SAFETY FOCUS

INSTITUTIONAL BIOSAFETY COMMITTEE

An Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) is required at the University of Utah to review and approve research involving recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules, according to the NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules. In addition, work with other types of hazardous or potentially hazardous biological materials must be registered with, and approved by, the IBC.

WHAT: The IBC consists of a Chair, Vice Chair, Director (the University of Utah Biosafety Officer), Administrator (the University of Utah Assistant Biosafety Officer) and a minimum of 5 additional members. The committee must have expertise in the areas of research under review and must also include at least 2 community members (no affiliation to the University of Utah). Committee members serve at least one 3-year term and must have a personal commitment to laboratory safety in general and biosafety in particular.

The IBC works in conjunction with the University of Utah Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) to advise the Vice President for Research (VPR) on policies concerning the safe conduct of research involving hazardous or potentially hazardous biological materials. These include recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules, human materials, microbial pathogens, acute biological toxins, select agents that are listed as potential bioterrorism agents, and restricted microbial pathogens of domestic animals and plant crops. More information can be found on the IBC's webpage (https://ibc.utah.edu/).

WHY: The IBC has been charged by the VPR to ensure that investigators at the University of Utah are in compliance with current Federal, State and University regulations and to ensure that research with biological materials is conducted in the safest possible manner. Failure of Principal Investigators to follow Federal Regulations can result in loss of funding to the researcher and even the Institution. All non-exempt recombinant and synthetic nucleic acid molecule research at the University of Utah, regardless of funding source, must be conducted in accordance with the NIH Guidelines and must be registered with the IBC. Work that involves other hazardous or potentially hazardous biological materials must be registered to ensure compliance with other federal policies (for example, the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard) and meet the safety standards defined in the CDC's Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories publication and the University of Utah Biosafety Manual.

HOW: Investigators conducting laboratory-based work with biological materials must register their work with the IBC through BioRAFT, a web-based research management platform used by the University to support laboratory safety compliance. https://utah.bioraft.com/ . For laboratory-based research involving samples collected from human subjects, investigators can register their work with the IBC through BioRAFT or through ERICA, a web-based platform used by the University to ensure compliance with Human Subject Research Participant Protection regulations. Investigators are advised to contact the Biosafety office (Biosafety@ehs.utah.edu) to determine the best option for their registration.Investigators conducting research involving the introduction of recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules or biohazards into human subjects will need to register their work with the IBC through ERICA.

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