Thank you for contacting the Public Health Agency of Canada (the Agency).

Please note that there are currently no regulatory requirements for laboratories within Canada that are handling Risk Group 1 (RG1) biological material. However, due care should be exercised and safe work practices should be followed in order to minimise any risk that may be associated with the activities conducted.

The Agency is currently drafting a document for safe practices for work at containment level 1 (CL1). In the interim, we recommend you follow good laboratory practices as outlined below, adapted to your project of a mobile public mini-lab for RG1 microorganisms.

Recommendations:

- A documented procedural (safety) manual be available for all staff, and its requirements followed;
- Personnel training on the potential hazards associated with the work involved and the necessary precautions to prevent exposure to infectious agents and release of contained material (personnel should show evidence that they understood the training provided; the training should be documented and signed by both the employee and supervisor; and retraining programs should also be implemented);
- Eating, drinking, smoking, storing of either food, personal belongings, or utensils, applying cosmetics, and inserting or removing contact lenses should not be permitted in any laboratory (the wearing of contact lenses is permitted only when other forms of corrective eye wear are not suitable; wearing jewellery is not recommended in the laboratory);
- Oral pipetting of any substance should be prohibited in any laboratory;
- Long hair to be tied back or restrained so that it cannot come into contact with hands, specimens, containers or equipment;
- Open wounds, cuts, scratches and grazes should be covered with waterproof dressings;
- Laboratories are to be kept clean and tidy (Storage of materials that are not pertinent to the work and cannot be easily decontaminated such as journals, books, correspondence, etc.), should be minimized; paperwork and report writing should be kept separate from such biohazardous materials work areas);
- Protective laboratory clothing, properly fastened, worn by all personnel (suitable footwear with closed toes and heels should be worn in all laboratory areas);
- Careful consideration given to the identification of procedures requiring eye and face protection, and selection appropriate to the hazard where there is a known or potential risk of exposure to splashes or flying objects, whether during routine operations or under unusual circumstances (e.g., accidents), eye and face protection should be used;
- Gloves (e.g., latex, vinyl, co-polymer) worn for all procedures that might involve direct skin contact with biohazardous material (gloves are to be removed when leaving the laboratory and decontaminated with other laboratory wastes before disposal);
- The use of needles, syringes and other sharp objects should be strictly limited (needles and syringes should be used only for parenteral injection and aspiration of fluids from laboratory animals and diaphragm bottles; caution should be used when handling needles and syringes to avoid auto-inoculation and the generation of aerosols during use and disposal; where appropriate, procedures should be performed in a BSC; needles should not be bent, sheared, recapped or removed from the syringe; they should be promptly

placed in a puncture-resistant sharps container (in accordance with Canadian Standards Association [CSA] standard Z316.6-95(R2000))(6) before disposal);

- Hands washed after gloves removed before leaving the laboratory and at any time after handling materials known or suspected to be contaminated;
- Work surfaces cleaned and decontaminated with a suitable disinfectant at the end of the day and after any spill of potentially biohazardous material (Work surfaces that have become permeable (i.e., cracked, chipped, loose) to biohazardous material should be replaced or repaired);
- Disinfectants effective against the agents in use available at all times within the areas where the biohazardous material is handled or stored;
- Leak-proof containers used for the transport of infectious materials within facilities (e.g., between laboratories in the same facility).
- For further information or guidance, please contact our biosafety and biosecurity group directly at 613- 957-1779.

The Agency, as well as the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), regulate facilities within Canada that manipulate or store pathogens or toxins. The Canadian Biosafety Standards and Guidelines (CBSG), outlining operational and physical requirements for laboratories handling risk groups 2, 3 and 4 (RG) pathogens, has been published. Please visit the website at http:// canadianbiosafetystandards.collaboration.gc.ca/.

Moreover, depending on the intended work with the RG1 agents, Environment Canada made be consulted as they would provide guidance for substances that are intended to be released in the environment.