

Introduction

The Occupational Health Program plays an important role in the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Institutional Animal Care Program. This program is designed to protect both UW-Milwaukee's personnel and the laboratory animals they work with. This brochure is an introduction to the current Occupational Health Program for all personnel with laboratory animal contact (it is not restricted to only those individuals who work in the research laboratory setting). The requirements of this program are based on guidelines from the National Research Council's "Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals" and the "Occupational Health and Safety in the Care and Use of Research Animals". Specific questions regarding individual medical needs should be directed to the individual's personal physician.

Who Should Participate?

All individuals with animal contact participate in the program. These individuals may include, but are not limited to, animal care staff, investigators, research assistants, fellows, graduate students, undergraduate students, facility managers, IACUC members, support staff, maintenance staff and custodians. Investigators, department heads and supervisors may identify additional personnel whose contact with laboratory animals, tissues or waste from laboratory animals warrant participation in the program. It is the principal investigator or supervisor's responsibility to ensure that their staff has received all the pertinent information included in the program prior to coming into contact with animals.

What is Included?

A minimum health program for persons with animal contact includes participation in the Animal Care Program training process; having a current tetanus inoculation (<10 years old); and being aware of the potential zoonotic diseases and risks to which the individual may be exposed.

As part of the Animal Care Program training process, individuals receive information on zoonotic diseases and occupational allergies and asthma. They also receive information on risk factors present in the workplace and methods to reduce hazards in the workplace.

All individuals are encouraged to review the following website:

www4.uwm.edu/usa/acp/occ_health/ that contains information on ergonomics, injuries, personal protective equipment, CO2 cylinder use, blood borne pathogens, inoculation procedures, emergency preparedness, chemical right to know and other safety topics.

An "Animal Care Program Occupational Health Questionnaire" is required to be completed by all individuals having contact with mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish, their tissues, or their waste. The form requests information regarding health history including past animal exposure, immunization and allergy status. The forms are sent to occupational health professionals at Columbia St. Mary's Corporate Worx for evaluation. Individuals are contacted if necessary for further advice. All medical information is held confidential by the above entities. The Animal Care Program at UWM only retains a record of whether or not individuals complete the form.

Individuals who have very minimal contact (i.e. students whose exposure to animals is by participation in a teaching exercise) are not required to participate in the completion of the "Animal Care Program Occupational Health Questionnaire". They are provided with information about any health considerations relative to the animals with which they have contact and precautions they should take to reduce hazards.

A reminder to complete the "Animal Care Program Health Questionnaire Follow-Up" form is sent to all individuals who completed the initial form on an annual basis. The form requests information on any changes in the individual's personal health during the past 12 months and any changes in responsibilities relating to animal exposure. Completion of the form is voluntary, however the individual is sent a form requiring them to choose to complete the form or "opt-out". The

questionnaires are evaluated in the same fashion as the initial forms and individuals are contacted for further advice if necessary.

How Do You Participate?

All individuals who will come in contact with animals are required to participate in the Animal Care Program training program. As part of the training program individuals receive this brochure, the "Animal Care Program Occupational Health Questionnaire" and the "Laboratory Animal Allergies" brochure if necessary, and receive training from the Veterinarian or Lab Manager on potential exposure to zoonotic diseases, allergies and methods to reduce hazards and risk factors in the workplace.

In Case of Injury:

Response to Animal Bites or Scratches

1. Wash wound thoroughly with soap and warm water. Wound may then be cleaned with betadine scrub and/or hydrogen peroxide. Betadine wipes and hydrogen peroxide are in the cabinets in Garland-Pearse animal rooms and above the sink in Lapham B59A, indicated with a first aid sign.
2. Bandage the wound and apply pressure to stop any bleeding.
*Quarantine and/or label the animal involved, if possible.
3. All animal bites should be evaluated by a medical professional. Of greatest concern are bites or scratches that are deep, that occur over joints or tendons, and that will not stop bleeding after 10-15 minutes of direct pressure. If any swelling, redness, or increasing pain occurs around the injury site, see your health care provider immediately.
4. Report the incident to your supervisor and complete all appropriate forms (see next section).

Injury Reporting:

If you are injured while working with animals or an animal-related health problem is suspected, report the problem to your immediate supervisor and the Lab Manager or Veterinarian.

--If you are faculty, staff, graduate teaching or graduate project assistant or undergraduate student employee complete: Employee's Work Injury and Illness Report within the first 24 hours of the injury (Contact the Worker's Compensation Office for forms at x4463 or check the following website <http://uwm.edu/hr/home/forms/absences-leaves-and-workers-compensation-forms/>).

--If you are an undergraduate student not employed by UWM or a graduate student research assistant (payrolled by UWM) complete: General Incident Report (Contact the Risk Management Office at x6339 for forms or check the following website <https://uwm.edu/risk-management/forms/>).

If the problem has occurred during or after normal business hours and needs emergency care you may contact the Campus Police (9-911) for assistance from on campus.

If the problem has occurred during normal business hours and is not an emergency you may go to the Norris Health Center (students only) or to your personal physician.

If any swelling or redness occurs around the injured site see a physician as soon as possible.

Pregnant Women:

Working with hazardous agents, in particular exposure to toxic chemicals and certain anesthetic vapors should be avoided especially during the first trimester of pregnancy. Your supervisor or the Department of University Safety & Assurances may be consulted for Material Safety Data Sheets for all chemicals in the workplace.

All women who are considering pregnancy or are pregnant should inform their physician of their employment and agents of possible exposure.

For additional information, please see:
www4.uwm.edu/usa/acp/occ_health/#PREGNANCY

Disease Communicable From Animals to Humans- Zoonoses:

Humans may be susceptible to infectious diseases suffered by animals. Infectious diseases transmitted from animals to humans are called zoonotic diseases. In many cases the animal shows little, if any, sign of illness. A bacterium from the normal flora of a healthy animal may cause a serious disorder in a person exposed to it. While the animals have developed a “resistance” to these microorganisms, humans with no previous exposure to the agent may lack this protective immunity. Therefore, one should always be aware of the possible consequences of working with animals and take appropriate precautions to minimize the risk of infection. In the event that an individual becomes ill, it is important that they inform their personal physician that they work with animals.

Examples of specific zoonotic diseases and the potential animal reservoirs are described elsewhere in this brochure or in the “Guide to the Responsible Care and Use of Animals in Teaching and Research at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.” Some common sense steps can be taken to decrease the risk of infection. These include adherence to the Personal Protective Equipment Policies that describe the appropriate clothing and equipment to wear while working with animals under various condition. Eating

and drinking are not allowed in animal rooms. Break rooms are provided for these activities.



If You Work with Rodents:

Contact with rodents or rodent tissue requires precautions against some diseases such as lymphatic choriomeningitis (LCM). LCM is a rodent neurological virus that can be transmitted to man. Attention should also be paid to the possibility of allergic reactions. An additional concern for investigators coming in contact with wild rodents is Hantavirus.



If You Work with Birds, Reptiles, Amphibians or Fish:

Birds can carry diseases such as psittacosis. Only inspected and properly quarantined birds should be used in research or teaching. Individuals can also be allergic to birds or avian feathers.

Salmonella is frequently harbored in turtles and other reptiles and amphibians. The use of gloves and good hand-washing is always recommended after contact with reptiles and amphibians.

Mycobacterium marinum is a bacterium that may cause disease in fish and people. The use of waterproof gloves and good hand/arm-washing is recommended

after contact with fish or aquarium water especially if individuals have breaks in the skin.

If You Work with Hazardous Agents:

Hazardous biological, chemical, and physical agents may be encountered when working with animals or in the animal facilities. Training is available and should be performed prior to working with these potentially hazardous agents. Individuals should be aware of, understand, and know how to protect themselves from hazards prior to working with these agents. Examples of biological agents include *E. coli* and *Salmonella*; chemical agents include disinfectants, pesticides, and feed or bedding contaminants; and physical agents include hot materials from the autoclave or cage washing machines.

Read and follow standard operating procedures (SOPs) for working with hazardous agents. SOPs should address safety measures that include the use of personal protective equipment, exhaust ventilation (i.e., fume hood and biological safety cabinet), and techniques for handling the hazardous agents as well as where to find hazardous information about the agent (i.e., Safety Data Sheets).

Good personal hygiene practices are critical when working around hazardous agents and animals. Hand-washing after removing gloves, handling chemicals, infectious materials, or animals, and before leaving the laboratory is critical. All work surfaces—after work and daily—should be decontaminated. All contaminated materials should be decontaminated by autoclaving or chemical disinfection before washing, reuse, or disposal.

For further information on working with hazardous agents, contact your supervisor or the Department of University Safety & Assurances at 229-6339 or view the following website:

www4.uwm.edu/usa/acp

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Animal Care Program

Occupational Health Program for Personnel with Laboratory Animal Contact



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Tel: 414-229-6016
www4.uwm.edu/usa/

Training Manual/ Certification Exam

<http://www4.uwm.edu/usa/acp/training/>