



Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee Guidelines and Policies

June, 2007

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAM FOR ANIMAL RESEARCHERS

Institutions that receive Federal funding to conduct animal research must provide an occupational health program for those that work with animals. Rosalind Franklin University's program of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) for individuals who have animal contact in the course of their employment or studies has been developed in accordance with federal regulations and the recommendations outlined in the "Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals" and "Occupational Health and Safety in the Care and Use of Research Animals".

Who should be enrolled in the program?

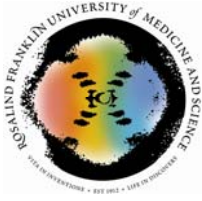
All individuals who work with or have contact with research animals as a component of their employment must be enrolled in the OHS program. This applies to all workers who work directly with research animals, well as those who are only indirectly exposed. Thus, faculty, staff and students who work with research animals or use fresh tissue harvested from animals on approved animal protocols need to be enrolled, as do all members of the Biological Resource Facility's (BRF) animal care staff. In addition, people who have indirect contact with animals because their job requires occasional entry to the BRF (e.g. personnel in engineering & maintenance, security or IT who need to enter animal housing facilities to attend to plumbing, communications, etc.) must be enrolled in the program. Students who are only exposed to animals in a classroom setting are not required to enroll in the OHS program, but the instructor should provide them with information about any health risks associated with the species they will be exposed to.

How do you enroll personnel in the program?

The form for enrollment in the OHS program for animal workers can be found on the "Forms" section of the IACUC website, or can be downloaded here: [Enrollment and Risk Assessment Form for Animal Research OHS program.](#)

What is risk assessment about?

The enrollment form includes a risk assessment section. An employee or student is considered at "increased risk" if they are exposed to live, vertebrate animals in a way that gives them an increased chance of getting an occupational illness, such as allergy, a physical injury or a zoonotic disease. People who work with or around animals **are** at increased risk of getting an animal related illness compared to people who do not have any contact. However, risk assessment is intended to classify individuals into one of several groups, depending on their type and extent of contact with animals. The requirements for training, monitoring and vaccination status vary depending on the risk category. Individuals who have extensive exposure to animals (e.g. animal care staff, investigators who do surgeries on large mammals) are in a different risk



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group than individuals who have minimal animal contact (e.g. an individual who assists on a research project but only works with tissue harvested from a mouse) and will need more extensive training. In addition, people who only occasionally enter the BRF for other non-animal related duties (for example engineering/maintenance staff who are fixing a plumbing leak) are in an even lower category of risk. However, everyone exposed to animals must participate in the OHS program at the most basic level: Enrollment, Basic Training and a Facilities Tour. Table 1 – found at the end of this document summarizes the main risk groups and the requirements of the OHS program for each of these.

Supervisors must objectively evaluate the working conditions of those working under their supervision and complete the risk assessment part of the OHS enrollment form. This initial assessment defines the type of species and the extent of animal contact and the estimated risk. Supervisors are encouraged to consult with IACUC, EH&S or Human Resources for general guidance in risk assessment if questions arise. In addition, the veterinary Director of the BRF can be consulted about questions concerning zoonotic risks or other issues involving working with animals.

Tetanus Vaccination

Individuals who work with live animals are at increased risk for animal bites as well as other types of puncture wounds (e.g. from equipment they may use in the course of their work with animals). Thus, a current tetanus vaccine is recommended for everyone who works with, or has direct exposure to, animals. If your enrollment/risk assessment form indicates a general risk category of III or IV, you are required to maintain current tetanus vaccination status. If an employee has not had a tetanus vaccine/booster within a 10 year time frame (or can't remember when they last had one) they should make arrangements to obtain a tetanus shot. The university will provide one free of charge; the form needed to obtain a free tetanus shot at a local clinic can be obtained from the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (X3420).

People at Special Risk – Additional Risk Assessment Needed!

There are individuals who are considered at special risk in the context of the OHS program for animal workers. They need to be informed of this and should be referred for additional risk assessment with an occupational health physician to determine their needs and limitations in their proposed work with animals. For example, individuals with altered immunocompetence (e.g. someone undergoing chemotherapy for cancer, someone who has had a transplant, persons who suffer from chronic infections, etc.), pregnant individuals (or those attempting to get pregnant) as well as individuals with existing allergies or asthma should undergo additional risk assessment and be referred to an occupational health physician. This process is initiated by contacting the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (X3420).

The supervisor who is filling out the OHS enrollment and risk assessment form should always notify their personnel of the following: **If you think you may have a health condition that**



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could make you more susceptible to illness than an average worker, you can arrange a confidential assessment with an Occupational Health Physician free of charge. Any discussion between them and the physician will be kept strictly in confidence. Arrangements can be made either through the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (X3420) or Human Resources (X3262).

If you will be working with biohazards or radioactivity in animals you will also require additional risk assessment and will need additional advanced training. This is done as a coordinated effort between your supervisor/Principal Investigator, IACUC and EHS. Be sure that you are fully comfortable and confident that you have received adequate training for your duties before engaging in any activities involving animals.

Facilities Tour:

Everyone who will need to enter the Biological Resource Facility as a part of their job must complete a Facility Tour. These are offered on a regular basis (contact the BRF Manager to arrange such a tour: X8470). The tour will provide orientation to the facility as also provide the employee with the basic rules and regulations that are in force (clothing such as closed toe shoes required, noise and photography are prohibited, etc). There are definitely areas (biohazard areas for example) that require special protective equipment and training to enter and some rules about moving between zones in the BRF. In the case of graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, the tours can also be run by the PI of the lab they will be working in.

Reporting And Treatment Of Illnesses, Injuries Or Accidents:

- All injuries, illnesses or accidents involving animals or occurring in the BRF shall be reported immediately to the employee's **supervisor and to RFUMS Security at X3288.**
- ***In case of an emergency, “911” may be dialed from any phone once an outside line has been reached by dialing “9”.***
- Security, with the help of the supervisor and the employee (if possible) will promptly investigate all injuries, illnesses or other incidents. Appropriate corrective measures to prevent reoccurrence shall be implemented with the assistance of the Office of Environmental, Health and Safety.
- Individuals who observe conditions or work practices that pose a potential safety risk should notify their supervisor and/or the Office of Environmental, Health and Safety.



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EDUCATION & TRAINING FOR RISK REDUCTION:

A fundamental component of an OHS program is education and training. Everyone who has contact with research animals must, at a minimum, have “Basic Training”. The IACUC has prepared a brochure “[Introduction to Animal Hazards](#)” that can be obtained from our web site, from the IACUC office, or from Human Resources. This brochure introduces the range of risks encountered in the care and use of research animals at the University as well as to provides some education about how to reduce the risks to enable a safer and healthier workplace.

The other document that IACUC has prepared is also found on the web site and is called “[Guidelines For Risk Reduction When Working Around Animals](#)”. The last page of this document has a summary of “Best Practices” to reduce risks associated with research animals. Finally, there is an information page on [Zoonoses](#) that will be of interest to anyone working with research animals.

It is the supervisor’s responsibility to ensure that all individuals in their departments are appropriately trained in safe work practices and animal hazards before starting work that involves exposure to animals. In the case of researchers, the supervisor is the PI, and that individual is responsible for the training of everyone in their laboratory who will be working with or exposed to animals.



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Table 1. Risk Categories and Requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Program for Individuals in Contact with Research Animals

<i>General Risk Category</i>	<i>Must complete:</i> <i>a. OHS Enrollment and Risk Form,</i> <i>b. Basic Training</i> <i>c. Facility Tour (1)</i>	<i>Requires:</i> <i>Advanced Training (2)</i>	<i>Requires:</i> <i>Additional Risk Assessment (3)</i>	<i>Requires:</i> <i>Tetanus Vaccine (4)</i>	<i>Requires:</i> <i>Specialized Services (physical exam) (5)</i>
I. Indirect Contact: Personnel who have infrequent access to the animal housing or procedure areas for other job duties (Security, IT, Engineering, etc)	yes	no	no	no	no
II. Animal Tissue Contact only: Research personnel who do not handle live animals but work with fresh animal tissues/fluids	yes	yes	no*	no	no
III Direct Animal Contact 1: Research staff or animal care & veterinary staff who handle live animals but do not perform invasive procedures.	yes	yes	yes	yes	As determined by OHS physician
IV. Direct Animal Contact 2: Research staff or animal care & veterinary staff who handle live animals and perform invasive procedures (e.g. surgery).	yes	yes	yes	yes	As determined by OHS physician

(1) if yes, the enrollment and risk assessment form must be filed with the IACUC office (X8543); basic training and a facility tour must also be completed.

(2) If yes, the PI (supervisor) must provide and document such training.

(3) If yes, additional risk assessment can be arranged through EHS (X3420)

(4) If yes, the university will provide this free of charge through EHS (X3420)

(5) After additional risk assessment, some individuals may require additional preventative services (respirator training, additional vaccines, physical exam, or physician supervised program)

**if any biohazards or radiation is involved this changes to a "yes" here.*