations. For more information on the Act, please see: http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ols-bsl/pathogen/h-pat_toxin_bkg-eng.php

For Phase I:

- The University must register with PHAC our activities involving human pathogens or toxins by September 21, 2009.
- The University must inform PHAC immediately if we have any smallpox. It will need to be destroyed within 30 days.
- The University must take reasonable precautions to protect the health and safety of the public when dealing with human pathogens or toxins.

What does this mean to Researchers working on campus?

- Individual researchers working on campus do not need to register. As long as you have a valid biohazard approval number for your research and have submitted a Biohazardous Agents Registry Form within the last three years, the University has the information it needs to register on your behalf.
- If you do not have a current Biohazardous Agents Registry Form, please see the website: www.uwo.ca/humanresources/biosafety
- If you have questions, please contact the Western Biosafety Officer, Jennifer Stanley, at extension 81135.

What does this mean to Researchers working off campus?

- Individual researchers working off-campus should contact the Safety Officer for their institution to confirm their registration.