

CHAPTER II: CODE OF CONDUCT AND CULTURE OF RESPONSIBILITY

All scientists are accountable for the establishment of a culture of responsibility in their labs and at their institutions. Fundamental to this culture of responsibility are scientific integrity and adherence to ethical codes of conduct. For the individual scientist, an ethical code of conduct centers on personal integrity. It embodies, above all, a commitment to intellectual honesty and personal liability for one's actions and to a range of practices that characterize the responsible conduct of research, including:

- Intellectual honesty, accuracy, fairness, collegiality, transparency in conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest, protection of human subjects in the conduct of research, humane care of animals in the conduct of research, and adherence to the mutual responsibilities between investigators and their research teams.

In the realm of research involving pathogens and toxins, additional responsibilities include:

- Awareness of and adherence to all safety and security protocols.
- Knowledge and awareness of spill and exposure response protocols.
- Knowledge of and adherence to reporting requirements related to spills, exposures, or potential releases.
- Knowledge and awareness of all emergency response protocols (e.g., fire, tornado, inclement weather).
- Completion of all classroom-training requirements.
- Completion of all proficiency training requirements.
- Completion of all Occupational Health requirements, including documentation of required physicals, medical clearances, and/or vaccinations, when applicable.
- **Immediate reporting to the Principal Investigator of any situation that compromises an individual's ability to perform as required in a BSL-2 or ABSL-2 laboratory, including physical or psychological issues.**
- **Immediate reporting to the Principal Investigator and the UC, where appropriate, of behavior or activities that are inconsistent with safety and security plans.**

The establishment of support systems for the individual scientist is essential to the development of a culture of responsibility at an institution. At the individual level, one such support system is the University of Chicago Staff and Faculty Assistance Program (SFAP- <http://hrservices.uchicago.edu/benefits/healthwelfare/sfap.shtml>). The SFAP is a confidential service that provides support, counseling, referrals, and resources for issues

that impact your life and potentially compromise your ability to perform safely in the laboratory, such as child/elder care, family or marriage counseling, financial or legal advice, stress, alcohol and/or drug abuse, etc. You may call for help at 1-800-456-6327 or seek help online. Please contact the Benefits Office (773-702-9634) for log-in information. Registered students may also seek mental health care free of charge through the university Student Counseling Service (<http://counseling.uchicago.edu>).

Another important mechanism essential to the development of a culture of responsibility is the establishment of formal, confidential reporting mechanisms for instances of noncompliance with established safety and/or security policies established for the UC and for your particular laboratory. At the UC, multiple pathways exist whereby behaviors of concern can be confidentially reported, depending on the particular situation at hand. Included among these options are: (1) Reporting to your PI/supervisor; (2) Reporting to your Department Administrator and/or Chair; (3) Reporting to the UC Whistleblower Hotline (1-800-971-4317, see Appendix 2); (4) Reporting to the Office of Biological Safety/Institutional Biosafety Committee (see Appendix 2); (5) Reporting to the Department of Environmental Health and Safety/Office of Risk Management. Depending upon the nature of a given situation, reports of concerning behavior may involve the UC Institutional Biosafety Committee as described in Appendix 2.