



Fact sheet B2

October 2018

Tasks, authority levels and responsibilities for lab and project leaders (PI) in the University of Zurich's academic departments

1. Training lab and project leaders in biological, chemical and radiological safety: situation and duties of the academic departments

1.1. Departmental safety officers are responsible for informing and instructing the PI about the biological, chemical and radiological safety tasks that the PI has to perform. This applies to departments that handle microorganisms, chemical substances and radio isotopes. The safety officer must inform the PI about the legal provisions and their responsibilities with regard to working with these agents, including proper handling and disposal of active and/or poisonous substances. The PI's duties and authority levels are based on the standard profile and are adapted to the specific needs of their lab if necessary.

During normal operations, the PI is responsible for adhering to all biological, chemical and radiological safety and security measures within their facilities. Departmental safety officers (BSO, CSO and RSO) are available to help draft and establish all necessary safety measures. During normal operations, the departmental safety officers are authorized to give instructions to the PI and can order, review and implement any measures that are in the interests of employee safety or environmental protection. In the event of an incident, the PI is subordinate to the internal and external incident response services (Safety, Security and Environment office, fire department, police, emergency services).

1.2. Prerequisites, requirements and further training

The PI has been made aware of the relevant laws and guidelines and understands the basic concepts of biological, chemical and radiological safety at the university. They are familiar with the methods, organisms and agents used in their group and are aware of the different projects carried out within their group.

In case any questions arise about the safe handling of biological, chemical or radiological agents, the first person to contact would be the relevant safety officer in the department. When it comes to incidents and incident prevention, safety officers work together with the Safety, Security and Environment office, which coordinates these matters throughout the university.



1.3. Authority levels

The PI implements directives and resolutions that have been approved by department heads and safety officers in coordination with the Safety, Security and Environment office.

In the event of an incident, the PI has the authority to issue orders to the staff in their working group, on behalf of department heads and safety officers, until the arrival of incident response services.

Once the safety officers arrive on the scene, they will assume the authority for working together directly with incident response services.

The heads of the involved incident services are responsible for informing the media.

2. Tasks to be carried out by the PI

2.1. Normal operations

The following applies during normal operations:

- The PI makes their staff aware of the operational biological, chemical and radiological safety concept and ensures that the legal requirements and university guidelines are implemented and adhered to.
- They also ensure, together with the relevant safety officers for their department, that activities subject to notification are reported according to the guidelines and that no work that has not been approved is carried out. They keep a list of current projects and activities within their own working group.
- The group keeps the applicable templates, fact sheets, etc. from the Safety, Security and Environment department in mind when carrying out their work.

The PI ensures that staff is familiar with the principles of microbiological practice and safety regulations and that these are adhered to. They inform employees about changes to legal regulations and how the Safety, Security and Environment office mandates their implementation at the university.

- Possible microbiological, chemical and radiological safety hazards are communicated to staff and all necessary safety measures are taken and implemented in order to prevent accidents with these agents.
- Microbiological, chemical and radioactive waste is correctly disposed of, and the university guidelines are followed when transporting or sending biological and other hazardous materials. Departmental safety officers are available to advise on the correct implementation of these measures.
- Employees are adequately trained and instructed when it comes to special needs or requirements; they are provided with and use the necessary protective equipment when performing hazardous tasks in the aforementioned areas.



- All security related devices are maintained in top condition and are used in a way that minimizes contamination of workers and the environment.
- Organizing access regulations, which stipulate that only people with authorization are granted access to level 2 areas. (Additional rules are to be followed for level 3 areas.)
- Correct room designation procedures are followed (access rights, biohazard symbols for level 2 areas etc.) for work involving microbiological material.¹
- Lab specific protocols (SOPs) are in place that regulate the handling of special lab-specific hazardous agents.
- Employees receive any special inoculations required in advance of planned activities so that they are protected from unnecessary risk.
- Women of childbearing age are informed about university guidelines for maternal protection.
- The PIs work together with departmental security officers to prepare emergency measures and make sure these are in place in case of an incident.

¹ The operational safety concept should describe these points in more detail.