Incident Reporting

A key component of an effective incident prevention program is prompt, reliable reporting. Reporting hazards, near misses and injuries provides an opportunity to intervene at the earliest opportunity, to either prevent an incident from occurring or minimise the severity of injury.

Reportable incidents include:

- the escape or unintentional release of a GMO outside of an OGTR certified facility,
- inadvertent dealing,
- unintended gain of function of a GMO,
- misconduct involving a GMO,
- development of a 'dual use' GMO without a permit,
- dealing without a licence,
- non-compliance with OGTR or IBC Approval conditions,
- conduct which poses a significant risk to the health and safety of people and/or the environment,
- exposure of personnel to a potentially harmful GMO and/or development of illness,
- near misses

Small spills outside a Biosafety Cabinet which do not contain potentially respiratory infectious material nor meet the above criteria, do not need to be reported.

Immediate and Serious Danger from Pathogens or Escape of Genetically Modified Organism.

If there is an immediate and serious danger of infection, serious harm or escape of a GMO then staff and students in the facility should:

- If infectious aerosols (potential or actual) have been generated, turn off any equipment which may be generating aerosols and allow 30 minutes for settling of aerosols before decontamination.
- Ensure doors to the facility are closed and establish an exclusion zone, until the immediate danger is contained.
- Seek medical assistance if required.
- Notify people in the immediate area of the incident, to both warn them of potential danger and ask for their assistance.
- Notify the Laboratory Coordinator.
- If a GMO has escaped the facility, make attempts to recapture, annihilate or inactivate the GMO.
- Utilise the spills kit in accordance with Standard Operating Procedure provided in the spills kit.
- Dispose of waste in accordance with AS/NZS 2243.3 and OGTR Guidelines.

Reporting

The following people should be notified*:*

- Project Leader or Line Manager (if not conflicted)
- Laboratory Manager/Coordinator
- Operations Manager
- University Biosafety Officer and Executive Officer of the IBC
- Office of the Gene Technology Regulator (for GMOs)
- Department of Defence (for biological weapons or other Dual Use incidents)
- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (for breaches in biosecurity)
- Facilities Management Unit (if involving building, engineering or services)
- University online Work Health and Safety
- Head of Academic Unit/Institute/Centre
- Employees of other institutions, will also need to report the incident to their employer. (Such as staff and HDR students of SA Pathology.)

Incident reporting is often triaged by Laboratory Managers/Coordinators.

However, primarily the line manager is responsible for ensuring that the IBC is notified.

Reporting to the IBC can be done by emailing the details to biosafety@unisa.edu.au.

The people listed above, will be notified automatically through the submission of two reports:

1) The UniSA online incident reporting form
2) An email notification to biosafety@unisa.edu.au

If personnel involved in the incident are employees of other institutions, such as SA Pathology, then those institutions also need to be notified.

UniSA Online Incident Reporting Form

Project Leaders and Laboratory Coordinators take the primary responsible for reporting hazardous incidents to the Occupational Health and Safety Unit (People, Talent and Culture). Students are not able to lodge an incident report online. It is preferable that reports to UniSA People, Talent and Culture be submitted within 48 hours of the incident.

The University's online reporting system, Hazard/Incident Reporting and Investigation System, is used to report hazards and incidents, record investigation findings and corrective action to prevent a recurrence.

Access is available through the Staff Portal, logging into 'myUniSA' using your username and password and clicking on the 'Report a Hazard or Incident' link.

For further information: https://i.unisa.edu.au/staff/ptc/safety-and-wellbeing/hazard-reporting

Reportable Spill Incident

Small spills contained within a Biosafety Cabinet Level II do not need to be reported to either the UniSA online incident reporting system or UniSA Biosafety Officer.

Genetically Modified Organisms

Escape or unintentional release of a GMO needs to be reported to both the IBC and the Office of Gene Technology Regulator. Reporting to the IBC or the OGTR, is coordinated through the University Biosafety Officer and IBC Executive Officer biosafety@unisa.edu.au.

What Happens Next?

All information concerning alleged non-compliant conduct provided to the IBC and the OGTR will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Depending on the situation, the IBC Chair, University Biosafety Officer and representatives of People, Talent and Culture may:

- Attend the scene.
- Interview relevant personnel about all aspects of the incident.
- Identifying any potential breaches of Regulations or Conditions of Approval.
- If needed, seek expert advice, or ensure that counselling is arranged (under the Employee Assistance Program) for persons affected by the incident.
- Unless the incident is embargoed, the IBC Executive Officer will report the incident at the next IBC meeting for IBC consideration.
- Prepare a report as appropriate, for the Safety and Wellbeing Team, OGTR, Deputy Vice Chancellor: Research Enterprise (who may notify the Vice Chancellor), Pro Vice Chancellor and Head of Academic Unit/Institute/Centre.