

LABORATORY BIOSAFETY MANUAL
FOURTH EDITION
AND
ASSOCIATED MONOGRAPHS

RISK ASSESSMENT



World Health
Organization

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Glossary of terms

Acceptable risk: The risk that is considered acceptable and allows work to proceed bearing in mind the expected benefit of the planned activities.

Accident: An inadvertent occurrence that results in actual harm such as infection, illness, injury in humans or contamination of the environment.

Aerosol: Liquid or solid particles suspended in air and of a size that may allow inhalation into the lower respiratory tract (usually less than 10 micrometres in diameter).

Aerosol/airborne transmission: The spread of infection caused by the inhalation of aerosols.

Biological agent: A microorganism, virus, biological toxin, particle or otherwise infectious material, either naturally occurring or genetically modified, which may have the potential to cause infection, allergy, toxicity or otherwise create a hazard to humans, animals, or plants.

Biological safety cabinet (BSC): An enclosed, ventilated working space designed to provide protection to the operator, the laboratory environment and/or the work materials for activities where there is an aerosol hazard. Containment is achieved by segregation of the work from the main area of the laboratory and/or through the use of controlled, directional airflow mechanisms. Exhaust air is passed through a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter before recirculating into the laboratory or into the building's heating, ventilation and air conditioning system. There are different classes (I, II and III) of BSCs that provide different levels of containment.

Biosafety: Containment principles, technologies and practices that are implemented to prevent unintentional exposure to biological agents or their inadvertent release.

Biosafety officer: An individual designated to oversee facility or organizational

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