

SERCEB Biohazard Incident Reporting Policy

Research in emerging infections and biodefense is under significant public scrutiny. Significant events related to SERCEB-funded research must be reported promptly to the SERCEB director and to the member of the SERCEB steering committee at the institution where the event occurred. Significant events include any human exposure to an infectious agent, any event that is likely to generate media coverage, and any event that requires reporting to any governmental or institutional entity, including but not limited to CDC (Select Agents, other release), NIH Office of Biotechnology Affairs (recombinant DNA), USDA (Select Agents, animal welfare), and law enforcement (security events). Some examples of a reportable event include breakage of a container holding priority pathogens under study where the pathogen may contaminate surfaces or become aerosolized; the compromising, such as by a tear or a needle stick, of personal protective equipment (PPE) during handling of a priority pathogen under study; or violation of an institution's SOP in the handling of a priority pathogen that could put humans at risk of exposure. If in doubt, report the incident to the SERCEB director who will determine whether it should be reported elsewhere.

The responsibility for reporting rests with the SERCEB project PI on whose project the event occurred. He or she should immediately contact the SERCEB director as well as the SERCEB Steering Committee representative at the institution where the event occurred. [If the event has caused an emergency that puts human life at risk, the investigator should first follow the emergency response procedures of their institution.] The SERCEB director will notify the NIH Program Officer, if deemed necessary.

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