

The role of Biological Safety Officers

Employers are required to appoint one or more 'competent persons' to assist them in undertaking the measures required to comply with the relevant statutory duties. A BSO must have sufficient training, experience or knowledge and other qualities to enable them properly to assist in undertaking the measures required to meet all of the relevant statutory provisions. In addition, the BSO must be allocated sufficient time and resources to do the job.

The expectations of the role: -

- To advise on the containment and training aspects of the work
- To advise on risk assessment and co-ordinate the notification procedures
- To ensure that local rules for the safety of personnel are drawn up and followed.
- To ensure appropriate training of personnel has been carried out.
- To ensure accidents/incidents spillages etc. in the laboratory (or other containment facility) are appropriately investigated and followed up.
- To advise on the safe storage, transport and disposal of genetically modified organisms/ harmful or potentially harmful material and ensuring that the records kept are current and accurate.
- To ensure that laboratories are appropriately disinfected at the end of a project or before the entry of maintenance personnel. Appropriate disinfection could range from swabbing down work surfaces to complete fumigation and will be dependent on the risk assessment.
- To participate in locally organised inspections.
- To advise on appropriate methods for testing for the presence of viable process organisms outside the primary containment, if deemed necessary.
- To ensure that control measures and equipment are tested and maintained at appropriate intervals.
- To liaise with the University's LGMSC on behalf of the Department on risk assessment and classification as necessary.
- To ensure all appropriate statutory notifications are made to HSE.
- To inform employers of any changes to the relevant regulations.
- To advise on the physical security of the laboratory.
- To liaise with National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NACTSO) where appropriate.

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