



ND Bench Guide for BT Agents

A new “ND Bench Guide for Bioterrorism Agents” was sent to each sentinel lab the week of March 19. The bench guide is modeled after the updated APHL bench cards and follow ASM guidelines.

Some key updates include: *B. cereus* biovar anthracis guidance, the addition of “Trigger points,” a gram negative identification flowchart, and updated contact information.

A Biothreat Agent Poster is also available on the APHL website. If you did not receive your ND Bench Guide, please contact Tracy Hoke at 328-6284 to obtain a copy.



B. cereus, biovar *anthracis* update

Any isolate suspected of being *B. cereus*, biovar *anthracis* should be investigated to determine if the isolate is significant regardless of motility.

1. If the isolate was recovered from a sterile site or from a wound culture the clinical lab should contact the patient’s attending physician to determine the likely clinical significance (e.g., does the patient have an anthrax-like clinical syndrome?).
2. Appropriate travel history should be obtained.
3. If the isolate is deemed significant, contact the North Dakota Department of Health, Division of Microbiology and refer the isolate for confirmatory testing.

For more information on *B. cereus*, biovar *anthracis*, see: <https://www.asm.org/images/PSAB/LRN/Anthrax%20LRN%20091217.pdf>

Biosafety Box: Safety Climate vs. Safety Culture

A laboratory’s safety climate can be defined as what is stated in their policies. Safety culture is what is actually practiced in the lab. In other words, what we SAY we will do vs. what we REALLY do. The gap between a laboratory’s written safety policies and the employee’s actions is the true measure of the effectiveness of a biosafety program. For example, we might say that we will have open communication about facility issues that impact biosafety, but we actually only communicate these problems to management. One of the biggest challenges of biosafety is to work to close that gap!

Kratom-associated *Salmonella* outbreak

In March 2018, the ND Department of Health issued a news release regarding *Salmonella* cases associated with kratom use. Kratom is a plant native to southeast Asia, and is used as a dietary supplement or for recreational use. It can be consumed in powder form, as tea, or pills. The US Food and Drug Administration issued a mandatory recall of kratom products manufactured, processed, or packed by Triangle Pharmedicals on April 3. To date, there have been 87 salmonellosis cases reported in 35 states.