



IDENTIFICATION

Department	Position Title	
Northwest Territorial Health and Social Services Authority	Biological Safety Officer	
Position Number	Community	Division/Region
48-16034	Yellowknife	Outpatient Specialty and Support Services / Stanton Territorial Hospital

PURPOSE OF THE POSITION

The Biological Safety Officer (Officer) provides subject matter expertise and assistance in all matters related to biological material and organism safety, and co-ordinates administration of the Biosafety Program, including compliance with federal, territorial and municipal legislation and regulations.

SCOPE

The Northwest Territories Health and Social Services Authority (NTHSSA) is the single provider of all health and social services in the Northwest Territories (NWT), with the exception of Hay River and Tłı̨chǫ regions, covering 1.2 million square kilometers and serving approximately 43,000 people, including First Nations, Inuit, Metis, and non-aboriginals. Health and social services includes the full range of primary, secondary and tertiary health services and social services including family services, protection services, care placements, mental health, addictions, and developmental activities, delivered by more than 1,400 health and social services staff.

While the Tłı̨chǫ Community Services Agency (TCSA) will operate under a separate board and Hay River Health and Social Services Agency (HRHSSA) will in the interim, the NTHSSA will set clinical standards, procedures, guidelines and monitoring for the entire Northwest Territories. Service Agreements will be established with these boards to identify performance requirements and adherence to clinical standards, procedures, guidelines and policies as established by the NTHSSA.

Located in Yellowknife, the Officer reports to the Director, Outpatient Specialty and Support Services (Director) and has a reporting relationship with the Chief Operating Officer (COO) (the



License Holder under the federal *Human Pathogens and Toxins Act and Regulations (HPTA/R)*). As the facility subject matter expert in the *HPTA/R* and *Health of Animals Act and Regulations (HAA/R)*, the Officer provides advice and ensures compliance with all relevant federal, territorial and municipal requirements. This position is responsible for keeping facility procedures and practices, for the use of biological material, up to date; for identifying improvements and opportunities to keep biologically hazardous materials minimal; and in assisting Stanton Territorial Hospital (STH) meet regulatory compliance.

The Biosafety Program Manual is the foundation of the Biosafety and Biosecurity Program, and contains the institutional policies, programs and plans required to prevent infections and illnesses among personnel and to protect the public, the environment, and animal population from harm by preventing the inadvertent release of pathogens or toxins. This manual was developed by the Biosafety Advisory Committee to fulfill the Operational Practice Requirements outlined in the Canadian Biosafety Standard and to ensure compliance with the *Human Pathogens and Toxins Act and Regulations (HPTA/R)*.

This position plays a key role in the development and maintenance of the manual which documents the Biosafety program and describes how the organization plans to achieve the goals and objectives of the program. The Officer will be expected to ensure the manual is regarded as a valuable tool to make personnel aware of the hazards, risks, mitigation strategies, emergency response, and safe work practices, and which personnel can consult as the need arises to review updates or refresh their memory on these issues.

This position is guided by the Public Health Agency of Canada's (PHAC) *Human Pathogens and Toxins Act and Regulations* and will be expected to foster and build strong working relationships with all staff at STH, colleagues in other NTHSSA locations and several external agencies. The incumbent is responsible to uphold the responsibilities of a Biological Safety Officer in accordance with the *HPTA/R* and the *HAA/R* to ensure that all communications with the PHAC and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) are accurate and complete. When performing technically related functions there will be continuous periods of intense visual concentration required to check the identity of organisms in the inventory to determine if they are accounted for and appropriately stored. Additionally, the incumbent is accountable for developing, providing and documenting required safety training as it pertains to biological safety within the facility.

The Biological Safety Officer is required to be motivated and innovative in the area of continuing education and practice to encourage the professional growth of self and others.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Promotes and monitors compliance with the Biosafety Program and applicable legislation.**



- Leads the development and maintenance of the Biosafety Manual and SOPs related to biosafety and biosecurity, such as training, audit and shipment records.
- Assists with investigations and supervision after accidents or incidents involving biologically hazardous substances.
- Performs periodic biosafety audits on technical methods, procedures and protocols, biological agents, materials and equipment.
- Monitors the inventory of biological substances at STH.
- Discusses violations of biosafety protocols and procedures with the appropriate person(s).
- Informs the license holder of any non-compliance by a person conducting activities under the license that is not resolved after that person has been made aware of it.
- Exercises the authority to require any person who conducts controlled activities under the license to provide the necessary records to assist them with carrying out their functions.
- Corrects unsafe acts through the regular line of authority, although the Biological Safety Officer may exercise emergency authority to prevent or stop unsafe acts when immediate action is required.

2. Provides on-going subject matter advice and technical assistance to persons using biological substances at STH.

- Reviews biosafety aspects of plans, protocols and SOPs involving biologically hazardous substances prior to implementation of these activities.
- Coordinates with medical practitioners regarding possible Laboratory Acquired Infections (LAI).
- Acts as a resource to help ensure proper waste management.
- Supports the establishment of appropriate procedures for the import/export of biologically hazardous materials or organisms to/from the laboratory, according to federal regulations.
- Performs the duties of co-chair of the Joint Infection Prevention and Control/Biosafety and Biosecurity Committee at STH .
- Responds to Hazardous Spills in accordance with the STHCode Brown Policy, encompassing both chemical and biological spills. Performs the duties of the Safety Liaison Officer in the event of a Code Orange Mass Casualty Response.
- Provides relief and support to STH Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Coordinators when required.
- Participates in other related committees and working groups.
- Acts as a biosafety resource for other NTHSSA sites, when required.

3. Maintains contact, as required, with the Public Health Agency of Canada.

- Communicates with the PHAC on behalf of the license holder.



- Reports incidents involving pathogens, toxins, other regulated infectious material or involving failure of containment systems.
- Notifies the PHAC of any inadvertent possession of human pathogens and toxins not received as expected.
- Conducts investigations and reporting exposure follow up reports.
- Notifies the PHAC of changes to the physical structure of the facility, changes to equipment, or changes to standard operating procedures (SOPs) which could affect biocontainment.
- Verifies the accuracy and completeness of license applications.

4. Performs the duties of the Training Coordinator/Maintainer for the NWT Emergency Response Assistance Plan Team.

- Acts as a member of the NWT Emergency Response Assistance Plan Team.
- Maintains the equipment and supplies required by the NWT Emergency Response Assistance Plan Team, including ordering new supplies from the PHAC when required.
- Coordinates the training of the members of the NWT Emergency Response Assistance Plan Team. This involves coordinating training through the PHAC and conducting training sessions when the PHAC does not travel to conduct training.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Physical Demands

No unusual demands.

Environmental Conditions

Working within the Laboratory and the Biohazardous Waste Room, the Officer is periodically exposed to infectious agents such as biological samples, human waste and sharps (i.e. during training, orientation and inventory and safety audits). There will also be exposure to toxic/corrosive agents used doing the performance of duties.

On an as-needed basis, this position exposes incumbent to unpleasant odors from urine, feces and chemical reagents, and there is potential exposure to a significant biological and/or chemical hazard.

Sensory Demands

No unusual demands.

Mental Demands

Within the Biosafety Officer role, there is a significant lack of control over the requirement and frequency to respond to emergent situations.



KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Knowledge of microbiology appropriate to the risks associated with the controlled activities being conducted.
- Knowledge of the HPTA/R, Hospital and Healthcare Facility Standards Regulation (2009), and Transport of Dangerous Goods Regulations.
- Knowledge of, and/or the ability to acquire knowledge of Guidelines for the Management of Biomedical Waste in the Northwest Territories, Northwest Territories Communicable Disease Manual, the NWT Infection Prevention and Control Manual and the NWT Tuberculosis Manual.
- Knowledge and application of patient safety principles and practices in all day to day activities, including following all safe work practices and procedures and immediately communicating any activity or action which may constitute a risk to patient safety.
- Knowledge and skills with applicable biosafety and biosecurity policies, standards and practices appropriate to the risks associated with the controlled activities being conducted.
- Ability to maintain self-control in stressful or challenging situations, controlling emotions and talking or acting calmly.
- Ability to adapt and remain flexible; to adjust and alter normal procedures or ways of working to fit a specific situation to get the job done and/or to meet goals.
- Ability to take initiative, and to persist when things do not go smoothly.
- Ability to listen, seek out further information to support understanding, and respond to others appropriately.
- Skilled at analytical thinking, and able to take apart a problem and link those pieces together and sort into order of importance.
- Skilled in client/customer service.
- Knowledge of privacy and confidentiality act / regulations and requirements, and will only access such information if it falls directly within the scope of their job duties.
- Ability to commit to actively upholding and consistently practicing personal diversity, inclusion and cultural awareness, as well as safety and sensitivity approaches in the workplace.

Typically, the above qualifications would be attained by:

The successful completion of a recognized Medical Laboratory Technology Program, or a Medical Microbiology degree; and, five (5) years of directly related laboratory experience; two (2) years of experience providing and coordinating training, and three (3) years of experience as a safety officer, most responsible person, or biological safety officer in a medical facility or laboratory; and one (1) year of supervisory experience.

Equivalent combinations of education and experience will be considered.



ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Proof of immunization in keeping with current public health practices is required.

Registration with the Canadian Society of Medical Laboratory Science is required.

Stanton Territorial Hospital has a number of certifications that are required upon hire, depending on the area where the employee works, including but not limited to: Indigenous Culture Awareness and Sensitivity Training, Biohazardous Waste, Biosafety & Biosecurity, Infection Control, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System(WHMIS) and others directly related to the incumbent's scope of practice.

Position Security (check one)

- No criminal records check required
- Position of Trust – criminal records check required
- Highly sensitive position – requires verification of identity and a criminal records check

French language (check one if applicable)

- French required (must identify required level below)

Level required for this Designated Position is:

ORAL EXPRESSION AND COMPREHENSION

Basic (B) Intermediate (I) Advanced (A)

READING COMPREHENSION:

Basic (B) Intermediate (I) Advanced (A)

WRITING SKILLS:

Basic (B) Intermediate (I) Advanced (A)

- French preferred

Indigenous language: Select language

- Required
- Preferred