

ChABSA 2023 Scientific Symposium

Panel Discussion



Building and Maintaining an Effective Biosafety Program - Walking the Line of Proactive vs. Reactive Biosafety

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Introduction

Breakdown of discussion

1. Panel discussion will be broken down into three topics
 1. Benefits and Challenges of Managing a Biosafety Program Reactively
 2. Benefits and Challenges of Managing a Biosafety Program Proactively
 3. Benefits and Challenges of Managing a Blended Reactive vs Proactive Biosafety Program
2. At the end of each topic there will be time for a brief Q&A with panelist (5 -10 min)
3. During the discussion with the panelist please hold audience questions until the Q&A portion of the topic. You can submit written questions via chat which we will try to address during the Q&A portion of the theme or at the end of the Panel Discussion.

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Panelist Introductions

**Paul Landon, CIH, CSP, RBP | National Biodefense
Analysis and Countermeasures Center (NBACC)**

**Paul Meechan, PhD, RBP, CBSP | Independent
Consultant**

Meghan Seltzer, PhD | MITRE Corporation

Describe 1 Biosafety Program You Have Managed

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Topic #1: - Benefits and Challenges of Managing a Biosafety Program Reactively

- **Reactive biosafety programs** work by developing and designing policies after a workplace incident to prevent future incidents of similar nature
- There is an inherent aspect of safety that will always involve reactive elements including incident response and emergent issues
- People are inherently reactive and many large institutions are challenged by the reactive/proactive balance
- We will discuss the causes and effects of a reactive biosafety program in our first section

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Topic #1: - Benefits and Challenges of Managing a Biosafety Program Reactively

Q1: Can you share a story (positive or negative) about a biosafety program that used a reactive approach in a situation and offer to us lessons learned?

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Topic #1: Benefits and Challenges of Managing a Biosafety Program Reactively

Q2: Could you explain the system/pathway at your research facility(ies) to report issues? What is/was the perception of the reporting pathway among staff? How do you help create a culture where personnel feel comfortable reporting near misses/safety issues?

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Topic #1: Benefits and Challenges of Managing a Biosafety Program Reactively

Q3: You need reactive elements to maintain a successful biosafety program. Explain how having a strong reactive element supports and benefits the overall biosafety program.

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Topic #1: Benefits and Challenges of Managing a Biosafety Program Reactively

Q&A with audience

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Topic #2: Benefits and Challenges of Managing a Biosafety Program Proactively

- **Proactive biosafety programs** work by taking a holistic approach in developing and designing policies based off of near miss reports and other leading indicators to prevent unintentional incidents
- While the fields of safety and biosafety may be inherently reactive, there are benefits to creating a proactive safety environment
- We will discuss the challenges of developing this type of approach and its short and long term benefits

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Topic #2: Benefits and Challenges of Managing a Biosafety Program Proactively

Q1: As a biosafety professional, you are expected to be a liaison for several groups. Biosafety also impacts multiple groups within an organization. Can you share an example of a group you worked with that did not prioritize proactive safety/biosafety and what actions were taken to influence the group to become proactive?

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Topic #2: Benefits and Challenges of Managing a Biosafety Program Proactively

Q2: Have you ever worked with external personnel to coordinate change? If so, what has been your experience with external personnel looking in? What have you observed from leadership, scientists, other staff, colleagues, etc. when external personnel assess your organization?

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Topic #2: Benefits and Challenges of Managing a Biosafety Program Proactively

Q3: Corporate or multinational biosafety programs face the challenge of losing control or individuality. How do you implement a proactive biosafety program when working with large facilities that may be throughout the United States or even across borders?

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Topic #2: Benefits and Challenges of Managing a Biosafety Program Proactively

Q&A with audience

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Topic #3 - Benefits and Challenges of Managing a Blended Reactive vs Proactive Biosafety Program

Blended biosafety programs combine both proactive and reactive elements to mitigate hazards of a research facility

We will discuss the benefits of this approach and the challenges that this type of balance presents to a safety program

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Topic #3 - Benefits and Challenges of Managing a Blended Reactive vs Proactive Biosafety Program

Q1: How do you find the balance for a blended reactive/proactive biosafety program? What kind of strategies do you implement to change the safety culture to think in these terms?

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Topic #3 - Benefits and Challenges of Managing a Blended Reactive vs Proactive Biosafety Program

Q2: Financial resources can impact the amount of change in your organization. What are some strategies to convince management that the financial investment outweighs the risk?

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Topic #3 - Benefits and Challenges of Managing a Blended Reactive vs Proactive Biosafety Program

Q3: What technology have you used to become a more proactive biosafety professional? (Metrics, automated emails to remind people to take training, software, emergency response planning software etc.)

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Q&A



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Additional Questions

- Incidents and near misses will happen. Unexpected situations will present itself that are beyond our control as biosafety professionals. Reactive change management takes place when you implement change after a need, opportunity or unexpected situation presents itself. Yet, some may be hesitant to acknowledge a level of unpreparedness or want to protect their job or staff. What message or words of encouragement can you share with us today about making reactive changes in a positive and structured way?
- Especially working with BSAT you work in a highly regulated compliance driven model. While you need to stay in compliance, it is naturally a reactive model for doing business. How do you make sure safety above the regulations required?
- How do you set up a pathway for people to report issues? Who is that person?
- What strategies do you use to transition to proactive biosafety from reactive biosafety?

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Additional Questions

- What strategies do you use to transition to proactive biosafety from reactive biosafety?
- Have you implemented a biosafety safety management system?
- If we do choose to report with a negative connotation which is being proactive. However, there is a negative connotation (incidents go dramatically up but people are actually reporting them). It is going to get worse before it gets better when you try to retrofit a strong reactive program.
- How do you avoid people abusing programs (e.g. incentives for low safety accidents/near misses)... Traditionally, rewards have been given in a reactive situation so there are no more incidents. How do you implement an incentive program that would reward/encourage reporting? How do you get buy-in from leadership to make a more proactive culture?

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References

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