

## **USC Protocol for Post-Exposure Evaluation and Follow-Up**

### **Procedures for an Exposure Incident Involving a Potentially Infectious Material**

This protocol applies to all University faculty, staff, student employees, and other students that have a laboratory exposure incident involving a potentially infectious biological material. An *exposure incident* means a specific eye, mouth, other mucous membrane, non-intact skin, parenteral contact (e.g. needle stick) or inhalation of aerosols involving a potentially infectious material that results from the performance of an employee's duties. A *potentially infectious material* or biological hazard may include an incident involving a microorganism (e.g. bacterial agent, viral agent, fungal agent), human-derived material, biological toxin, or an incident involving recombinant DNA research.

**USC & SOM student questions: Contact Student Health Services patient care nurse at 777-3658.**  
**School of Medicine faculty and staff questions: Contact HealthWorks at 803-296-3500.**

#### **Procedures for needle sticks or other exposures to a potentially infectious material:**

- \* Report the lab incident immediately to your supervisor to authorize medical evaluation. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring staff are offered immediate medical care, appropriate diagnostics and treatment.
  - Percutaneous Exposure (e.g. needle stick, cut, animal bite) – Immediately wash or flush the exposed area with soap and water for 10 minutes.
  - Mucous Membrane Exposure (i.e. eyes, nose or mouth) – Flush the exposed area with water. If exposure is to the eyes, flush eyes (holding open) using the eyewash station for 10 minutes.
- \* Seek medical treatment as soon as possible after the incident (see below for specific instructions)
- \* Complete a [USC Laboratory Incident Report Form](#) after post-exposure evaluation has been initiated. Then email the completed form to the Biosafety Officer at [mrobbins@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:mrobbins@mailbox.sc.edu) and [ibc@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:ibc@mailbox.sc.edu).

#### **During normal working hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm (excluding holidays):**

School of Medicine faculty, staff and students:

Faculty and staff should contact HealthWorks (Palmetto Health's Employee Health Department) at 803-296-3500. You may be required to report to the HealthWorks Office for further evaluation. HealthWorks is located at 1333 Taylor Street, Suite 3-H, Columbia, SC 29201. The HealthWorks team will determine the appropriate clinical protocols to follow based on the circumstances of the reported incident. The exposed employee and/or their supervisor should provide the HealthWorks professional evaluating the exposure incident with a description of the job duties relevant to the exposure incident, route(s) of exposure, circumstances of exposure, agent or hazard involved in the incident (e.g. HIV+ blood, *Vibrio*, lentiviral vector), and relevant medical records.

Students should report to Student Health Services at 1409 Devine Street on the USC Columbia campus.

USC Columbia faculty, staff and students:

The exposed individual should immediately report to USC's Student Health Services for a confidential post-exposure evaluation and for assistance with any necessary referrals and appropriate follow-up care. Student Health Services is only equipped to provide medical evaluations for low risk and minor exposure incidents. Higher risk and more significant exposure incidents will be referred to the Palmetto Health ER. (Note: HealthWorks only provides services to USC faculty and staff employed by the USC School of Medicine.) The Student Health Services clinical staff and the exposed individual will ensure the health care professional evaluating the exposure incident receives a description of the job duties relevant to the exposure incident, route(s) of exposure, circumstances of exposure, agent or hazard involved in the incident (e.g. HIV+ blood, *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, lentiviral vector), and relevant medical records.

### **Lab exposures occurring outside normal working hours and on weekends or holidays:**

Report to the Emergency Department at Palmetto Health Richland Hospital.

- USC main campus faculty/staff/students and USC School of Medicine students should then verify that USC's Student Health Services is provided an incident report and any medical evaluation records.
- School of Medicine faculty and staff and should then verify that HealthWorks (Palmetto Health's Employee Health Department) is provided an incident report and any medical evaluation records.

This report must include the date of the incident, person involved and their supervisor, nature and consequences of the incident, root cause, and a description of the material/hazard involved.

### **Procedures for employee/student exposures occurring in facilities outside Columbia, SC:**

(Note: This guidance applies to personnel participating in academic training at an area hospital or facility)

Students with a potential exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials as a result of participating in activities required for their academic studies may be covered under the USC worker's compensation policy. All programs or courses with students that have an exposure risk should be documented as being covered under the policy. The USC Office of Risk Management should have a record of the program/course name, main contact, estimated number of students, and weeks per semester these students perform activities that may result in an exposure incident. The [USC Risk Management website](#) includes contact information if you have questions regarding coverage of students under the University's worker's compensation policy.

Worker's Compensation has identified medical facilities for each USC regional campus that can be used for medical evaluation following an exposure incident. Please see the [Designated Medical Facilities website](#) for a listing of authorized medical facilities.

### **Procedures for workers compensation when a work-related accident or injury occurs:**

- **Step 1:** Go to a designated medical facility in your area and complete an Employee Injury Report.
- **Step 2:** Notify your supervisor & contact USC's Workers Compensation Coordinator at 803-777-6650.
- **Step 3:** The Benefits Office must report this injury to the S.C. Workers' Compensation Commission within 10 days.

Additional Information, including the Injury Report, is available on the [Workers Compensation website](#).

### **Providing exposed individual with evaluating healthcare professional's written opinion:**

The University must obtain and provide an exposed employee a copy of the evaluating healthcare professional's written opinion within 15 days of completion of the evaluation. The written opinion for post-exposure evaluation must include information that the employee has been informed of the results of the evaluation and told about any medical conditions resulting from exposure that may require further evaluation and treatment. All other findings or diagnoses must be kept confidential and not included in the written report. Post-exposure counseling should also be given to employees following an exposure incident. Counseling concerning infection status, including results and interpretation of all tests, will assist the employee in understanding the potential risk of infection and in making decisions regarding the protection of personal contacts. Counseling based on the USPHS recommendations must also be provided for HBV and HCV and other bloodborne pathogens, as appropriate. The institution or medical practice that provides medical services is responsible for providing the employee with a copy of the evaluating health care professional's written opinion after completion of the evaluation.

**Special requirements for reporting incidents related to research subject to the *NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules to the NIH OBA:***

The NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules (NIH Guidelines) states that "...any significant problems, violations of the NIH Guidelines, or any significant research-related accidents and illnesses" must be reported to NIH OBA within 30 days. Certain types of accidents must be reported on a more expedited basis. Spills or accidents in BL2 laboratories resulting in an overt exposure must be immediately reported to NIH OBA.

Any spill or accident involving recombinant DNA research of the nature described above or that otherwise leads to personal injury or illness or to a breach of containment must be reported to OBA. These kinds of events might include skin punctures with needles containing recombinant DNA, the escape or improper disposition of a transgenic animal, or spills of high-risk recombinant materials occurring outside of a biosafety cabinet. Failure to adhere to the containment and biosafety practices articulated in the NIH Guidelines must also be reported to OBA. Minor spills of low-risk agents not involving a breach of containment that were properly cleaned and decontaminated generally do not need to be reported.

All incidents related to research subject to the *NIH Guidelines* must be reported by emailing a completed copy of the [USC Laboratory Incident Report Form](#) to USC's Institutional Biosafety Officer (BSO) at [mrobbins@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:mrobbins@mailbox.sc.edu), and the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) at [ibc@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:ibc@mailbox.sc.edu). For incidents in BL2 labs resulting in an overt exposure that must be immediately reported to NIH OBA, the Principal Investigator must submit the Incident Report Form as soon as possible to the BSO and IBC with sufficient information to understand the nature and consequences of the incident, as well as its cause. Following the initial reporting, a more detailed report can be provided to the NIH OBA at a later date that includes the measures taken in response to mitigate the problem and to preclude its reoccurrence.