Institutional Biosafety Committee Charge

The University of Southern California Institutional Biosafety Committee is mandated under the NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules (NIH Guidelines). Section IV-B-2 of the NIH Guidelines states the following:

Section IV-B-2. Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC). The institution shall establish an Institutional Biosafety Committee whose responsibilities need not be restricted to recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecule research.

The USC IBC is responsible for creating and enforcing USC policies, practices, and guidelines related to the use of potentially hazardous biological agents such as infectious agents, human and non-human primate materials (including established cell lines), toxins of biological origin, regulated carcinogens, chemotherapy drugs, chemicals used in biomedical research, select agents, recombinant and/or synthetic nucleic acid molecules, and studies involving human gene transfer or the use of biohazardous materials. The USC IBC is responsible for ensuring that research conducted using these agents does not endanger the researcher, laboratory workers, human research subjects, the public, or the environment.

The Institutional Biosafety Committee responsibilities include:

- Formulating and implementing policies related to the safe use of biological materials and some chemicals commonly used in biomedical research;
- Reviewing research protocols involving biological and chemical hazards used in biomedical research;
- Approving or disapproving such projects based on their potential hazard and proposed containment procedures;
- Establishing, approving and monitoring proper laboratory conditions and procedures required for such projects;
- Reviewing the qualifications and training of investigators and laboratory personnel engaged in such research to ensure appropriate laboratory safety techniques are used;
- Ensuring adoption of proper disposal and decontamination procedures;
- Adopting emergency plans that cover accidental spills and personnel contamination resulting from research; and
- Ensuring the investigation and reporting of any significant problems with or violations of the NIH and/or CDC Guidelines, as specified in the NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules and in the CDC/NIH “Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories” guidelines, respectively.

The Committee follows the NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules on the use of recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules and human gene transfer, and the CDC/NIH "Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories" guidelines, in addition to implementing more restrictive guidelines, as needed.

The Institutional Biosafety Committee meets at least once per month. Fifty-one percent of the voting membership and suitable expertise to adequately review the protocols is necessary to establish a quorum for conducting business and the IBC Co-chair makes this decision.

Committee members are selected from a pool of faculty with expertise in the properties and safe use of the materials used. The pool of faculty selected to serve on the Committee shall meet the requirements specified in the NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules. Members must attend three-fourths of the meetings or they may be removed from the Committee the following year.

The Institutional Biosafety Committee shall consist of at least 12 voting members appointed by the President or his designee. Membership includes, at minimum:

- Six faculty members who are either physicians and/or scientists and are particularly knowledgeable in biomedical research;
- A Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from Animal Resources;
- A member representing the Laboratory Technical Staff;
- Two outside community members;
- The Institutional Biosafety Officer; and
Ex officio members:

- Associate Senior Vice President for Administrative Operations
- Executive Director of the Office of Environmental Health and Safety
- Deputy Director of Environmental Health and Safety

Ad hoc and alternate committee members will be used for various situations as they arise.

The members shall serve for a term of one year, which may be renewed. The Chair or Co-Chairs shall be designated by the President or his designee, and shall be selected from among the faculty representatives on the Committee.

The Committee reports administratively to the President through the Senior Vice President for Administration, and works closely with the Vice President for Research, whose office provides the staff support for the Committee.