



Welcome to Week 3 of National Biosafety Month! This week's focus is on Laboratory Incident Response and Reporting.

As we kick off Week 3 of National Biosafety Month 2018, we would like to open with a quote from [Guidance for Enhancing Personnel Reliability and Strengthening the Culture of Responsibility](#) (National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity, 2011):

*“. . .in cultivating and sustaining a culture of responsibility, scientists who conduct research must recognize that they engage in a continuous, reciprocal process of promoting and bearing **mutual responsibility** for their work: They must hold themselves and their peers accountable collegially and with a **shared commitment to advancing science and maintaining public trust.**”*

Laboratory accidents and incidents have significant impact on institutions with lost workdays, damaged credibility, reduced research funding, damage to property, and the potential for injury or death of a student or employee. Reports of unsafe conditions, near misses, and other types of incidents assist the Office of Research Safety (ORS) in identifying areas with a high risk of injury. This allows ORS staff to work with lab and building staff to prevent future accidents. Accidents and near misses can also serve as **teachable moments or training opportunities** to prevent such events happening again. You have an important role to ensure a culture of safety here at UMD by reporting unsafe conditions or accidents.

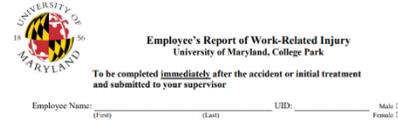
Unfortunately, a major reason for not reporting an accident/illness/injury is the fear of negative consequences. We at ESSR/ORS place your health and safety as our top priority, and believe that no one should be penalized for reporting accidents or illnesses in the workplace. Our primary goals for investigating accidents or injuries are to gather the facts, establish a root cause, and work with you to develop resolutions; we will not assign blame or punitive action for coming forward. Your lab's experience may help us generate training or adopt new practices to prevent accidents in other labs.

When and how should I report a medical emergency?

- **If the incident is a life-threatening emergency requiring immediate action, please dial 911 or the University Police Emergency line at 301-405-3333.** ESSR will follow up once appropriate treatment has been administered.
- **Notify your supervisor** (or a lab manager) of what has happened, and then contact the University Health Center. For full availability of all hours and services, [please visit the University Health Center page.](#)

- Individuals experiencing a **non-life threatening issue** should visit the UHC during operating hours, or consult the after-hours nurse line.
- If you are a **witness to an incident or accident**, contact biosafety@umd.edu so that you can help us understand the situation more fully.

When and how should I report an injury?



- Please visit the [ESSR Incident Reporting & Investigation](#) page. Here, you can:
 - **Report a potentially hazardous condition or “near miss”** that does not involve an injury using the [Incident Report form](#).
 - If you are **an employee who has suffered an injury**, go directly to the [Employee's First Report of injury form](#). This form will initiate a Worker's Compensation claim; additional forms at this link are required from your supervisor and any witnesses to the injury.
 - Utilize the [Incident Investigation Instructions](#) and [Incident Investigation Form](#) to help determine cause(s) of the incident and how to prevent future occurrences.

What if I am unsure if a research procedure or piece of equipment is safe?

Contact us! Email biosafety@umd.edu for biological research-specific questions, or researchsafety@umd.edu for more general questions!

What actions can I take now?

1. Check out [ABSA International's Laboratory-Acquired Infection \(LAI\) Database](#) and review the different accidents and incidents that have occurred in laboratories throughout the years. This tool can raise awareness and help staff recognize lapses in safety practices. **Do you work with an agent represented in the database?**
2. Do you have the latest [Emergency Response Guide](#) posted in your lab? For a physical copy, contact [ESSR](#)! Do you have numbers for your classmates, researchers, staff, managers, or supervisors? **Post a list of numbers** that laboratory staff and students can use case of a non-life threatening incident.
3. Do you know about the [UMD Guardian](#) app? This can be used as a “buddy system” when working alone in the lab!
4. **For PI's** – discuss the importance of reporting incidents and near-misses at your next lab meeting. Share a story of one of your near-misses or incidents to show you understand!
5. **For PI's** – do you have a policy on staff working alone in a lab? Are there times it is not permissible? Ensure any such policies are clearly communicated to your staff.

Did you miss a [previous week's email](#)? Don't forget to send a picture or an email of your actions for Biosafety Month for a chance to **win a prize**! Email us at biosafety@umd.edu.