

## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

### DEALING WITH A LEAKING PACKAGE CONTAINING A KNOWN OR SUSPECTED BIOLOGICAL AGENT

#### Summary

This SOP is for the use of laboratory staff who may be required to deal with a leaking package containing clinical or research specimens. **Part A** summarises the instructions that have been provided to Post Room staff and is for information only. **Part B** provides the instructions to be followed by those who are contacted to deal with the spillage / leakage.

#### **PART A: Instructions for Post Room staff:**

1. Evacuate the room immediately and do not enter for a minimum of 15 minutes. This will allow any aerosols to settle.
2. Re-enter the room and move any other packages or property well out of the way. If there is a risk that other items have been contaminated, do not touch them.
3. Try to identify who the parcel is addressed to by looking at the outside package and note any details. Avoid touching or moving the package.
4. Contact the Safety Department on x 49423 / 49421 / 49569. Give all details on the address label (if known).
5. Leave the room again and secure it against further entry.

#### ***If the leaking contents accidentally come into contact with skin or clothes:***

1. Thoroughly wash off body with plenty of water.
2. Remove contaminated clothing.
3. Keep hands away from eyes nose and mouth.
4. Do not eat or smoke.
5. Staff that have come into contact with the contents of a leaking package should remain at the workplace until their names are noted by the Post Room staff and the exact nature of the danger has been determined.
6. If the contents are identified as potentially harmful, staff who have come into contact with it may be advised to visit the College Occupational Health Department.

#### **PART B: Instructions for those dealing with a leaking package:**

Name of competent person:  
Campus:

1. Ensure that a biohazard spillage kit is available in the post room. If you are contacted by the Safety Department, we will determine this in advance. If you are contacted directly by Post Room staff, you will need to enquire whether one is present. If not, a kit will need to be obtained from one of the local departments. It would be wise to be aware of whereabouts an alternative spill kit may be found.

Location of spillage kit:

2. Ensure that Post Room staff remain excluded from the area whilst the package is dealt with.
3. Follow the instructions provided with the kit. Typically:
  - Put on the disposable gloves provided.
  - Place the whole damaged / leaking package into one of the yellow disposal bags provided with the kit – some bags have an adhesive strip to allow them to be temporarily affixed to a tabletop or wall.
  - Apply the powdered / granulated disinfectant to any spilt material and leave for the specified time period to allow it to take effect.
  - Scoop up the material with the tool provided and place everything inside the yellow bag.
  - Wipe down any potentially affected surfaces with the disinfectant solution provided and place the used wipes inside the yellow bag. The disinfectant solution is normally made by dissolving a specified number of tablets in tap water using the diluter provided with the kit.
  - Carefully remove the disposable gloves and place inside the yellow bag.
  - Loosely tie the bag and place the whole bag inside a rigid autoclavable clinical waste bin of the type shown in the photograph below. These should be available for use in each of the Post Rooms.



***Note: a biohazard spillage kit should not be used in the event of a chemical spillage. A judgement will need to be made in each case as to what the contents of the package may be in the event that it does not have any biohazard label or markings. There is evidence to suggest that the vast majority of inter-university and university-NHS Trust packages are likely to contain specimens of a biological nature.***

4. Take the waste bin to a suitable autoclave and autoclave using a standard waste cycle.

Location of autoclave:

5. After autoclaving, affix a College clinical waste tag and take the bin to the nearest clinical waste disposal point and place inside one of the large clinical waste *Eurocarts* for final disposal.