Environment, Health and Safety
Hazard Alert

Title: Exposure to Pertussis Toxin
Audience: Laboratory PIs and Personnel

Incident Summary:
A graduate student was performing a tail vein injection on a restrained mouse. The student was administering pertussis toxin and a droplet of solution landed on their cheek; the student could not be sure if it reached their eyes. The post-exposure protocol was initiated but not completed as the student did not seek medical attention until requested several days later.

Investigation Findings:
• Light in biosafety cabinet was not repaired; other methods were used to improve lighting.
• The student moved the mouse tail below the sash to the outside edge of the biosafety cabinet.
• The student was not required to wear protective eyewear by the lab-specific procedure.
• The student was previously trained but at the time of incident did not complete all the steps of the post-exposure protocol and did not seek medical attention.
• The student was not requested by the supervisor to seek medical attention.

Actions Taken:
• Request repair of light inside biosafety cabinet.
• Remind lab personnel that they cannot modify the details of the tail vein injection procedure.
• Revise the Institutional Animal User Training Program training scripts such that safety eyewear is required at all times during inoculation/administration in these settings.
• Enforce requirement to wear eye protection as per revised lab-specific procedure.
• Supervisor to reinforce the requirements of the Post-Exposure Protocol for Biological Hazards.

Key Takeaways:
• Ensure equipment is functioning properly or repairs requested.
• University and lab-specific procedures must be followed.

Resources:
• Post-Exposure Protocol for Biological Hazards
• Standard Operating Procedure Template