

GM Animal and GM Plant Containment Measures

The following is a summary of containment measures for work with GM animals and GM plants reproduced from the Scientific Advisory Committee on Genetic Modification - SACGM:

GM Animals

Containment and control measures for work with GM animals need to follow certain basic principles, and be appropriate to the size or species of animal used animals should be housed in appropriate pens, cages or enclosures;

- all potential routes of escape should be identified and controlled
- measures should be put in place to detect, capture or destroy escaped animals;
- appropriate barriers should be used on exits to prevent escape of animals into general circulation areas e.g. corridors;
- all procedures should be carried out in such a way as to control the risk of escape;
- rooms used to house GM animals should be locked and access restricted to authorised persons only;
- animals should be transported to and from rooms/facilities in appropriate containment;
- written records should be kept of births, deaths, use and disposal of vertebrate animals (records kept for Home Office requirements are sufficient);
- if animals have been identified as posing a risk to human health or the environment, a written record should be kept of any accidents or escapes.
- staff should receive appropriate training; and
- waste, including animal carcasses should be disposed of appropriately.

GM Plants

There are certain basic principles of containment and control that should be used, irrespective of the size or species of plant being used. These comprise both physical and procedural measures:

- the building used to house the plants should be capable of containing the work and withstanding normal climatic conditions;
- plants should not be planted directly into the ground;
- the facility should be easy to clean and maintain;
- the need to control drainage from the facility should be considered, and if necessary be able to trap run-off water for inactivation (ie if it could be contaminated with GM material);
- access to the facility should be controlled;
- handwashing facilities should be used to control the spread of pollen or seeds on the hands of staff
- appropriate protective clothing should be used in the facility which should be removed before leaving;
- GM plants should be clearly labelled;
- measures may be needed to control the ingress of vermin, birds or insects that could spread pollen or seeds from the facility;
- plants and plant material should be transported to and from the facility in suitable containment;
- the growth of plants in the immediate environment should be controlled;
- all waste should be disposed of appropriately - this could include plant growth media, pots or other equipment that could be contaminated with GM material eg seeds;
- work in the facility should be restricted to a limited range of GM material and where possible GM and non-GM work should be physically separated eg in different rooms; and
- measures should be in place to control the escape and dissemination of seeds and pollen.