

University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Institutional Biosafety Committee Standard Operating Procedures		
Effective Date: 04/24/2023 Revised Date: 07/27/2026 Version: 3	TITLE: IBC SOP #4 – Laboratory Inspections	Page 1 of 4

A. PURPOSE

This SOP describes the procedures used in performing, reporting results, and resolving findings from periodic inspections of laboratories where activities involving biohazardous materials are conducted.

B. POLICY

To protect the campus community, the IBC is tasked with evaluating research, teaching, and diagnostic testing involving biological hazards and monitoring safety and compliance. Laboratories where biohazards are present must thus be periodically inspected by qualified personnel.

C. INSPECTION PROCEDURE

Scheduled Inspections: Inspections are collaborative and allow for the inspectors to gain understanding of the biosafety requirements specific to the lab being audited; therefore, the PI or designee must be available during the audit to participate in the conversation. Scheduled inspections will be conducted at least annually. When feasible, inspections will be conducted when teaching or research activities are occurring to provide inspectors with the opportunity to observe work practices.

The timing of initial inspections for new laboratories, based on anticipated activities, is summarized in *Appendix A—BSL-1 and BSL-2 Laboratory Inspection Decision Trees*. New research laboratories (e.g., new faculty start-ups, BSL-1 and/or BSL-2) will be inspected at a mutually agreed upon time after consultation with the PI to determine when lab supplies have been acquired and equipment has been set up, and when BSL-1 and/or BSL-2 activities are expected to begin.

Laboratories in good standing transitioning from BSL-1 to BSL-2 safety standards will be inspected using BSL-2 standards prior to approval of the new BSL-2 registration by the IBC and commencement of BSL-2 activities.

For all inspections, the IBC Administrator will contact the laboratory supervisor/principal investigator, representative from the Office of Environmental Health and Safety, Department Safety Officer (or similar) if applicable, and at least two IBC representatives, to schedule a mutually convenient time for the inspection. IBC representatives at the lab inspections cannot be affiliated with the lab being inspected and will be selected on a rotating basis throughout the committee's membership.

Annual inspections should be scheduled prior to the annual due date. However, if the lab inspection date cannot be scheduled by this time (e.g. difficulty in aligning inspector's schedules), the lab inspection must occur within two weeks after the lab inspection due date. Inspections will be conducted using the UTC IBC Laboratory Inspection Form (General Laboratory Safety and Biological Laboratory Safety sections) available on the IBC website. Copies of the relevant inspection forms will be provided to the PI when the inspection appointment is confirmed.

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Unscheduled Inspections: Unscheduled inspections may be conducted at the discretion of the IBC or representative from the Office of Environmental Health and Safety. The primary purpose of unscheduled inspections is to determine whether safety practices are being followed during the day-to-day operation of a given laboratory. A secondary purpose of unscheduled inspections is to conduct follow-up assessment of noncompliance incidents. Unscheduled inspections can be initiated by the IBC Chair, representative from the Office of Environmental Health and Safety, IBC Designated Official, or other university administrators (Department Heads, Deans, Provost, Vice Chancellor for Research). Unscheduled inspections will be conducted by at least two IBC representatives using the UTC IBC Laboratory Inspection Form (General Laboratory Safety and Biological Laboratory Safety sections).

D. REPORTING

An IBC Lab Inspection Report, which includes the findings from the laboratory inspection, will be provided via e-mail to lab supervisors/principal investigators within 5 business days after the inspection. The IBC Chair and/or Representative from the Office of Environmental Health and Safety will review findings with the lab supervisor/PI and answer questions, as needed.

If an inspection triggers audit escalation procedures described in IBC SOP #5, *Escalation Procedures for Noncompliance*, follow-up actions will be taken as designated in the SOP. Detection of laboratory conditions that pose an imminent threat to the life or health of students, faculty, staff, and/or visitors; pose an imminent risk of harm or damage to property of the University; and/or that violate Federal, State or local laws and may be subject to legal action may result in immediate work stoppage and laboratory shutdown as noted in IBC SOP #5.

E. RESOLUTIONS AND LAB INSPECTION COMPLETION

A Corrective Action Plan (CAP) for correcting major and minor findings, and observations is required from the lab supervisors/principal investigators within 3 business days of receipt of the IBC Lab Inspection Report. The CAP will summarize how all noted findings/observations will be addressed.

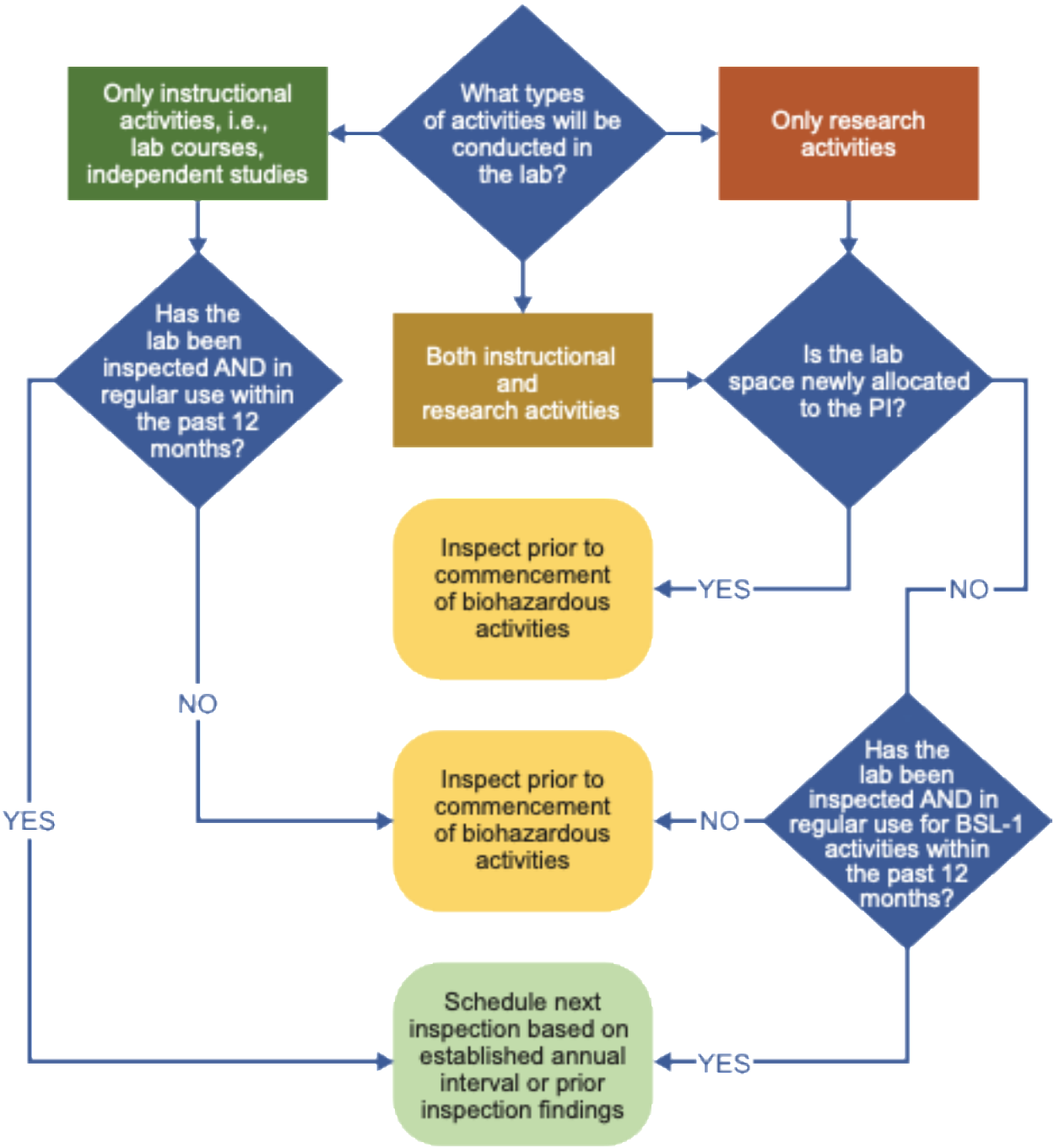
Thereafter, corrective action status reports are required every 10 business days until all corrective actions have been completed and verified. Corrective action status reports must include photographic documentation of resolved findings. Major findings will also be verified via re-inspection. Minor findings will be verified through re-inspection upon completion of corrective actions or during the next inspection cycle as warranted by risk. For observations, re-inspection will occur when warranted by risk.

Upon completion of all corrective actions, the IBC Administrator will provide the lab supervisors/principal investigators with a completed PDF copy of the UTC IBC Lab Inspection Form. This copy must be archived within the laboratory and available at subsequent IBC lab inspections. The PI is required to have a hard copy of the previous lab inspection in the lab notebook. Digital copies of any other previous lab inspection is recommended.

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Appendix A—BSL-1 and BSL-2 Laboratory Inspection Decision Trees

Inspection Requirements for BSL-1 Laboratories



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Inspection Requirements for BSL-2 Laboratories

