

## Important Regulatory Bulletin Concerning Viral Vector Research

October is [National Biosafety Month](#) and the Biosafety team uses this opportunity to draw your attention to two important, but sometimes overlooked, issues of regulatory compliance for those researchers working with viral vectors.

1. Ensuring that all applicable recombinant DNA (rDNA) research is reviewed by the [Institutional Biosafety Committee](#). The [NIH guidelines](#) require that all experiments using viral vectors must be reviewed by the [IBC](#). This includes *in vitro* experiments (as well as *in vivo* experiments in animals or human subjects). [RASCAL](#) Appendices A and B are used to submit an IBC application for *in vitro* protocols. When compiling an Appendix for *in vitro* experiments, ensure that the “*In vitro* / Invertebrates only” option is selected. Collaborative projects where viral vectors are shared between different institutions must receive IBC review at both institutions.
2. Viral vectors that are shipped between collaborating institutions, and even between different Columbia campuses, must be compliant with [Department of Transportation regulations](#), and be appropriately classified, packaged and labeled. Viral vectors should be shipped as Biological Substances, Category B (UN3373) using a commercial carrier. The only exception is if viral vectors are triple-packaged and transported by foot alone between institutions. More information available in the [EH&S shipping manual](#). Training and certification can be acquired by taking [RASCAL](#) course TC0507 to ship Biological substances, Category B and TC0076 to ship Dry Ice.

Biosafety Officers are available to answer any questions about regulatory compliance (email: [biosafety@columbia.edu](mailto:biosafety@columbia.edu)).

Effective biosafety oversight needs cooperation and commitment from all levels – from Federal to institutional, to the individual scientists who are conducting vitally important research. We appreciate your compliance with these important laws.

Christopher Aston, Ph.D  
Manager, Biological Safety Programs  
Environmental Health & Safety

Stephen S. Morse, Ph.D, FAAM, F.A.C.E.  
Professor of Epidemiology  
Chair, Columbia University Institutional  
Biosafety Committee (IBC)