

SPECIAL EDITION

SEPT 2026



RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
Institutional Planning
and Operations
Rutgers Environmental Health and Safety

NIH BIOSAFETY MODERNIZATION

The NIH's Biosafety Modernization Initiative has reached the next step following the six regional listening sessions, stakeholder engagement, and public comments. The NIH has released the Draft Biosafety Policy for Research Involving Biohazards (NIH Biosafety Policy) which will replace the current NIH Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant or Synthetic Nucleic Acid Molecules. This draft is available on <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-OD-26-112.html> for review.

A comparison table of the significant changes can be found on https://osp.od.nih.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/Draft_Policy_Table-of-Changes.pdf

HIGHLIGHTS

The scope of the Draft NIH Biosafety Policy includes the materials below, which may impact whether you will need to create (or amend) a biosafety protocol. Additionally, the proposed requirements may impact the timelines for IBC approval.

☣ The Policy defines research involving biohazards as involving known or potential risk

to human health and any of the following:

1. Wild type biological agents that cause disease in humans.
2. Cells, viruses, or organisms, other than plants, that have been genetically modified.
3. Toxins, prions, and other self-aggregating proteins.
4. Cells or organisms containing points 1, 2, or 3 above.

☣ Genetically modified plants and plant pathogens that do not cause human disease are not covered under the proposed NIH Biosafety Policy

Please note, the modifications to the NIH Biosafety Policy does not exclude other regulatory requirements (e.g. USDA, CDC, etc.)



PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Comments regarding the draft NIH Biosafety Policy are being accepted at the following link until **OCTOBER 19**.

(<https://osp.od.nih.gov/comment-form-draft-nih-biosafety-policy-for-research-involving-biohazards/>).

Please take a moment to review the proposed changes to the NIH Guidelines to understand how they may impact your lab. REHS is collaborating with the Office of Research and the Institutional Biosafety Committee and reviewing the broad impacts of the draft policy. Periodic updates to statuses will be available on the [Biosafety Website](#). If you have any comments that you would like to highlight or questions, please feel free to reach out to us at biosafety@rutgers.edu. Otherwise, the NIH is accepting comments on the above link both anonymously and not.