



THE UNIVERSITY  
of NORTH CAROLINA  
at CHAPEL HILL

Dear Colleagues,

You are receiving this email because you have a Laboratory Safety Plan designating your lab as working with biological hazards, recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules, or use of transgenic animals or plants.

As a result of recent lapses in biosafety practices at federal laboratories, the federal government has issued a “[Safety Stand-Down](#)”. This will provide federal facilities time to review safety protocols, and thereby assure the wellbeing of laboratory researchers and the American public. Institutions, such as the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, that receive U.S. government funding are encouraged to conduct similar reviews.

As part of this effort, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services has declared September as [National Biosafety Stewardship Month](#). The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has a robust research safety program in place and is committed to excellence in research. Excellence in research safety requires ongoing vigilance and we welcome this as an opportunity for us to evaluate and improve on our current efforts.

As part of National Biosafety Stewardship Month we are asking Principal Investigators who work with infectious agents, recombinant DNA, or [select agent toxins](#) to take the time to:

1. Inventory your agents and toxins and ensure any research involving those materials is reflected in your Laboratory Safety Plan. Notify the UNC-CH Biological Safety Group immediately if you identify any select agents or toxins that have not been previously registered.
2. We ask every laboratory to complete a freezer location inventory [form](#) within the next three weeks. This step will provide a record of all freezers on campus and what types of materials are being stored. This information will be uploaded and maintained in your Laboratory Safety Plan.
3. Reexamine your specific laboratory safety procedures to ensure biosafety practices are being followed and that clear roles and responsibilities for safety within your lab are established. We are asking you to create an environment in which people are comfortable and willing to ask questions or raise safety concerns if they arise.
4. Ensure your lab specific training is specific to the hazards and procedures in your group. EHS is requesting feedback on training recommendations.

The University has an integrated [workplace safety committee](#) structure ultimately reporting to the Chancellor. The importance of National Biosafety Stewardship Month is being shared with each committee and the IBC is taking an extensive review of the Biosafety programs to identify

opportunities for improving research safety and strengthen partnerships with the investigator community.

The Department of Environment, Health & Safety, Institutional Biosafety Committee, School of Medicine -Office of Research and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research are available to provide support to answer any questions. We encourage you to reach out to them for assistance and to consider them an extension of your research group.

Links for additional information:

Department of Environment, Health & Safety      <http://ehs.unc.edu/>

Institutional Biosafety Committee    <http://ehs.unc.edu/committees/ibc.shtml>

White House Biosafety memo:

<http://www.absa.org/pdf/140819WhitehouseMemoEnhancingBiosafetyandBiosecurity.pdf>

Notice of National Biosafety Stewardship Month:

<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-14-127.html>

HHS and USDA Select Agents and Toxins:

<http://www.selectagents.gov/Select%20Agents%20and%20Toxins%20List.html>

Sincerely,

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