



6 July 2015

SECURITY RECOMMENDATION FOR FACILITIES POSSESSING, STORING OR WORKING WITH BIOLOGICAL AGENTS AND TOXINS UNDER THE BIOLOGICAL AGENTS AND TOXINS ACT (BATA)

The Biosafety Branch (BSB) of the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) jointly conducted a review on the security measures for possession of biological agents listed in BATA. The changes resulting from the review apply to facilities possessing biological agents under **First Schedule Part I, Third Schedule** and **Fourth Schedule** of the BATA.

2 There are no changes to requirements on facilities possessing biological agents and toxins under First Schedule Part II, Second Schedule and Fifth Schedule of the BATA. These facilities will continue to be required to gazette their premises as a protected place under the Protected Areas and Protected Places Act (PAPPA)¹.

3 Updated recommendations for facilities possessing biological agents under First Schedule Part I of the BATA.

- a) Other than all existing requirements under the BATA, facilities will be issued a set of guidelines (Annex A). This set of guidelines encompasses a series of possible measures that aim to ensure the safe and secure storage of the biological agents under the

¹ Under the BATA, being gazetted as a protected place under the PAPPA is a pre-requisite for the application for possession of First Schedule Part II, Second Schedule and Fifth Schedule biological agents and toxins. Please refer to the document titled "[Application for Gazetting as a Protected Place under the Protected Areas and Protected Places Act for the Possession of Biological Agents and Toxins listed in the BATA](#)" for details.

possession of the facility, as well as to prevent and detect attempts of unauthorized access to the said biological agents;

The facilities may also expect visits by officer(s) from the Singapore Police Force (SPF) who will provide further advice on the appropriate measures to be adopted, depending on the characteristics of that particular facility. Such visits will be organised and conducted with the agreement of the facility owner;

- b) Facilities are not obliged to fully adopt the measures as advised by the officers. Nonetheless, in order to provide a safe and secure working environment in view of the biological agents stored therein, facilities are strongly encouraged to take up the advice of the officer(s).

4 Updated recommendations for facilities possessing biological agents under Third Schedule and Forth Schedule of the BATA.

- a) Other than all existing requirements under the BATA, facilities will also be issued with the same set of guidelines (as for the First Schedule Part I biological agents, Annex A), which encompasses a series of possible measures that aim to ensure the safe and secure storage of the biological agents under the possession of the facility, as well as to prevent and detect acts of unauthorized access to the said biological agents;
- b) In order to provide a safe and secure working environment in view of the biological agents stored therein, facilities are encouraged to adopt the measures stated in the guidelines. Facilities that require assistance from SPF on the appropriate measures to be adopted may contact the Biosafety Branch of MOH at moh_biosafety@moh.gov.sg

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the purpose of the visit by officers from SPF?

The guidelines issued contain a list of possible security measures that can be adopted to ensure the safe and secure storage of the biological agents, as well as to prevent and detect any attempts of unauthorized access to the said agents. Facilities that are not familiar with these measures may not know which measures to adopt. The purpose of the visit is for the officer(s) to better understand the facility in order for them to advise the appropriate security measures to be adopted.

2. What can we expect from the visits?

The visits will be pre-arranged with the facility at an agreed date between the officer(s) and facility. There will not be any surprise visits from the officer(s). During the visits, the officer(s) will ask general questions relating to processes involving access control, storage of the biological agents etc. The officer(s) is also likely to visit the exact room where the biological agent is or will be stored.

3. How often will these visits be conducted?

Such visits will only be conducted once unless further requests are made by the facility.

4. What is the expected cost for adopting the recommended measures?

The cost of adopting the measures varies across each facility as the measures that are recommended differ, depending on the existing state and characteristics of the facility itself. Hence, it is not possible and appropriate to give an estimate of the cost at this point of time.

5. Will there be any funding from MOH or MHA on the cost for adopting the recommended measures?

Unfortunately, there is no funding from the authorities. The measures are meant to provide a safe working environment for the personnel working in the facility. They also help secure the biological agents, properties of the facilities, against theft and pilferage.

6. How do we go about adopting the recommended measures?

The facility may source for vendors and/or contractors available in the market, in accordance to the facility's internal procurement processes and guidelines.

7. If we do not adopt the recommended measures, will there be an impact on our application with MOH to possess the biological agent?

There will be no impact on the application with MOH to possess the biological agents. However, as a responsible facility, you are strongly encouraged to adopt the recommended measures to provide a safe and secure working environment and to be fully accountable for all the biological agents in your possession.