Developing Biorisk Management Objectives

Clear objectives are essential for the effective planning and implementation of a biorisk management program. These objectives outline specific milestones to monitor progress, define timeframes for completion, and help describe the desired outcomes. When setting objectives, organizations should consider potential risks, regulatory requirements, and identified needs that may necessitate additional objectives. The information gathered during the planning phase should inform the development of a well-structured set of objectives at various levels, ultimately guiding the organization toward achieving the overarching goals of its biorisk management system. Biorisk management objectives should be written in a Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) format to ensure consistency with the organization's overarching biorisk policy:

- **Specific:** Detailed, focused, and addressing what needs to be accomplished.
- **Measurable:** Quantifiable and trackable to monitor progress and determine when the objective is met.
- **Achievable:** Realistic and attainable within available resources.
- **Relevant:** Aligned with the organization's mission and related to long-term biorisk management implementation.
- **Time-based:** Defined target completion date and a clear deadline.

These objectives serve as guides for monitoring program implementation, setting accountability targets, and evaluating performance within established timeframes. Objectives should be dynamic rather than static. Regular review intervals are recommended to update objectives based on feedback and changing conditions within the organization. This process allows for continuous improvement and ensures that the objectives remain relevant and aligned with the organization's changing needs over time.

Examples of SMART Biorisk Objectives

- Conduct a comprehensive Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) risk assessment for all Biosafety Level-3 (BSL) laboratory areas by the end of the calendar year and annually thereafter.
- Achieve at least 80% active participation from all laboratory staff in quarterly biosafety emergency response drills within the next six months.
- Implement a centralized electronic inventory management system to achieve 100% accountability and documentation for all biological agents within 12 months.
- Ensure 100% of all new laboratory personnel complete the required occupational health screening, vaccinations, and medical surveillance within 30 days of their employment start date.

Pitfalls to Avoid

- Creating objectives that solely focus on reducing reported incidents or near misses, as they can inadvertently discourage transparent reporting.
- Developing vague objectives without clear action plans and assigned responsibilities.
- Not seeking leadership support as it can impede the achievement of objectives.
- Failing to establish performance metrics and monitoring mechanisms for evaluation and improvement.

Resources:

- CEN Workshop Agreement. Laboratory Biorisk Management — Guidelines for the implementation of CWA 15793:2008. Brussels: European Committee for Standardization; 2011.
- ISO 35001:2019 Biorisk management for laboratories and other related organisations. First Edition 2019. Switzerland.