

BIOSAFETY STEWARDSHIP

WHAT'S IN YOUR FREEZER?

If you haven't done a thorough cleaning of your lab freezers recently, there's a good chance it's crowded with duplicate samples, items left behind by previous personnel, and other forgotten materials. October is [Biosafety Stewardship Month](#) -- a great time to inventory your stored biological materials.

Dispose of items that are:

- unneeded or unwanted
- abandoned or orphaned
- unlabeled, unknown, or unidentifiable
- expired

Organize and inventory what's left:

- Clearly label items you want to keep.
- Keep an inventory, and update it on a regular schedule. A simple spreadsheet is great!
- Update your [Biological Use Authorization \(BUA\)](#) to include current biological materials.
- Create a routine for cleaning your freezers, refrigerators, and cryogenic storage.

If you need help with your biological inventory, aren't sure how to dispose of an item, or need to add or remove items on your BUA, contact EH&S at ehsbio@uw.edu or 206.221.7770.

RESEARCH APPROVAL

[Institutional Biosafety Committee \(IBC\)](#) approval of research increases safety and transparency. An effective and compliant IBC is also a requirement for NIH funding to the University.

The [Biological Use Authorization \(BUA\)](#) approval process can help you identify organisms or toxins that require enrollment in the Select Agent Program or require other registrations (e.g. NIH or APHIS). BUA approval also means you get to work with a biosafety

officer who can help you navigate the NIH Guidelines and other regulations to help ensure that your research receives funding.

- Apply for BUA if your research involves work with biohazards including recombinant or synthetic DNA/RNA.
- Submit a Change to BUA application for any new agents, procedures, or locations.
- Consult with an EH&S biosafety officer regarding lab practices and procedures.

TRAINING

EH&S provides online and classroom training courses at no charge to UW faculty, staff and students.

- Review the [EH&S safety training](#) schedule and training matrix.
- Access EH&S training records online at [My EH&S Training](#).
- [Biosafety training](#) is required every three years for PIs with research involving biohazards and all lab personnel with potential exposure to biohazards.
- [Bloodborne Pathogens \(BBP\) training](#) is required annually for staff with reasonably anticipated exposure to BBP including human source materials.

Lab-specific training increases safety awareness and helps ensure lab staff are knowledgeable about risks and safe work practices.

- Review agent-specific risks, work practices, and decontamination procedures.
- Demonstrate appropriate use of [personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#).
- Educate staff on proper [biohazardous waste](#) handling procedures.
- Provide training on how to work safely in a biosafety cabinet.

REVIEW PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

Now is a great time to review practices in your lab that impact safety. Administrative controls can greatly reduce exposure to hazards and increase the culture of safety in your lab.

- Implement standard operating procedures (SOPs) to ensure proper handling of infectious materials and toxins.
- Use the [PPE Assessment Guide](#) to determine PPE needs.
- Ensure staff wash their hands after removing gloves and before exiting the lab.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

Preventative and post-exposure medical management is an integral part of an effective biosafety program. See the [EH&S Research and Occupational Safety webpage](#) for more information.

- Review medical management procedures for vaccine offerings and other considerations.
- Post the [Exposure Response Poster](#) in all lab areas.
- Remind staff to report all accidents and injuries in the [UW OARS](#) system to help prevent future accidents.
- Contact the [UW Employee Health Center](#) at 206.685.1026 for personal medical questions related to work in the laboratory environment.

SUGGESTIONS?

If you have ideas or suggestions for how EH&S and the IBC can enhance biosafety at UW and influence a positive safety culture, contact us at ehsbio@uw.edu or 206.221.7770.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories \(BMBL\)](#)
- [Prudent Practices in the Laboratory](#)
- [NIH Guidelines](#)
- [American Biological Safety Association \(ABSA\)](#)
- [UW Biosafety Manual](#)