

MSU IBC Policy for Service Animals in Research and BSL-2 Teaching Laboratories

The main role of the MSU Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) is to protect students, teachers, researchers, and the community from potential exposure to biological agents studied in MSU research and teaching laboratories. This mission depends on the execution of safe handling and containment of biological agents and biohazardous material, as prescribed by federal regulations and [MSU biosafety policies and procedures](#). Access to laboratories is restricted when biological agents and biohazardous materials are present and pose a threat to humans, animals, or the environment. This policy is meant to ensure that MSU considers the unique needs of individuals who rely on service/assistance animals and identifies accommodations, where feasible, to allow individuals the opportunity to enter a laboratory environment.

In this policy, “individual” refers to students, researchers, and all other persons who may enter a research or Biosafety Level 2 (BSL-2) teaching laboratory for the purposes of learning and performing experiments.

This policy does not apply to the Animal Resources Center (ARC).

Service/Assistance Animals

A “service animal” is a dog that has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for an individual with a disability. On the MSU campus, there are also emotional support and other “assistance animals,” which are often registered with the [MSU Office of Disability Services](#) so that they are authorized to accompany individuals while on campus.

Research and Teaching Laboratories

Laboratories are categorized according to the relative risks associated with the biological agents and biohazardous material. Biosafety Level 1 laboratories work with and contain biological agents and biohazardous material that pose a minimal potential threat to humans and are generally not associated with human disease. BSL-2 laboratories are designed for work on biological agents and biohazardous material of moderate disease threat to healthy humans.

For all biosafety levels, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) [Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories \(BMBL\) guidelines](#), state that “animals and plants not associated with the work being performed must not be permitted in the laboratory.”

Individuals seeking to bring a service animal into a research laboratory or BSL-2 teaching laboratory need to make a request with the Office of Disability Services (for students) or ADA Coordinator (for employees). The [Office of Disability Services](#) or [ADA Coordinator](#), as appropriate, will serve as a liaison between the individual and the lab manager or other appropriate MSU employees, including the IBC and Biosafety Officer, to engage in the interactive process to determine whether, and under what conditions, an animal may be allowed in a specific research laboratory. Individuals seeking to bring a service animal into a laboratory assume responsibility for all risks involved in the use of their service animal in laboratory areas, including the risk of exposure to hazardous materials and objects to their service animal. For questions, please contact the MSU Office of Disability Services or the ADA Coordinator, and MSU Biosafety Officer.