

ABSA INTERNATIONAL

OCTOBER 2019

Biosafety and Biosecurity Month

Dear Research Community,

October is the 6th Annual Biosafety and Biosecurity Month. This year's theme, *Beyond the Lab: Increasing the Visibility of Biosafety and Biosecurity*, is an opportunity for us all to consider the important roles that we serve in fostering an understanding of biosafety and biosecurity. As a researcher, you are a role model, a mentor, and a leader to a new generation of scientists and scientific support personnel. October is an excellent time to foster an open dialogue with your colleagues, peers, and staff about biosafety and biosecurity.

These are some starting points that you can utilize to integrate biosafety and biosecurity into your lab meetings/ discussions/ practice:

- Invite your institutional biosafety and biosecurity professionals to speak to your lab or class about safety work practices, risk assessments, and how to respond to incidents.
- Identify opportunities to collaborate with biosafety and biosecurity professionals on applied safety research, from increasing efficiency to streamlining an SOP.
- Review high-risk and high consequence procedures in your work environment.
- Discuss the importance of securing pathogens and chemicals that can cause serious harm and take care of identified security issues.
- Review procedures in your lab environment, the engineering controls in place, donning/ doffing PPE, and decontamination and disposal procedures.
 - Involve all members of the lab in periodic review and revision of SOPs.
 - Encourage collaboration with biosafety and biosecurity support personnel in this review process.
- Request an audit/ inspection of work spaces and storage by biosafety/ biosecurity professionals to assess the effectiveness of your controls, procedures, and behaviors.
- Review emergency response plans and SOP. Conduct drills or exercises (when applicable) to ensure everyone understands the plans.
- When presenting to colleagues or at conferences, integrate safety and security practices you implemented in your work into the presentation.
- Encourage personnel to join ABSA International, the Association for Biosafety and Biosecurity or to attend ABSA trainings or conferences.

For more ideas on how to increase awareness of biosafety and biosecurity, contact your institutional biosafety and biosecurity professionals. For more information on the 2019 Biosafety and Biosecurity Month, visit the ABSA International website at <https://absa.org/event/2019-biosafety-month/>.