

Bio-safety levels: It consists of a combination of laboratory practices and techniques, safety equipment and laboratory facilities appropriate for the operations performed and the hazard posed by the infectious agents. The guidelines for Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories suggest four Biosafety levels in incremental order depending on the nature of work. Additional flexibility in containment levels can be obtained by combination of the physical with the biological barriers. The proposed safety levels for work with recombinant DNA technique take into consideration the source of the donor DNA and its disease-producing potential. These four levels corresponds to (P1<P2<P3<P4) facilities approximate to 4 risk groups assigned for etiologic agents.

These levels and the appropriate conditions are enumerated as follows:

Biosafety Level 1: These practices, safety equipment and facilities are appropriate for undergraduate and secondary educational training and teaching laboratories and for other facilities in which work is done with defined and characterised strains of viable microorganisms not known to cause disease in healthy adult human. No special accommodation or equipment is required but the laboratory personnel are required to have specific training and to be supervised by a scientist with general training in microbiology or a related science.

Biosafety Level 2: These practices, safety equipment and facilities are applicable in clinical, diagnostic, teaching and other facilities in which work is done with the broad spectrum of indigenous moderate-risk agents present in the community and associated with human disease of varying severity. Laboratory workers are required to have specific training in handling pathogenic agents and to be supervised by competent scientists. Accommodation and facilities including safety cabinets are prescribed, especially for handling large volume are high concentrations of agents when aerosols are likely to be created. Access to the laboratory is controlled.

Biosafety level 3: These practices, safety equipment and facilities are applicable to clinical, diagnostic, teaching research or production facilities in which work is done with indigenous or exotic agents where the potential for infection by aerosols is real and the disease may have serious or lethal consequences. Personnel are required to have specific training in work with these agents and to be supervised by scientists experienced in this kind of microbiology. Specially designed laboratories and precautions including the use of safety cabinets are prescribed and the access is strictly controlled.

Biosafety level 4: These practices, safety equipment and facilities are applicable to work with dangerous and exotic agents which pose a high individual risk of life-threatening disease. Strict training and supervision are required and the work is done in specially designed laboratories under stringent safety conditions, including the use of safety cabinets and positive pressure personnel suits . Access is strictly limited.

A specially designed suit area may be provided in the facility. Personnel who enter this area wear a one-piece positive pressure suit that is ventilated by a life support system. The life support system is provided with alarms and emergency break-up breathing air tanks. Entry to this area is through an airlock fitted with air tight doors. A chemical shower is provided to decontaminate the surface of the suit before the worker leaves the area. The exhaust air from the suit area is filtered by two sets of HEPA filters installed in the series. A duplicate filtration unit, exhaust fan and an automatically starting emergency power source are provide. The air pressure within the suit area is lower than that of any adjacent area. Emergency lighting and communication systems are provided. All penetrations into the inner shell of the suit area are sealed. A double door autoclave is provided for decontamination of disposable waste materials from the suit area.