

# **UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON**

## **INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE COMMITTEE**

### **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY SOP**

1. Institutional policies for personal hygiene, handling hazardous agents, and personnel protection:
  - a. Investigators are required to identify possible hazards (chemical, biological, animal-related, etc.) in the protocol application for animal use. Potential hazards and/or possibility of zoonoses transmission are considered by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) during protocol review. At least one staff member from the Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) serves as a consultant or voting member of the IACUC to provide safety consultation and expertise. All individuals applying for approval to conduct work with animals must complete UT Arlington's Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) training which is provided through an online module as well as Animal Care Facility (ACF) Orientation. Based on the hazard risks of the protocol, individuals may also be required to complete additional trainings such as Hazard Communication and Waste Management Training, Biosafety Level 2 (BSL-2) Training, Bloodborne Pathogens for Laboratory Research Personnel Training, Respiratory Protection, Radiation Awareness and Radiation Producing Machine (X-ray) Training. Individuals are also required to follow all animal hazard safety procedures established by the UT Arlington ACF.
  - b. To reduce the possibility of zoonoses transmission, strict personal hygiene is enforced. Eating, drinking, smoking, and the application of cosmetics is strictly prohibited in the ACF except for the designated breakroom areas. Protective clothing is required within the ACF. In daily practice, lab coats should be worn and changed between labs housing different species. Individuals should wash their hands before and after handling animals and whenever protective, disposable gloves are removed. Gloves must be worn while handling animals or if there is a potential for contact with hazardous chemicals or infectious agents. Safety glasses/chemical splash goggles or face shields should be worn when handling hazardous or infectious liquids. In certain instances, as determined by the EH&S, respiratory protection may be required. EH&S will provide respirator fitting and training when applicable.
  - c. The EH&S is responsible for picking up and disposing of hazardous waste and sharps generated in the ACF.
2. Pre-placement medical evaluation, required immunizations, preventive medicine program, zoonosis surveillance, and procedures for reporting and treating injuries:

Prior to being given access to the ACF, an individual must submit current proof of tetanus immunization and complete a medical evaluation questionnaire to help identify any medical condition(s) that may pose a health risk because of contact with animals. The medical evaluation questionnaire queries the individual on any known allergies, conditions of known suppressed immune system, and includes information regarding the danger of zoonoses, and pregnancy while working with animals. Individuals with existing or potential health concerns will be identified and may require further precautions and protection before beginning work with animals. Additional precautions may include limited access to animals or facilities, additional personnel protective equipment requirements, additional training in hazards and preventive measures, and/or frequent health monitoring. Individuals are required to complete the medical evaluation questionnaire on an annual basis to monitor any changes in health conditions. Medical information is kept confidential and is only reviewed by the IACUC's OHS Nurse.

- a. To further help prevent zoonoses transmission and injuries (such as animal bites and scratches), individuals are required to complete hands-on training before beginning work with animals. The ACF Staff conducts the hands-on training which includes species-specific information on animal behavior and animal handling techniques.
  - b. The UT Arlington ACF also participates in a sentinel program through IDEXX BioResearch Serology Testing to aid in surveillance of zoonoses. The animals are tested for pathogens quarterly by the ACF Staff using the IDEXX RADIL Comprehensive Profile. Samples are submitted to IDEXX quarterly for complete serology testing. Results of these tests are reviewed by the Attending Veterinarian (AV), and Principal Investigators (PIs) are informed of the results. Records are documented and maintained by the ACF Staff.
  - c. If an individual is injured while working in the ACF, they should immediately report to UT Arlington Health Services (students) or their personal physician (faculty/staff) for treatment. Any injuries incurred while working in the ACF should be reported as soon as possible to the ACF Manager who will then report to the OHS Nurse as well as EH&S. The OHS Nurse and EH&S will keep records of accidents and injuries.
  - d. At each IACUC meeting, the OHS Nurse gives a standing report which identifies accidents, injuries, occupational health inspection findings, and other health and safety concerns, and EH&S gives a report which identifies safety hazards as well as high-risk areas and research projects to be considered by the IACUC and ACF Staff. Information from this report will be considered and included in the IACUC's Semi-Annual Program Review and Facility Inspection.
3. Description of covered personnel; procedures for hazard and risk assessment; and training of personnel:
- a. All personnel involved in the care and use of research animals, regardless of employment status, will require an appropriate level of participation in the OHS Program based on the level of risks encountered. This may include investigators, veterinarians, animal-care technicians, research assistants, students, visitors, IACUC

members, workers in areas adjacent to laboratories, maintenance and custodial personnel, EH&S staff, and security personnel.

- b. Hazard and risk assessment begins during the IACUC's initial review of the research project. Occupational health and safety, including potential hazards, personnel at risk, training, etc. is addressed in the initial animal use protocol application. Hazards and risks are considered by the IACUC. Appropriate protections and precautions for identified hazards and risks may be required as a condition of research approval. Certain hazards must be identified by an Animal Hazard Safety Protocol Form posted in the hazard area according to the ACF Hazardous Agents Classification, Containment, Communication, and Safety Equipment SOP.
- c. Additionally, before an individual begins activities involving animals, they must enroll in the OHS Program. This includes completion of OHS Training, documentation of tetanus immunization, and completion of a medical evaluation questionnaire (referenced above). A specific plan of occupational health and safety will be developed for individuals identified with health concerns or a potential for health concerns.
- d. OHS Training is part of the General IACUC online training module as well as ACF Orientation. All personnel involved in the care and use of research animals are required to complete both before commencement of animal research. The training includes information pertaining to physical hazards, allergens, zoonotic diseases, containment procedures, animal health and handling procedures, and generally accepted protective procedures and equipment for working with commonly used lab animals.