

September 23, 2012

**RESEARCH STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP)**  
**ANIMAL CARE AND USE PROGRAM**  
Infection Control Policy

1. **PURPOSE:** To provide policy and procedures for infection control and safety in research laboratories.
2. **POLICY:** Research Service operates in accordance with South Texas Veterans Health Care System (STVHCS) HIV-Standard precautions/Bloodborne Pathogens protocols and policies, as well as other local, state and federal regulations.
3. **ACTION:**
  - a. **Investigators** are responsible for insuring all employees adhere to guidelines.
  - b. **FOOD, DRINKS, AND SMOKING:** No food or drinks are permitted in laboratories. Food/drinks are permitted in break areas, and, in rooms in which no chemicals or microbiologic agents are used, handled, or stored. Only refrigerators specifically designated "For Food Only" are to be used for food storage. Users are responsible for temperature monitoring and cleanliness. Smoking is not permitted within the facility.
  - c. **PROTECTIVE WEAR:** Personal protective equipment shall be worn in accordance with hospital policy.
    - (1) **Gloves:** Gloves must be removed prior to leaving the lab. Procedural gloves will not be worn in hallways, corridors, bathrooms, offices, etc., or, when going from room-to-room through doorways where doorknobs, etc., are handled. Gloves used in a procedure to protect the individual can transfer contaminant (infectious, chemical, or radioactive) to other places. Dispose of gloves properly.
    - (2) **SHOES:** Opened-toe sandals or shoes are not permitted in any laboratory.
    - (3) Lab coats/smocks. Laboratory coats worn while working with radioactive materials, hazardous chemicals, or, other hazardous agents must not be worn outside of the immediate work area.
  - d. **WASTE DISPOSAL:**
    - (1) **GLASS:** Each lab will dispose of glassware in a large red sharps container and hauled away by the STVHCS biohazard contractor. Large red sharps containers are located in V203. DO NOT use cardboard boxes to collect glass.
    - (2) **SHARPS:** Needles should not be bent, sheared, replaced in the sheath or removed from the syringe following use. Needle and syringe should be immediately placed in a puncture resistant container. Containers are procured from a contracted vendor by the AO or the AO's representative, for distribution to the labs.

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- (3) **BIOHAZARDOUS WASTE:** All materials used for collection of animal or human blood or serum, human and animal tissue culture cell lines, and, related materials (i.e., pipettes, dishes, and other plastic ware) must be discarded in appropriate closable red leak-proof biohazard waste containers. Use refrigerator (CTR-2) for infectious materials or waste held in excess of 48 hours (over a weekend or holiday) prior to the waste contractor is notified for removal. Neutralize biohazardous liquid (i.e. cell culture medium such as RPMI) waste before disposal down the drain. Autoclave preventive maintenance and service records are maintained in room S201 contract folder.

**WARNING:** The sterilizer/autoclave in room V203 is not to be used to sterilize biohazardous waste (trash) of any type. Red or orange trash bags are NOT to be placed in the autoclave. The contractor will be called to remove all biohazardous waste containers. Place red or orange trash bags in the red leak-proof container.

### e. LAB PROCESS:

- (1) All reagents must be properly contained, labeled (including hazard warnings), and dated.
- (2) All areas will be kept clean and orderly. Avoid general clutter in laboratories. Users will keep common use areas clean (e.g., cold rooms, wash rooms, counting room, etc.)
- (3) Leave ceiling shower rings and chains hanging down for safety (e.g., if a person gets acid in the eye and is unable to see).
- (4) Each laboratory (or designated representative) with an outside eyewash station is responsible for flushing the station weekly and initialing date on the eyewash log.
- (5) Warning signs (e.g., radioactive, biohazard) should be placed on the room door and appropriate places within the room (e.g., refrigerator, sink, counter, disposal containers). Post current emergency contact numbers on the door.
- (6) Mouth pipetting is strictly forbidden.
- (7) Employees will report the presence of pests to the Research Office immediately. Environmental Management Service will contact the current contractor.

### f. INJURIES/INCIDENTS:

- (1) **INJURIES:** Escort injured employees to Occupational Health (formerly Employee Health) or Urgent Care during non-duty hours. Report injury to Research Office and ensure an accident report is filed within 24 hours. Adhere to current hospital reporting procedures. Post Texas Poison Control Network telephone number (1-800-222-1222) in the hallways.
  - a. UTHSCSA employees should be escorted to their occupational/employee health department for acute non-serious injuries. Serious injuries involving life, limb or eyesight should be escorted to the VA Emergency Department on the first floor directly below the lab area.
  - b. VA employees should be escorted to Employee Health for non-life threatening injuries. Injuries involving life, limb or eyesight should be escorted directly to the VA Emergency Department. Supervisors are to initiate an accident report with an hour of the accident if they have VA network access. Otherwise, report to the VMU supervisor or Administrative Officer for Research.

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- (2) **CHEMICAL EXPOSURE/SPILL:** Contact Green Environmental Management System Coordinator for chemical exposure or spill and follow procedures defined in the Research Service Chemical Hygiene Plan.

g. **VETERINARY MEDICAL UNIT (VMU):**

- (1) No smoking, drinking, or eating is permitted within the VMU animal or procedure rooms. Eating and drinking is limited to the VMU U235 Admin Area and U236 -employee break area.
- (2) No tours of the VMU will be conducted unless approved by the ACOS/Research or AO/Research and conducted by VMU Supervisor or his/her designee.
- (3) Identify/label infected animal rooms and cages with infective agents. All protocols using infectious agents require approval of the Subcommittee for Research Safety.
- (4) Put discarded scalpel blades, syringes, needles, and, other sharp items in rigid, puncture resistant sharps containers. Seal full sharps containers, labeled seal, and placed in Cold Room Number 2 plastic-lined biohazard box for pick-up. Replacement sharps containers can be obtained in room V203.
- (5) Personnel receiving any animal bites will wash the bite area with soap and water and report to the Occupational Health Physician during normal duty hours (or to Urgent Care/Triage during off hours) and file an accident report.
- (6) Handling of all contaminated material such as feed, bedding, and, caging equipment will be accomplished by Veterinary Medical Unit (VMU) personnel or appropriate laboratory personnel. Precautionary measures such as face masks, hair nets, gloves, and, protective clothing will be worn as required or necessary. The hospital Personal Protective Equipment and Clothing Policy will be adhered to. Place contaminated feed and bedding in autoclave bags and autoclaved before disposal. Contaminated clothing may be autoclaved and then washed. ("Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories (BMBL), 5<sup>th</sup> Edition) The sterilizer located in R206 will be used to sterilize all infective materials at the discretion of the VMU Supervisor, Veterinarian or Principal Investigator
- (7) Daily housekeeping duties, within the VMU, will be accomplished by VMU personnel using quaternary ammonium compounds and phenolics appropriate for areas being cleaned. Phenolics and any other listed EPA hazardous chemicals will be used in drip-type bottles and not spray bottles. Other Research Personnel are responsible for cleaning up after themselves, when using VMU facilities. Failure to accomplish this could result in VMU privileges being revoked.
- (8) The VMU will house animals purchased from an approved vendor or designated by the Department of Laboratory Animal Resources, UTHSCSA. Primates, sheep, goats, pigs, dogs, and cats will not be housed in the VMU.
- (9) The VMU, key-operated, freight elevator (S-9), adjacent to Stairwell No. 4, will be used for delivery of live animals. This elevator is to be used only for the transport of animals or VMU supplies, and only by authorized personnel. It will not be used to transport patients, by visitors, or by employees when not transporting animals/supplies.
- (10) All Laboratory animals arriving at the VMU must be shipped in filtered boxes. All rodents shipped to the VA will be delivered by warehouse personnel to VMU personnel for approval.

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Rodents will not be removed from filtered boxes until a VMU Technician clears the shipment. All newly assigned laboratory animals will be quarantined 72 hours for observation. Diseased or dead animals will be reported to the contracted Veterinary Medical Officer immediately. All animals will be disposed of by University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA).

- (11) Patient diagnostic equipment and treatment/monitoring areas may be used for nonhuman (animal) studies only when such use is of potential value to human patients. *A Request to Use Patient Care Procedural Area for Animal Studies* must be submitted through the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee and approved by the VA Facility Director prior to any use of patient areas for animal studies in accordance with VHA Handbook 1200.7.
- (12) Lab coats are required to enter any animal room. Mask and gloves are required in addition to lab coat if working directly with animals. Gowns, gloves, and mask will be worn in designated biohazard rooms. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be removed prior to existing biohazard rooms. Don clean PPE before entry into any other animal room.
- (13) Clidox-S and Sani-Wipes will be used to decontaminate walls, floors and surfaces in all infected animal rooms.

**4. REFERENCES:** None

**5. RESPONSIBILITY:** ACOS for Research and Development

**6. RECISSIONS:** Research Service Memorandum 10-01, September 10, 2010

**7. RECERTIFICATION:** September 2017

  
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