

March 8, 2019

**ANIMAL CARE AND USE PROGRAM**

Occupational Health and Safety for Personnel with Exposure to Research Animals

1. **PURPOSE:** To provide guidelines designed to facilitate the provision of a safe workplace and safe work practices for personnel working in an animal research setting.

2. **POLICY:** All personnel engaged in the care and use of research animals will comply with a program for personal hygiene, protective safety measures, safe use of hazardous materials, and preventive medicine. This policy applies to VA salaried employees, on-site Without Compensation (WOC) employees and intergovernmental personal assignment agreement (IPAA) and WOC appointees conducting VA IACUC-approved research off-site.

3. **RESPONSIBILITY:** Principal Investigators/Supervisors are responsible for ensuring all employees adhere to guidelines.

4. **ACTION:**

a. **PREVENTIVE MEDICINE PROGRAM (PMP) FOR PERSONNEL WITH DIRECT PHYSICAL CONTACT OR ROUTINE EXPOSURE TO LIVE ANIMALS, ANIMAL TISSUES OR BODY FLUIDS.** Personnel with direct physical contact or routine exposure to live animals, animal tissues or body fluids will participate in the PMP through the Occupational Health clinic. The PMP for employees with direct contact or routine exposure to research animals will include:

(1) **Medical Evaluation.** A pre-employment physical exam to ensure that a prospective new employee is capable of the physical demands of the position.

(2) **Pre-placement tuberculosis testing (required of all STVHCS personnel).** If the test is positive, further tests (e.g., chest x-ray) or follow-up will be determined by the Occupational Medicine Physician.

(3) **Baseline Review by the Occupational Health Physician.** Upon hire, the research personnel will complete the base line survey (Attachment 1) and supervisor or principal investigator will complete the Supervisor/PI certification (Attachment 2) provided by the Research Office. The individual (VA employees and WOC employees working in the VA) will make an appointment with Occupational Health clinic, located on the first floor, for review of the completed documents and an examination by the Occupational Medicine Physician. During the appointment, the Physician will ask about the individual's medical history, including their medications, type of work that will be performed, if their work involves zoonoses, and if they have any pre-existing allergies or receive immunosuppressive therapy. The VA Physician will determine the individual's risk for problems related to animal exposure and any potential protective measures that must be implemented. The VA Physician will sign the certification page and then give it to the researcher for delivery to the IACUC Administrator for filing. A similar procedure is arranged for VA WOCs and IPAAAs working at the University of Texas Health, San Antonio (UTHSA); however, they will make an appointment with Employee Health and Wellness Center. The UTHSA Employee Health and Wellness Center nurse will review the baseline survey, sign the certification page, and inform the IACUC Administrator by email of the completion.

(4) **Periodic Animal Exposure Questionnaire.** At least annually, during the Continuing Review of the research protocol, a Periodic Animal Exposure Questionnaire (Attachment 3) will be sent electronically to principal investigators and research assistants for completion. The completed form must be sent to either the VA Occupational Health Clinic or UTHSA Employee Health Clinic, depending upon work location. Upon review of the questionnaire, the clinician will determine if an appointment is necessary, and if any intervention is warranted. A list of the individuals who have completed their Occupational Health Risk Assessment will then be emailed to the IACUC Administrator by the VA and/or

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UTHSA clinic so that the continuing review of their protocol can be forwarded to the appropriate committees for approval.

(5) **Protective immunizations** (e.g., tetanus, rabies) will be provided at appropriate intervals in accordance with Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations. Booster tetanus immunization shall be given every 10 years or promptly as indicated for an animal bite. Follow-up titer tests will be performed as deemed necessary by the clinician.

(6) **Occupational Safety Training.** Personnel who have contact with experimental animals should receive training in the proper handling of the animals to minimize the risk of animal inflicted injuries. Personnel are instructed to avoid unnecessary risk when working with animals, and to seek expert assistance when in doubt. Training includes the use of protective clothing, equipment, practicing good hygiene, and universal precautions, where applicable. Personnel whose work responsibilities require that they lift heavy objects should be trained in proper lifting techniques.

**b. PREVENTIVE MEDICINE PROGRAM FOR PERSONNEL WITH INCIDENTAL EXPOSURE TO ANIMAL HOUSING AREAS:** Personnel that have incidental exposure to animal housing areas, such as Engineering or Environmental Management Services (EMS) personnel, will receive an information sheet (Attachment 4) that informs them of the potential for allergy to animal dander. The information sheet, which will be provided by the Research Service office prior to the individual being given access to the restricted VMU area, will instruct personnel who have pre-existing animal allergies, or who may develop allergy symptoms after exposure to the animal housing area, to seek consult from the Occupational Medicine Physician. The Occupational Medicine Physician will determine if the employee needs further evaluation or intervention.

**c. REPORTING AND TREATMENT OF INJURIES AND ILLNESS.** Injuries, animal bites, animal scratches, and cuts sustained in the animal facility or research laboratory should be reported promptly to the research personnel's supervisor. The injured person should then be referred to the Occupational Medicine Physician for evaluation and appropriate treatment. A Report of Accident must be completed by the injured person in the Employees' Compensation Operations & Management Portal (ECOMP) <https://www.ecomp.dol.gov/>. Illness should routinely be reported to the employee's supervisor.

**d. PERSONAL HYGIENE.** An important factor in protecting the health of personnel engaged in animal care or research is personal hygiene. All employees need to understand the importance of personal hygiene and specific measures that are to be taken routinely to protect themselves against zoonotic agents found naturally in experimental animals as well as hazardous agents used experimentally in approved biomedical animal studies.

(1) **Hand Washing.** Hand washing is a crucial safety measure for safeguarding personnel in the animal facility. Although the proper use of disposable gloves provides an effective means of preventing hand contamination, hands can easily become contaminated during the removal of contaminated gloves. Hands should be washed thoroughly with soap and water whenever they touch contaminated or potentially contaminated surfaces, liquids, or body fluids. Employees will wash hands before eating, drinking, applying cosmetics, touching contact lenses, and when departing the animal facilities. Soap and paper towels will be located near sinks.

(2) **Eating, drinking, and cosmetic application.** Eating, applying cosmetics, installing contact lenses and similar procedures are prohibited within the animal facility or in animal study areas except in designated areas that are free from potentially contaminated materials. A designated break room is available within the VMU for eating and drinking. Employees will store food in refrigerators and/or freezers designated exclusively for such use in room U236. Smoking is prohibited in Federal building except in designated outside smoking areas. Personnel who smoke should wash their hands prior to smoking. Signs are posted throughout the animal and laboratory facilities instructing personnel on the prohibition of eating, drinking, and smoking.

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### e. PROTECTION.

(1) Veterinary Medical Unit (VMU) employees will wear provided protective clothing. Uniforms and laboratory coats should be laundered to provide clean protective clothing daily. Disposable protective items such as gloves, masks, head and foot covers, and gowns or other body cover will be worn when required. Protective clothing may not be removed from the work site.

#### (a) Veterinary Medical Unit Animal Care Personnel.

1. Uniforms. Upon arrival at the duty site, animal care personnel should change from street clothing into clean protective clothing. Uniforms will be changed when they become soiled. At the end of the work day, uniforms should be placed in the designated soiled clothing hamper inside VMU room R225.

2. Lifting. Employees should always practice safe lifting techniques. Tasks should be made as ergonomically efficient as possible.

3. Foot Injuries. Employees who are at risk of crushing foot injuries from heavy objects will wear steel-toed footwear.

4. Soiled Clothing. Soiled clothing will not be worn outside the animal facility and never carried home. Refer to para (a)(1) for proper disposition of soiled clothing.

(b) Research and Other Personnel with Animal Contact. Protective clothing needs depend on the procedures that will be performed, but as a minimum, clean lab coats and gloves will be worn by all personnel handling animals or animal tissues. Protective equipment (e.g., gowns, masks, respirators, eye shields, etc.) will be made available to investigators by the VMU for use as appropriate. N95 respirators are available for those individuals, other than VMU technicians, who report to the VMU supervisor/immediate supervisor or are recommended enrollment by Occupational Health physician. The employees will be enrolled in the STVHCS Respiratory Protection Program and must complete all mandatory elements.

#### (c) General Considerations.

##### 1. Disposable Gloves

a. Disposable gloves are useful to prevent the transmission of diseases between animal rooms, and to limit the possibility of disease transmission between animals and humans. They are also useful to limit staff exposure to contact allergens. Disposable gloves are available for caretakers and research personnel who contact animals, animal tissues, or soiled animal cages during their duties.

b. Disposable gloves should be discarded when they are visibly soiled, torn, punctured, or otherwise damaged such that their ability to act as a barrier is compromised. Prior to leaving an animal room or anteroom, personnel should discard their gloves. Care is needed to prevent contamination of door knobs, faucet handles, paper towel dispensers, refuse container lids, and similar objects by personnel with contaminated gloves. Some personnel may develop contact dermatitis allergy to the absorbent material that is used to lubricate disposable gloves; however, alternative lubricants are available. Refer to Research Service Memorandum 16-04 (Chemical Hygiene Plan), para 5B(2)a,b for glove types.

2. Hearing Protection. The noise level in animal facility areas may reach potentially damaging levels, particularly in cage washing areas. Ear protection will be worn to prevent hearing damage. The Industrial Hygienist conducts noise test levels in compliance with the Occupation Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations or whenever requested by an employee. Ear protection will be worn in areas where noise levels exceed permissible OSHA guidelines. If protective headset-style protectors are too bulky or uncomfortable, inexpensive disposable foam ear plugs may be used. The VMU Supervisor shall enforce use of required hearing protection.

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3. Eye Protection. Protective eyewear should be used by employees who handle corrosive or otherwise dangerous liquids or vapors. Goggles or other devices must completely shield the eyes.

4. Other Precautions. Personnel should be trained to avoid hand contact with their eyes, face, mouth, or other bodily surfaces with contaminated gloves or non-sanitized hands.

5. Special Circumstances. Special equipment and clothing may be required when personnel are engaged in studies that involve hazardous agents. The specific measures taken depend on the agents used, as determined by the Safety Officer in consultation with the investigator and the Veterinary Medical Consultant (VMC).

### f. HAZARDOUS AGENTS

#### (1) Work with Hazardous Agents.

(a) Scope. Additional safety measures may be needed to protect personnel who use or work in the animal facility when research involving biological, chemical, or radiological agents is being conducted. The specific measures needed are dependent on the risk to human and animal health represented by the agent, and the difficulty involved in containing the agent.

(b) Objective. The objective is to prevent animal care staff and other animal workers from exposure to hazardous agents present in animal tissues, animal secretions, soiled bedding, and elsewhere in the animal environment. The key elements to safety when working with hazardous agents are:

1. Trained, knowledgeable personnel to perform the study, and
2. Prior review and approval of the proposed use of hazardous agents by qualified personnel.

#### (c) Procedure.

1. Before experimental animals are treated with any hazardous agent, an approved copy of the Animal Component of Research Protocol with written safety precautions must be on file in the Research Office. This should include instructions on handling animals, caging, and animal waste.

2. Instructions should be posted outside the animal room where they are readily visible for the duration of the experiments.

3. Personnel who work with animals exposed to hazardous agents are to be trained in proper procedures to work with the animals and related waste and equipment. Documentation of such training needs to be made before employees manipulate experimental animals treated with hazardous agent(s).

(d) Biological Agents. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)/National Institutes of Health (NIH) handbook, "Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories" describes the minimum containment requirements that are to be followed when microbial pathogens are used in the laboratory and in the animal facility. A copy of the most recent edition of this manual is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/biosafety/publications/bmbl5/index.htm>.

#### (e) Special Considerations.

1. Immunologically compromised rodents such as the nude mouse and the severe combined immuno-deficient (SCID) mouse, that receives human xenografts, body fluids, blood, or human infectious agents and related materials, present a potentially unique and poorly understood (xenozoonotic) risk. These rodents may develop persistent infections while remaining otherwise healthy. For this reason, such animals injected with these materials need to be handled with caution, following Biosafety Level 2 practices in accordance with the recommendation of the Safety Officer.

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2. Universal Precautions. Universal Precautions is an approach to infection control in which all human blood and certain human body fluids are treated as if known to be infectious for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Hepatitis B Virus (HBV), and other bloodborne pathogens. Intended primarily for personnel working directly with human blood components, other body fluids and excreta, and unfixed tissues, Universal Precautions is relevant to all personnel working with potentially infectious materials in animal studies. Personnel working with animals treated with such materials will receive annual training in Universal Precautions to comply with the Bloodborne Pathogen Standard.

### (2) Chemical Agents and the Safety Data Sheet.

(a) Although all chemicals and drugs are potentially dangerous, special concern is necessary when working with known carcinogens, mutagens, immunosuppressive agents, toxic drugs, potent steroids, agents of unknown pharmacological activity, and other chemicals listed as hazardous waste by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

(b) All chemical agents purchased commercially are to have a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) either downloaded from the company website or obtained from the company. Each investigator must have a hardcopy SDS for all chemicals available in their laboratory, as a backup, should the on-line desktop graphical user interface fail. The VMU maintains paper SDS in room U235. Employees can access to VMU chemical inventory and SDS form the 3E Protect online chemical management program on the STVHCS Home page <http://vaww.ceosh.med.va.gov/ceosh/MSDS.shtml>

(3) Radioactive Agents. The safety principles for work with radionuclides are similar to those for work with other hazardous agents with some important additions:

(a) The Radiation Safety Officer must review and approve, or require specific procedures to be followed when using radionuclides in animals.

(b) Personnel must be trained to work with radionuclides.

(c) All acquisition and disposition of radionuclides must be in accordance with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) regulations.

### (4) Procedures for the Animal Care Staff.

#### (a) Warning Signs and Safety Protocol for Animal Rooms that Contain Hazardous Agents

1. Appropriate PPE for entering room will be posted on the entrance door.

2. The following information should be posted on the animal room door for the duration of the experiments:

a. Large biohazard, chemical hazard, or radiation hazard sign, as appropriate, and a limited access warning sign.

b. Name and telephone number of individual to contact in event of an emergency involving the agent.

c. Name of the hazardous agent(s).

d. Dress code for entrance into the room.

(b) Separation of Animals Treated with Hazardous Agents. Animals receiving hazardous agents should be housed separately from other animals to prevent cross contamination and simplify isolation of contaminated wastes. The housing room in use is R204.1. The use of negative-pressure ventilated racks, laminar flow units, and other similar high efficiency particulate air (HEPA)-filtered devices are

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helpful in isolating small animals exposed to hazardous agents.

(c) Warning Signs on Animal Cage Cards. The name of the hazardous agent should appear on the cage cards of animals treated with the agent. Each cage should display a Biohazard sign (tape or label).

(d) Cleaning, Feeding, and Watering Animals Treated with Hazardous Agents

1. If both treated and untreated animals are housed in the same room, the untreated animals should be cleaned, fed, and watered first to reduce the possibility of accidental contamination of untreated animals. Rooms housing treated animals should be cleaned last and animals in these rooms fed, watered, and manipulated after these procedures have been completed in other rooms.

2. Upon completion of a study involving use of infectious or other hazardous material, the room housing animals exposed to such agents should be decontaminated before introduction of new animals. If necessary, the Safety Officer will be consulted to determine the best method to decontaminate the room. The decontamination method will vary depending on the hazardous agent in use and cannot be generalized. It is important that personnel performing the decontamination are knowledgeable about their task and provided protective clothing as indicated by the Safety Officer.

(e) Use of a Bedding Change Station or Biocontainment Hood to Change Bedding: A device that draws aerosols away from the caretaker, such as an air filtered change station will be used when soiled, contaminated bedding is removed from animal cages. The caretaker should wear protective clothing, including a mask and gloves when removing soiled bedding from cages. Soiled bedding will be removed from cages in room R206, which is dedicated for this purpose.

(5) Waste Disposal.

(a) Bedding. Bedding contaminated with hazardous agents may present one of the most difficult management problems. Contamination with infectious agents may require that bedding be sterilized before being transported to the cage wash room for dumping. If soiled bedding containing hazardous material cannot be rendered harmless prior to transporting to the cage wash room, it may be necessary to bag, or double bag the bedding for direct transportation to the autoclave located in room R225. Regardless of the nature of the contamination, the methods of disposal should be determined by the Safety Officer. Use of disposable cages is highly recommended.

(b) Carcass Disposal. Contaminated carcass disposal is often similar to disposal methods for other contaminated materials, but in this case needs to reflect the nature of the hazardous agent in use. Upon completion of the necessary work with the carcass, it should be bagged, labeled, and autoclaved before disposal. Holding, when necessary, should be accomplished in a refrigerator in room U233.

(6) Miscellaneous Safety Procedures for All Personnel.

(a) Needle and Syringe Disposal. Needles should not be recapped. Needles and syringes will be disposed of by dropping them into puncture proof containers located in every room in which sharps are used. If the hazard requires neutralization before discard, the principal investigator must consult with the STVHCS GEMS Coordinator.

(b) Adequate Animal Restraint. The chance of accidental needle sticks is reduced if animals are anesthetized or chemically restrained before being injected with hazardous agents. Manually restrained, unanesthetized animals are often capable of jarring needles and redirecting their path by struggling, causing accidental needle stick.

(c) Prevention of Aerosol Formation. Whenever possible, hazardous agents should be prepared or purchased in rubber-topped vials so that the aerosols associated with open tube manipulations can be minimized. Solutions containing hazardous agents should never be expressed through a needle into

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disposal containers or disinfectant pans because of the aerosols produced; rather the syringe with solution should be discarded directly into an appropriate puncture proof sharps container.

1. When infectious agents are used, sharps container are sanitized by the contractor after pickup.
2. When hazardous agents require disposal by incineration immediately after use, the sharps container should be included with the disposition.

(d) Use of Hoods. Hazardous agents should be injected or otherwise administered within an appropriate biocontainment or chemical hood. When technical considerations make such a practice impossible, exceptions will be justified and approved by the local VA Safety Committee.

(e) Manipulating Animals. When manipulating animals, the fewer manipulations that a single individual performs when handling hazardous agents, the better. Should an accident occur, it is much safer to have a second person available to assist in decontamination procedures, and to audit the accident. People working alone are often reluctant to acknowledge mistakes or accidents.

(f) Reduce Distractions. When hazardous agents are being manipulated in the animal facility, distraction should be minimized. Research personnel should schedule with the animal care staff a time for manipulations so that routine cleaning and husbandry procedures can be avoided, postponed, or rescheduled. Loud noises should be minimized.

### (g) SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

(1) **Special Health Considerations for Female Employees.** Occupational hazards that are significantly detrimental to pregnant women and the unborn child are to be considered. Women who are pregnant and work with animals that are exposed to hazardous agents should declare their pregnancy to their supervisor as early as possible and are to be made aware of potential risks in consultation with the Occupational Health Physician, and/or the medical center Safety Officer and Radiation Safety Officer as appropriate.

(2) **Special Zoonotic Animal Diseases.** Some zoonotic diseases that may pose a risk for animal workers in the typical animal facility are described briefly in the following. Work with primates requires special attention to occupational health and safety requirements. Protective clothing plus masks, gloves, head and face shield or goggles should always be worn when personnel are in primate housing rooms or when working with primates.

(a) Rabies. Rabies is usually transmitted when the virus is introduced into open cuts or wounds in skin or mucous membranes. Exposure may be from bites by an infected animal or much less frequently through scratches, abrasions, open wounds, or mucous membranes contaminated with saliva or other infectious material. Vaccination is the most valuable preventive measure, and local wound treatment and vaccination should follow potential exposure as directed by the Occupational Health physician. Personnel who have contact with dogs, cats, other carnivores, wild mammals, and susceptible species of bats (or their tissues) should be advised to receive pre-exposure immunization against rabies. Pre-exposure immunization does not eliminate the need for prompt post-exposure evaluation and possible prophylaxis.

(b) Rat Bite Fever. Two causes are recognized: *Streptobacillus moniliformis* and *Spirillum minus*. The disease is usually associated with wild rodent bites, but rarely with laboratory bred rodents. In humans, the disease is characterized by an abrupt onset of chills, fever, headache, and muscle pain, followed shortly by a maculopapular or sometimes petechial rash. The primary wound usually heals promptly, but after an incubation period of about 10 days, systemic signs appear. A 7 to 10 day course of penicillin or tetracycline is recommended for treatment of the disease.

(c) For further information regarding other zoonotic diseases and risk categories for infectious diseases refer to References 5c., 5i., and 5j.

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### (3) Working with anesthetic gases:

(a) Anesthetic gases pose some degree of health risk to animal handlers. Occupational exposures are controlled by using engineering and work practice controls, administrative controls, personal protective equipment, and monitoring. Exposures are controlled by: (1) effective anesthetic gas scavenging systems that remove excess anesthetic gas at the point of origin; (2) effective general or dilution ventilation; (3) good work practices on the part of the health-care workers, including the proper use of controls; (4) proper maintenance of equipment to prevent leaks; and (5) periodic personnel exposure and environmental monitoring to determine the effectiveness of the overall waste anesthetic gas control program.

(b) Personnel working with anesthetic gases are initially monitored by Passive Samplers for Organic Vapors and then as needed

(c) Halogenated, inflammable, volatile gases are approved for use

(d) The use of explosive anesthetic gases such as Ether needs to be approved by the STVHCS Safety Officer. Proper storage for these gases is to be provided, and the location of use needs to provide adequate ventilation; and only used in operations that do not pose a fire and explosive risk and the area is free of ignition sources such as a spark from static electricity or electrical equipment.

(4) Transportation. Animals should not be transported through areas used by patients or visitors. VMU supervisor should be contacted regarding appropriate transportation procedures.

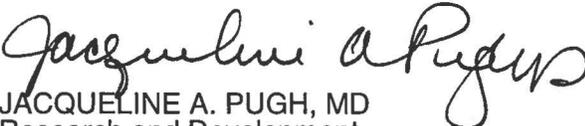
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- c. Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories, 5th edition, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, NIH, Revised December 2009 <https://www.cdc.gov/labs/BMBL.html>
- d. Title 10 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Chapter 1, Parts 0-171, Nuclear Regulatory Commission. See Part 20, Standards for Protection Against Radiation.
- e. Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, National Research Council (2011) <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/.../guide-for-the-care-and-use-of-laboratory-animals.pdf>
- f. Title 40 CFR Part 261 Subpart D, Lists of Hazardous Wastes. Environmental Protection Agency.
- g. VHA Handbook 1200.07.
- h. VHA Directive 7701, Comprehensive Occupational Safety and Health Program, May 5, 2017.
- i. Occupational Health and Safety in the Care and Use of Research Animals, National Research Council. [https://www.aaalac.org/accreditation/RefResources/OHS\\_Care\\_And\\_Use.pdf](https://www.aaalac.org/accreditation/RefResources/OHS_Care_And_Use.pdf)
- j. Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee Guidebook, ARENA/OLAW, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2002. <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/olaw/guidebook.pdf>

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6. **RESCISSION:** Research Service Memorandum 12-17, dated November 20, 2012

7. **RECERTIFICATION:** March 2024



JACQUELINE A. PUGH, MD  
Research and Development

Attachment (4)

1. Baseline Medical History
2. Principal Investigator or Supervisor Certification
3. Periodic Animal Exposure Questionnaire
4. Information Sheet: Risk of Exposure to Research Animals

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**Attachment 1**

**Animal Exposure Baseline History**

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ S.S.# (Last 4): \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Male  Female  Pregnant
3. Service: \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Extension: \_\_\_\_\_ Pager: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Location Building and Room #: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Principal Investigator's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Pls Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Animal Contact with VA VMU or UTHSCSA facilities (check all that apply):
- Dogs  Pigs  Cats  Sheep  
 Nonhuman Primates  Rodents  Rabbits  
 Guinea Pigs  Other: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Total amount of contact time with animals (include contact with animal tissues, waste, body fluids, carcasses or animal quarters):
- More than one hour / week  
 One or less hour / week  
 Other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_
9. Does your work with animals involve any human or animal pathogens or infectious diseases?  
 Yes  No  
If yes, please list pathogens or diseases: \_\_\_\_\_
10. If you are in contact with nonhuman primates:
- a. Have you ever had Tuberculosis (TB)?  Yes  No  
If yes, please list medications and how long you took them: \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Have you been vaccinated with BCG for TB?  Yes  No  
Year \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Have you ever had a positive reaction to a TB test (Tine Test, PPD, Mantoux)?  
 Yes  No
- If yes, please name any medications you took and the length of time you took them: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Are you receiving immunosuppressive therapy such as prednisone, steroids or anti-cancer drugs?  
 Yes  No
12. How often do you wear Personal Protective Equipment when working with animals? (Check the appropriate responses)
- | <u>Type of PPE</u> | <u>Sometimes</u>         | <u>Always</u>            | <u>Never</u>             | <u>Rarely</u>            |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Gloves             | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gown               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Mask               | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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Cap      
 Goggles/Glasses

13. Do you smoke, eat or drink in the animal areas?  Yes  No

14. How often do you do the following after handling animals at work?

|                 | <u>Sometimes</u>         | <u>Always</u>            | <u>Never</u>             | <u>Rarely</u>            |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Wash Hands      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Change clothing | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Shower          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

15. Do you have a history of the following conditions? (Check those you have or have had)

Hay fever     Asthma     Allergic skin problems     Eczema  
 Sinusitis     Other Chronic Respiratory Infections

16. Has anyone in your family ever had hay fever, asthma, eczema or allergic skin problems?

Yes  No

17. Do you have sneezing spells, runny or stuffy nose, watery or itchy eyes, coughing, wheezing, or shortness of breath, skin rash or hives, or difficulty swallowing after working with laboratory animals or their cages? (Circle those you have)

Yes  No

18. Which animals cause the above problems?

19. How frequently are you bothered by the symptoms below?

| <u>Symptoms</u>     | <u>Never</u>             | <u>Monthly</u>           | <u>Weekly</u>            | <u>Daily</u>             |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Watery, itchy eyes  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Runny or stuff nose | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sneezing spells     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Frequent dry cough  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Wheezing in chest   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Rash or hives       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Shortness of breath | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Trouble swallowing  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

20. Do you have any house pets?  Yes  No  
 If yes, what type of animals do you have?

21. Do you have any symptoms with your pets?  
 If yes, what type of symptoms do you have?

22. Do you have a chronic respiratory disease?  Yes  No  
 If yes, please explain:

23. Have you ever had a hernia (rupture)?  Yes  No  
 If yes, please explain:

24. Have you ever had back trouble or pain that required treatment, surgery or loss of time at work?  
 Yes  No  
 If yes, please explain:

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25. Do you have joint problems or any form of arthritis?  Yes  No

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If yes, please describe:

26. Do you work with chemicals?  Yes  No  
Do you have symptoms from the chemicals?  Yes  No  
Comments:

27. Please note any other health history you consider significant:

28. Immunization / TB Screening History:

| <u>Vaccine/Test</u>                 | <u>Date</u> | <u>Side Effect/Reaction</u> | <u>Other</u> |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Tetanus (most recent)               |             |                             |              |
| Rabies Series, Initial              |             |                             |              |
| Rabies Booster                      |             |                             |              |
| Rabies Immune Globulin              |             |                             |              |
| Hepatitis B Series, Initial         |             |                             |              |
| Hepatitis B, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Series |             |                             |              |
| Tuberculin Mantoux (PPD)            |             |                             |              |
| Other:                              |             |                             |              |
| Chest X-ray                         |             |                             |              |

Signature of Employee: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name:

Signature of Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name:

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**SUPERVISOR/PI CERTIFICATION**

By signature, I certify that I have provided \_\_\_\_\_ with information regarding STVHCS Research Service Animal Care and Use Program, Occupational Health and Safety for Research Personnel with Significant Animal Contact operating instruction and the availability of Learning Management System Occupational Health training, course 32755. I have provided necessary training and a printed copy of the above program guide.

Printed Supervisor/PI Name:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

**OCCUPATIONAL/ATTENDING**

By signature, I verify that I reviewed and discussed, with the participant , the submitted Occupational Health Questionnaire and potential risks associated with the involvement in animal-related research. The participant was offered medical services appropriate to the risks.

Printed Occupational Health Physician Name:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

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**Periodic Animal Exposure Questionnaire**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ SS#: (Last 4) \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Extension: \_\_\_\_\_ Bldg/Room #: \_\_\_\_\_

1. I no longer work with animals (including animal tissues, waste, body fluids, carcasses or animal quarters) at the VMU. YES  NO  (If YES, skip to #4)

2. Show any CHANGE in animal contact within the VMU in the past year. Write a plus (+) for continuing contact; (++) for new animal contact; (-) for animals no longer working with.

|                   |                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| _____ Dogs        | _____ Pigs              |
| _____ Cats        | _____ Sheep             |
| _____ Rabbits     | _____ Rodents           |
| _____ Guinea Pigs | _____ Nonhuman Primates |
| _____ Other       |                         |

3. Check total amount of contact time with animals in the past year (include contact with animal tissues, waste, body fluids, carcasses or animal quarters):

- More than one hour / week
- One hour or less / week
- Other (explain)

4. List any additions or deletions of human or animal pathogens or infectious diseases you have worked with in the past year:

Additions:

Deletions:

5. List the date of your last TB screening: (Mantoux or TB Symptoms Checklist):

6. List date of Hepatitis B, Tetanus or Rabies immunizations received this past year:

|         |        |             |
|---------|--------|-------------|
| Tetanus | Rabies | Hepatitis B |
|---------|--------|-------------|

7. Check any condition(s) you have developed over the past year:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Hay fever <input type="checkbox"/>              | Asthma <input type="checkbox"/>                              |
| Sinusitis <input type="checkbox"/>              | Other Chronic Respiratory Infection <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Allergic skin Problems <input type="checkbox"/> | Eczema <input type="checkbox"/>                              |

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Comments:

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8. Check symptoms you developed this past year and how often you have them:

| <b>Symptoms</b>     | <b>Never</b> | <b>Monthly</b> | <b>Weekly</b> | <b>Daily</b> |
|---------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| Water, Itchy eyes   |              |                |               |              |
| Runny, Stuffy Nose  |              |                |               |              |
| Sneezing Spells     |              |                |               |              |
| Frequent Dry Cough  |              |                |               |              |
| Wheezing in chest   |              |                |               |              |
| Rash or hives       |              |                |               |              |
| Shortness of Breath |              |                |               |              |
| Trouble Swallowing  |              |                |               |              |

9. Do animals cause the above symptoms? If so, please list the animals:

10. List any NEW pets you obtained in the past year and symptoms you have with them.

| <b>New Pet</b> | <b>Symptom</b> |
|----------------|----------------|
|                |                |
|                |                |
|                |                |

11. List any medical problems, pregnancies, hospitalizations or surgeries:

Signature of Employee: \_\_\_\_\_ Date:

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Physical : Recommended \_\_\_\_\_ Not Recommended \_\_\_\_\_

## **Information Sheet: Risks of Exposure to Research Animals**

1. The South Texas Veterans Health Care System Research Service maintains a Veterinary Medical Unit (VMU) for the support of animal research on mice and rats. This information sheet is directed to those hospital employees that only occasionally or intermittently need to enter the VMU as part of their work (i.e. to complete work orders/maintenance requests).

2. Animals produce dander, which is the loose scales of skin and dried secretions that are shed from the animal's fur/skin. The dander gets into the air in small quantities but can cause allergic reactions in people who may be sensitive. Allergic reactions can occur without direct contact with animals, for instance by walking in the hallways of the VMU. If you have a history of allergies to animals, or you had an adverse reaction after having entered the South Texas Veterans Health Care System animal facility in the past, you should discuss this with your supervisor and the Occupational Health Physician (Room M100; extension 1-4116) prior to entry into the VMU.

3. Allergic symptoms may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Itchy or burning eyes
- b. Runny nose
- c. Congestion
- d. Sinus pressure
- e. Coughing
- f. Sore or scratchy throat
- g. Wheezing and chest tightness
- h. Breathing problems
- i. Itching skin
- j. Skin rash

4. If your work in the VMU will require entry into an animal housing room, you should also be aware that some animal rooms are identified as biohazard and require appropriate personal protective equipment (i.e. masks) to be donned before entry. The VMU Supervisor is available in U235 (1-4687) and will assist you with the appropriate PPE and entry into the restricted access room as needed.

5. Evaluation and treatment for injuries and/or illnesses (e.g. cuts, scratches, bites, allergic reactions, etc.) should be evaluated as soon as possible. The Occupational Health Clinic is open Monday – Friday (excluding Federal holidays) from 0730 to 1530 and is located on the first floor next to the lab (room M100). After hours injuries may be evaluated in the Emergency Department located on the first floor of the VA hospital.

6. If you have any questions, please contact the Research & Development Service Administrative Officer (1-5538), VMU Supervisor (1-4687) or the Occupational Health Physician (1-4116)