Due to a prolonged illness, Dr Sylvia Lachberg the Biosafety Manager, has been absent from the Biosafety Office since 2012. Dr. Bernadette Bradley has recently moved onto Curtin University as their Biosafety Officer. We wish her all the best.

Dr. Carina Marshall is acting in the role of Biosafety Officer. Carina has a background in several varieties of genetics and lab work, and is enjoying taking a break from research to see how the admin side of research works.

In her spare time, Carina likes to assist in school science classes by showing students how to dissect a sheep’s brain.

Alison Panther has joined the Biosafety Office as Admin Officer; she is helping with inspections and the ever increasing mounds of legislative paperwork.

The scientist is not a person who gives the right answers; he's one who asks the right questions. ~Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Le Cru et le cuit*, 1964
As of 2013, Annual Reports for all dealings have been legislated as mandatory.

Failing to provide an annual report will carry fines for UWA and may result in a shutdown of research for the lab. This office will send out an email reminder in August, please pay attention and get them to us on time.

Lab inspections are ongoing throughout the year. You will be contacted by the Biosafety Office when your lab is due for an inspection.

Random inspections may also be carried out at any time. Please be sure that your records of training and GM storage are up to date, your benches and areas are accessible for deconmination, and your safety gear is stored properly and is accessible.
NEW OGTR REGULATIONS

The Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (OGTR) has introduced new regulations and guidelines for working with Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs).

There are significant changes in the regulations. The major change being:

“All applications now carry a time limit of five (5) years, after which the researcher must submit a new application for the work. This time limit will also be applied retrospectively to all dealings processed prior to September 2011. There is also the introduction of the new PC3-NLRD category for work with Risk Group 3 organisms.”

Changes to the classification of viral vectors were also made, and can be found here: http://www.ogtr.gov.au/internet/ogtr/publishing.nsf/content/viralvec-classchanges2011-htm

Please ensure that all researchers (license holders, persons covered by the license, visiting researchers, and students) are aware of the license conditions surrounding their research.

LABORATORY SAFETY TRAINING

In April of this year, Carina presented on Laboratory Safety Training so if you think you or your staff might need a refresher in the next session, follow this link:


BIOHAZARD APPROVAL

Any work involving Risk Group 2 or 3 organisms must have a risk assessment lodged with the Biosafety Office. Risk Group 3 organisms require approval from the Institutional Biosafety Committee.

You can find the form on the Biosafety Website. Protect yourself and your research!
ANSWERS TO YOUR FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS...

Q. Our research involves use of Exempt GMOs, do we need approval from the IBC?

A. Yes.

All research involving recombinant organisms must have the written approval of the IBC. Work with routine cloning and transformation protocols should fall into the Exempt category, but the IBC must make this determination for your specific dealing. To apply for an Exempt Dealing, please use the form on the Biosafety Website: www.research.uwa.edu.au/staff/biological/gmo/ED, and email it to the Biosafety office. The Institutional Biosafety Committee will consider your request and advise of the result in writing. Approval for an exempt dealing usually will consider your request and advise of the result in writing. Approval for an exempt dealing usually takes less than one week. If your work changes, e.g. changes to a different expression system, you will need to apply for an exempt dealing for this system.

Q. I am applying for a Notifiable Low Risk Dealing (NLRD), how do I include my exempt work?

A. A description of exempt work should be included in your NLRD application rather than submitted separately for approval. It is not necessary to provide extensive information for exempt work.

Q. Our research involves transforming animal or plant cell lines, is this considered GMO work?

A. Yes.

Transformation of tissue cultures (plant or animal) is covered by the Gene Technology Regulations. Approval of the IBC will be required. Routine work should fall into the Exempt category.

Q. Are Tissue Samples from GM Mice GMOs?

A. Tissue samples from transgenic mice are not considered GMOs unless the transgenes are able to give rise to an infectious agent or code for a toxin. Tissue samples from knockout mice are not considered GMOs. Tissue samples from mice infected with a GM virus or other GM micro-organism must be treated as GMOs.

Q. Can we use Ethanol to clean up a spill?

A. No.

Ethanol should not be used to decontaminate a spill. 80% v/v ethanol can be used as a final wipe for a surface free of spill. Ethanol is not recommended for spill clean-up for a number of reasons including:

- Rapid evaporation of ethanol makes it difficult to maintain proper contact time.
- Ethanol can precipitate surface proteins which may result in an inability to penetrate the spill and kill the microorganisms present.
- It is not possible to determine the correct volume of ethanol to use in a spill as ethanol works at quite a specific concentration range.