AI SAFETY SANDBOX · BIOSECURITY

Build a customer-screening training dataset

Intermediate · A few weeks · Free · Project idea

Online version: https://ai-safety-sandbox.vercel.app/projects/customer-screening-dataset/

Summary

Expand a handful of existing case studies into 25–40 profiles of legitimate and concerning customers, including historical cases of people who ordered dangerous biological material.

Why it matters

Training screening teams, grounding policy discussions and sharpening screening rules all need realistic examples.

What you will have at the end

A structured case-study dataset.

Before you start: dual-use risk

Some biosecurity work can be misused. Work with an experienced mentor, keep anything you publish high-level, and ask before sharing detailed material. See BlueDot's guide: https://blog.bluedot.org/p/dual-use-advice

Status

Likely to be picked up by IBBIS/EBRC in 2026. Contact them before starting; there may still be room to help.

How to start (tick each box as you go)

- [ ] **1. Write your question in one sentence.**
- [ ] **2. Spend 30 minutes finding what has already been written about it.**
- [ ] **3. Collect evidence in a simple table: claim, source, how strong.**
- [ ] **4. Draft 1–2 pages: answer first, then reasons, then uncertainties.**
- [ ] **5. Ask one person to poke holes in it, revise, and share.**

Key terms

DNA synthesis screening
Checking orders for synthetic DNA, and the customers placing them, so companies do not unknowingly help someone build a dangerous pathogen.

Dual-use
Knowledge or tools that can be used for protection or for harm. In biosecurity this calls for extra care

about what you research and publish.

Source and links

Langenkamp & Alexanian — Five tractable biosecurity projects you could start tomorrow (2025)
https://forum.effectivealtruism.org/posts/RwMpnHwqhTZ2rrwbr/five-tractable-biosecurity-projects-you-could-start-tomorrow

IBBIS customer screening work
https://ibbis.bio/translating-customer-screening-guidance-into-practical-tools/

EBRC end-to-end stress testing
https://ebrc.org/focus-areas-security-end-to-end-stress-testing-e2est-of-dna-synthesis-screening/

When you have finished

Write a few paragraphs on what you did, what you found and what you would try next, and share it with a friend, your society or online.

Courses, mentors, small grants and communities:
https://ai-safety-sandbox.vercel.app/next-steps/

Questions? Ask in AI Safety Cardiff University (AISCU): https://aiscu.org/

Notes