

Memo

To Safety Co-ordinators (for onward transmission to school safety advisors)

From Dr Melanie Taylor, University Safety Advisor

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Distribution Dr S A Robson, Dr S Thompson

Reference Circular 14/2005

Containment Level 3 laboratories

The University currently has no operational containment level 3 laboratories, although a number of facilities do exist or are in the process of being constructed. Unfortunately, Health & Safety Services staff have encountered a number of significant failings in the way in which facilities are being designed, built, commissioned, prepared for use and tested.

Your attention is drawn to what Cat 3 laboratories are used for. By definition, the biological hazards used in them can cause severe human disease and may spread to the community, although (usually) there is effective prophylaxis or treatment.

It is therefore essential that everyone involved in cat 3 facilities is aware of the importance of drawing up and adhering to safe operating procedures for all aspects of work. This includes not only the risk assessments and protocols for all the projects / laboratory work (including waste disposal), but also a comprehensive management plan for the facility itself. Please find attached an illustrative manual for managing a small suite of cat 3 laboratories, which hopefully will demonstrate the level of detail and thought that needs to go into a project of this nature.

I would like to acknowledge with thanks the assistance of Colin Gleeson, Paterson Institute, who prepared the original version of the manual for a real facility, and has given consent for this anonymised version to be circulated to the University.

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