# 13. Emergency Response

All UAB employees injured in the course of employment at UAB or acquiring a disease or illness directly attributable to their employment at UAB will be offered a referral for evaluation *as* described in the UAB On-The-Job Injury/Illness Program (See POL312 *You and UAB Handbook* and/or the *Faculty Handbook and Policies*). Services are rendered at UAB Hospital Employee Health (limited services), UAB University Hospital Emergency Department (medical emergencies), and/or *The Workplace,* (non-emergency medical treatment; hours of operation Mon-Fri 8am – 4:30pm) located at 2151 Highland Avenue, 933-5300 as noted below.

## 13.1 Needlesticks and Exposures to Human Blood, Body Fluids, and Tissues

If an exposure to human blood, body fluids, or unfixed tissue occurs during normal work hours, immediately call the UAB Hospital Employee Health Rapid Response Team at 4-3675, page them through UAB Paging 4-3411, or follow your specific response plan (ex., HIV, HBC, and HCV research labs).

If an exposure to human blood, body fluids, or unfixed tissue occurs after normal work hours, immediately page the UAB Hospital Employee Health Rapid Response Team through UAB Paging 4-3411, or follow your specific response plan (ex., HIV, HBV, HCV research labs).

## 13.2 Other Personal Injury

### 13.2.1 Medical Emergencies On or Near the UAB Campus

If an injury is a medical emergency and has occurred on or near the UAB campus, the employee should be taken to the UAB University Hospital Emergency Department where initial assessment and emergency treatment will be provided. If possible, the employee should take a written incident report to the Emergency Department. If that is not possible due to the urgent nature of the injury, the Emergency Department may be verbally advised that the employee was injured in the course of UAB employment, and the Emergency Department should indicate that in the employee's medical record. A written incident report must be completed by the supervisor as soon as possible and must be sent to the Emergency Department.

### 13.2.2 Non-Emergency Medical Treatment

If non-emergency medical treatment is required during the operating hours of *The Workplace*, the employee must report to *The Workplace* for initial evaluation and treatment. The employee must present an incident report in order to receive treatment. Medical treatment for an on-the-job injury should be obtained immediately following the injury. (See On-The-Job Injury/Illness Program, *You and UAB Handbook* and/or the *Faculty Handbook and Policies*).

If non-emergency medical treatment is required outside the operating hours of *The Workplace*, the employee must report to the UAB University Hospital emergency Department for evaluation. The employee must present an incident report in order to receive treatment.

### 13.2.3 Injuries Away from the UAB Campus

If a UAB employee is performing his or her job away from the UAB campus and suffers a job-related injury which results in a medical emergency, the employee should obtain necessary emergency attention from the closest medical facility, advise the treating facility that the injury occurred during the course of employment at UAB, and following reporting

procedures as outlined in the UAB On-The Job Injury/Illness Program ( See *You and UAB Handbook* and/or the *Faculty Handbook and Policies*).

### 13.3 Spill Response

Despite any precautions that may be taken, accidental spills can be expected to occur in the laboratory. When infectious materials are involved, it is important that the area be immediately isolated to prevent spread of the spillage, alert others in the area, and begin spill clean up according to your Laboratory Spill Response Plan. Take special care to avoid aerosolizing the material and avoid percutaneous exposures that may be present in the spilled material, i.e., needles, broken glass, scalpel blades, etc.

Spill Response Plans contain four essential elements:
Personal protective equipment (PPE)
Assessment of the extent and nature of the spill
Disinfection and methods of disinfection
Disposal

- Wear appropriate **PPE** for the potential infectious material encountered. This could include gloves, lab coat, face shield, goggles, dust mask, HEPA mask, etc. Think exposure routes and protect yourself accordingly. If the spilled material can be transmitted via the inhalation route then clear the area and warn others of the spill. Wait a period of time and then enter the area. This will allow aerosols to settle or be captured by the building exhaust. Keep in mind that the fact that there was a spill means that aerosolization has taken place.
- **Assess** the spill! Is it a large spill or a small spill? A large spill is generally defined as sufficient quantity that if spilled tends to seek its own level. In other words it runs to a low point. The main concept that would cause one to treat the large spill differently is with containment in mind. One would want to make sure the spill did not spread and contaminate other areas.
- **Disinfect** by covering the spill with absorbent towels and carefully pouring a suitable disinfectant on the area. When pouring the disinfectant start at the edge and spiral in toward the center of the spill. Select a disinfectant that is specific for the agent(s) used in your lab. Heavy soil load or high protein content may alter a disinfectant's effectiveness and precleaning may be required (as with blood spills). Remember two factors are associated with proper disinfection: concentration of the disinfectant and contact time. Follow the manufacturer's directions.
- **Disposal**: After the area has been thoroughly disinfected carefully place all the materials in the proper medical waste container. Contaminated glass should never be handled with hands (even gloved hands). Use tongs, dust pan and broom, hemostats, etc. and carefully place the broken glass in an approved sharps container. The rest of the spill clean up waste and disposable PPE can then be placed in red bags for proper disposal as medical waste. Carefully wash your hands with soap and water. Report incident to lab manager or PI as soon as possible and if warranted to OH&S as directed by lab manager or PI.

The following procedures are provided as guidelines for developing your own spill response procedures to biohazardous spill cleanup. Procedures should be posted in prominent locations within the laboratory. In each of the following cases, depending on the size of the spill, notify everyone in the lab. All major spills involving dangerous infectious materials should be reported to the Biosafety Division of Occupational Health & Safety

#### 13.3.1 Spills in a Biosafety Cabinet

Additional considerations for spills inside the biosafety cabinet may include:

- Leave biosafety cabinet blower motor turned on during cleanup.

- If necessary, flood work surface, as well as drain pans and catch basins below the work surface, with disinfectant.
- Wipe cabinet walls, work surfaces, and inside the front view screen with disinfectant.
- Lift front exhaust grill and tray, and wipe all surfaces. Ensure no paper towels or soiled debris has blown into the area below the grill.
- Expose non-autoclavable materials to disinfectant before removing from the biosafety cabinet.
- Run biosafety cabinet 10 minutes after cleanup before resuming work or turning cabinet off.
- If the spill overflows into the interior of the cabinet, contact OH&S for an evaluation in the event more extensive decontamination of the cabinet is required.

### 13.3.2 Spills inside a Centrifuge

Additional considerations for spills inside a centrifuge may include:

- Wait 30 minutes for aerosols to settle before attempting to clean up spill
- Remove rotors and buckets to nearest biological safety cabinet for cleanup.
- Thoroughly disinfect inside of centrifuge.

### 13.3.3 Spills in Lab, Outside the Biosafety Cabinet

- Call the biosafety office if the material requires BSL-2 or greater containment.
- Clear area of all personnel. Wait at least 30 minutes for aerosol to settle before entering spill area. The use of respiratory protection may be indicted if immediate entrance to spill area is required. The use of respirators requires prior fit-testing and training. Contact OH&S for information.

## 13.4 Other Emergencies

Whether it's fire, severe weather, a bomb threat or just an electrical power outage, it is important to know what to do. Check the UAB General Safety website for more details.

### 13.4.1 Loss of electrical power

The sudden interruption of electrical power and/or refrigeration can result in a disastrous sequence of events for laboratories working with labile biological material should the problem persist. At the first indication of power or refrigeration trouble, contact the Maintenance Dispatch Office (Ext. 4-5353 for campus buildings and Ext. 4-6181 for hospital buildings).

### 13.4.2 Fire

If you detect *FIRE* or *SMOKE*, no matter how minor it may appear to be, follow the UAB Fire Safety Program **CARE** procedures and:

- Stay calm and use common sense.
- **Confine the fire** by closing all doors. As you leave the room where the fire is located, close the room door, fire doors located in the corridors, at elevator lobbies, and stairs. Secure biologicals and turn off oxygen equipment, including gas and air outlets to biosafety cabinets.
- **Activate the fire alarm** – a small red box located on the wall near each exit. Follow the instructions on the alarm.
- **Report the fire**, Dial 911 from any UAB phone (UAB Police). Identify yourself and provide the exact location of fire or smoke and what is burning, if know.

- **Evacuate** faculty, staff, students, and visitors immediately. Do not use elevators. Proceed to the nearest exit and move away from the building, assembling in a location predetermined by each department or building.
- Do not return to the building unless told to do so by the fire department, police, or the Safety Office.

### 13.4.3 Tornado Watches/Warnings

A tornado watch means conditions are favorable for the development of tornadoes or very intense straight-line winds capable of causing severe damage. The watch will be issued by the National Weather Service for a specified period of time. No specific action should be taken during a watch except to stay alert to weather conditions and updates.

A tornado warning means a tornado has been spotted in or near Jefferson County. Personnel must stay alert to any sudden changes in weather conditions or weather announcements and be prepared to seek shelter immediately in the lower level and/or along the interior walls. Personnel should stay away from the windows as much as possible.