



NEOMED Institutional Biosafety Committee Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2026
Via ZOOM

In Attendance:

NAME	IBC ROLE
Matthew Smith, PhD (Presiding)	Chair
Jessica Ferrell, PhD	Scientist, Vice Chair
Sharad Shanbhag, PhD	Scientist
Nicole Smallwood, MS	Technical Laboratory Staff
Jesse Zampedro	Assistant Director, EOHS

Absent:

NAME	IBC ROLE
Aixa Bakuhn	Community Member
Lauren Brierley, DVM	Animal Containment Expert
Justin Meonske, PhD	Community Member

NOTE: The Committee member names listed in **bold type** above represent the voting members of the IBC. A quorum is five (5) voting members.

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED) Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) conducted a special meeting on Monday March 9, 2026. Dr. Matthew Smith IBC Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM with a quorum of the IBC present (5 of 8 members present).

III. INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

There were two guests at today’s meeting, Ms. Tricia Sloan and Ms. Michele Evans, Administrative Support.

IV. OPEN DISCUSSION – This was a special meeting called to order to discuss a biosafety violation that took place within the CMU, in a BSL level 2 Lab suite. The report came into the Biosafety Committee on Friday, February 27, 2026, from a laboratory staff. The report states that on Wednesday, February 25, 2026, a senior CMU staff member entered the animal housing room, not adhering to proper PPE standards. It was observed that this individual did not change into dedicated scrubs but instead wore their street clothes under the approved PPE. The CMU staff member was there to collect a fecal sample as couple of animals that had presented with bloody diarrhea. The CMU staff member was observed entering the cage and collecting the sample with a gloved hand. The CMU staff member then exited the V-180 suite still fully garbed, wearing the contaminated PPE with the uncontained, biological fecal sample, on one glove. It was taken to another room in the CMU that had a microscope to examine the sample, leaving the entire pathway to and from contaminated.

The Vice President of Research was notified and the IACUC is doing their own investigation as well. The Biosafety committee was asked to come up with a report to submit to the Vice President of Research. The Assistant Director of EHOS and the Safety Manager have done most of the investigation work along with the Biosafety Chair. They have interviewed lots of people and have viewed camera footage from the security cameras to gain a full understanding of the investigation.

This meeting was to inform the committee and to prepare a report that will be reviewed by the committee, voted on as complete, and then sent to the Vice President of Research. To date, evidence is still being collected but it was brought before the IBC committee to inform and offer feedback regarding the ongoing investigation.

The EOHS Assistant Director stated that this was not reported until 48 hours later, which is a violation in itself. It should have been reported immediately to either the Biosafety Chairperson or the EHOS officer. This resulted in more people possibly being infected. They had to go through badge records and notify the individuals that were exposed to the contamination. The infected areas then had to be properly disinfected.

It's not known what is causing the illness in the animals at this point. A sample has been sent out to the lab for testing, the data from that has not come back yet. One individual reported some GI related symptoms, however as of late last week they believe that the GI issues might have come from their child being ill at home. All CMU staff and anyone who may have been potentially contaminated have been notified. There have been no additional reports to date of illness from this adverse event.

It was discussed that there is confusion in both the PI lab and the CMU staff on what it means to work with in a BSL-2 lab. It was noted that the report sent to the Vice President of Research, will highlight that remedial training will be recommended when working in a BSL-2 Lab. It was decided that a full synopsis of the event will be sent out to the committee containing the findings and a timeline of the investigation. The committee will be given a week to review the information in the report. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled to discuss the formal report, which will then be voted on and submitted to the Vice President of Research.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:14 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Michele Evans