



## Environmental Health and Safety

80 Fort Brown ♦ Brownsville, Texas 78520 ♦ Phone: (956) 882-5930 ♦ Fax: (956) 882-5932  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT BROWNSVILLE AND TEXAS SOUTHMOST COLLEGE

# BIOLOGICAL EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

## Initial Actions

Determine what type of biological spill has occurred and what the degree of emergency is. In all cases, immediately call the Biological Safety Officer at 882-5731, [Environmental Health and Safety](#) at 882-5930, or [Campus Police](#) at 882-2222. Provide your name, location (room and building), phone number you are using, and a description of the nature of the emergency.

## Planning for Spills

The consequences of any spill of biological material can be minimized by performing all work on plastic-backed absorbent liner to absorb spills. A simple spill kit should be readily available and should include the following items: For spills of non-flammable chemicals, lab assistants and instructors should:

- Chlorine bleach or some other concentrated disinfectant.
- Package or roll of paper towels.
- Autoclavable bag.
- Latex or nitrile gloves.
- Forceps for picking up broken glass.

## Spills Inside a Biological Safety Cabinet

- LEAVE THE CABINET TURNED ON.
- Put on gloves and a lab coat.
- Spray or wipe cabinet walls, work surfaces, and equipment with disinfectant equivalent to a 1:10 bleach solution. If necessary, flood the work surface as well as drain pans and catch basins below the work surface with disinfectant.
- Wait at least 20 minutes.
- Soak up disinfectant and spill with paper towels. Drain catch basin into a container. Lift front exhaust grill and tray and wipe all surfaces. Ensure that no paper towels or solid debris are blown into the area beneath the grill.
- Autoclave all clean-up materials before disposal in the biohazardous waste container.
- Wash hands and any exposed surfaces thoroughly after the clean-up procedure.

## **Small Spill Outside a Biological Safety Cabinet**

(Spill that can be covered by a few paper towels.)

- Put on gloves and a lab coat.
- Cover spill with paper towels and gently apply disinfectant, proceeding from the outer edge of the spill to its center.
- Leave in place for at least 20 minutes.
- Pick up the towels and discard into a biohazardous waste container. Use forceps to pick up any broken glass and place the pieces into a sharps container.
- Re-wipe the spill area with disinfectant.
- Remove gloves and thoroughly wash hands.

## **Large Spill of BL2 Material Outside a Biological Safety Cabinet**

(More than 500 ml.)

- **HOLD YOUR BREATH AND LEAVE THE ROOM IMMEDIATELY.**
- Warn others to stay out of the spill area to prevent spread of contamination.
- Post a sign on the door warning others of the biological materials spill.
- Remove any contaminated clothing and put it into a biohazard bag for later autoclaving.
- Wash hands and exposed skin and inform your PI or supervisor about the spill.
- Put on protective clothing (lab coat, gloves, mask, eye protection, shoe covers) and assemble clean-up materials.
- Wait 30 minutes before re-entering the contaminated area to allow dissipation of aerosols.
- Cover the spill with paper towels and gently apply disinfectant, proceeding from the outer edge of the spill to its center.
- Leave in place for at least 20 minutes.
- Collect all treated materials and discard in a biohazardous waste container. Use forceps to pick up any broken glass and place the pieces into a sharps container.
- Re-wipe the spill area with disinfectant.
- Remove glove and wash hands thoroughly.