



## SSBA Issue 27

## NEWSLETTER June 2018



### Security Sensitive Biological Agents — a look back in time

#### SSBAs—how it all began

The deliberate release of harmful biological agents such as viruses, bacteria, fungi and toxins has the potential to cause significant damage to human health, the environment and the Australian economy.

In 2006, the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) Report on the Regulation and Control of Biological Agents identified that the regulations in place at the time focused on safety rather than security; and that there was a need to regulate the secure storage, possession, use and transport of security sensitive biological agents to minimise the risk of use for terrorism or criminal purposes.

The aim of the SSBA Regulatory Scheme is to limit the opportunities for acts of bioterrorism or biocrime to occur using harmful biological agents and to provide a legislative framework for managing the security of SSBAs. The scheme was developed using risk management principles to achieve a balance between counter-terrorism concerns and the interests of the regulated community, and aims to maintain full access to SSBAs for those with a legitimate need. The SSBA Regulatory Scheme also builds on Australia's obligations under the *Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention* and *UN Security Council Resolution 1540*.

The SSBA Scheme can be contacted on 02 6289 7477 or by email at [ssba@health.gov.au](mailto:ssba@health.gov.au)

The website is: [www.health.gov.au/SSBA](http://www.health.gov.au/SSBA)

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#### Dealing with emergency facility maintenance

**If your facility experiences an emergency**, such as a freezer malfunction or a flood, and it is necessary for an SSBA to be moved outside of your facility's secure perimeter, please contact the SSBA Regulatory Scheme to discuss options to ensure the continued security of any SSBAs being held. Depending on the SSBA being handled and the type of facility affected, it may be that:

- ◇ temporary storage arrangements may need to be made
- ◇ the SSBA may be required to be transferred to another registered facility; and
- ◇ specific conditions and reporting requirements may apply

**Part 4** of the SSBA Standards deals with Physical Security and covers the perimeter and physical access controls. Under clause 4.2-*Perimeter*, facilities must have a clearly defined perimeter which must enclose the secure area where SSBAs are handled. External walls that form part of the secure perimeter must be of solid construction and physically sound. External doors of the secure perimeter must be self-closing and suitably protected against unauthorised access with control mechanisms. Under Part 4A.5 of the SSBA Standards, facilities are able to register a linked storage facility for the storage of Tier 2 SSBAs (Tier 1 SSBAs must be stored within the secure perimeter defined under clause 4.2), although specific requirements apply to this.

## Reporting

### Reminder:

If you receive SSBA's from an overseas facility, a *'Transfer In'* form must be completed and sent into the Department. Further, if you are transferring an SSBA overseas a *'Transfer Out'* form must be completed and sent to the Department.

## SSBA Guidelines and Fact Sheets

SSBA Guidelines and Fact Sheets are available to provide information to stakeholders on topics of particular interest related to the SSBA Regulatory Scheme. Stakeholders are welcome to suggest areas of interest that may warrant the development of further Guidelines and Fact Sheets.

Suggestions may be sent to [ssba@health.gov.au](mailto:ssba@health.gov.au). The Fact Sheets and Guidelines may be found at:

Fact Sheets: <http://www.health.gov.au/ssba#fact>  
Guidelines: <http://www.health.gov.au/ssba#guidelines>

## NHS Regulations

*The National Health Security Regulations 2008* are due to sunset in 2018. The Department is in the process of having the NHS Regulations re-made. Thank you to those who participated in the consultation earlier this year.

## Online Training Facility

**SSBA Regulatory Scheme Online Training Facility (OTF)** helps affected stakeholders understand the requirements of the SSBA Regulatory Scheme. The OTF contains several modules to give you information about the SSBA Regulatory Scheme. The content is comprehensive and each module is like a separate course. It is designed for all affected stakeholders regardless of their experience with the SSBA Regulatory Scheme.

The OTF can be found at <https://www.health.gov.au/internet/otf/publishing.nsf/Content/Login>

On your first visit, you will have to set up a new user account. To do this, click on the new user field (below the main log-in field) and complete your user details. This includes your name, e-mail address (which will become your username), password details and registration key. The registration key is: SSBAOTF. Once you have submitted these details, you will be sent an 'activation of account' e-mail (which could take up to 30 minutes to arrive). This e-mail will provide the link to the OTF. You can then log on to the system using your account details. If you have any difficulties establishing a user account or logging onto the system, please contact 02 6289 7477 or email [ssba@health.gov.au](mailto:ssba@health.gov.au)

## SSBA Mailing List

*Please remember to notify the SSBA Regulatory Scheme if your contact details change.*

*The SSBA Regulatory Scheme uses a mailing list to send out the SSBA newsletter and other information about the scheme.*

*If you need to update your contact details, or would like to be added to the SSBA mailing list, please email your details to [ssba@health.gov.au](mailto:ssba@health.gov.au)*

## Webinar watch

### REPORTING NOTIFIABLE DISEASES IN AUSTRALIA WEBINAR

**RCPAQAP BioSecurity** is funded by the Department of Health and has been offering surveys for SSBA's and other emerging disease threats to Australian since 2009.

**RCPAQAP Biosecurity** hosted a webinar for all Australian microbiology laboratory personnel and RCPA Microbiology Registrars on 26 April 2018. The webinar was delivered by **Sandra Gebbie**, Director, Health Emergency Countermeasures Section, Office of Health Protection, Department Of Health. Watch the webinar at this link:

<https://rcpaqap.com.au/3187-2/>

### FEEDBACK

We **welcome** your feedback. If you would like to provide feedback or discuss any aspect of the SSBA Regulatory Scheme, please contact us at [ssba@health.gov.au](mailto:ssba@health.gov.au)

Check out our web site: [www.health.gov.au/SSBA](http://www.health.gov.au/SSBA)