Universal Precautions in Animal Facilities and Laboratories

Fresh animal tissues, blood, body fluids or wastes should be recognized as potential sources of zoonotic disease.

Persons who handle potentially infectious materials and who are at risk of occupational exposure should receive appropriate immunizations or tests for the agents handled or potentially present (Hepatitis B and rabies vaccination, or TB test, etc.).

Always wear protective clothing; a lab coat, gown or surgical scrub suit is the minimum.

Personal protective equipment provides additional means of preventing exposure. Latex gloves provide very good protection and should be worn when handling potentially infectious materials. Do not re-use or wash disposable gloves, replace them. Utility gloves may be decontaminated between uses if they are intact - not torn or cracked. If gloves are needed for your work and you cannot wear latex, see your supervisor for alternatives.

Wash your hands after handling animals or infectious material, after removing gloves and before leaving the animal facility or the laboratory.

Wear facial protection, like goggles and a mask, or a face shield when performing procedures that may splash or splatter. Persons who wear contact lenses in animal facilities or in the laboratory should also wear goggles or a face shield.

Engineering controls, such as mechanical pipettes and biosafety cabinets, are the primary means of exposure prevention.

Work practice controls, like not re-capping used needles and using a broom/dust pan to clean up broken glass, are a secondary method of exposure prevention.

Conduct all procedures in a manner which will minimize splashing, spraying, splattering, and generation or droplets of blood or other potentially infectious materials, use biological safety cabinets, centrifuge covers, protective environmental coverings.

Place contaminated sharps in assigned labeled, puncture-resistant, leak-proof containers.

Dispose of other potentially infections waste in a red bag for biomedical waste.

Label materials and storage areas with the red biohazard symbol.

Clean and disinfect your work area with a detergent and a disinfectant when you are finished or at the end of the day. A 1:10 freshly prepared dilution of bleach in water is adequate for most types of work.

Decontaminate equipment before removing it from the area or submitting it for service.

Report any exposure or injury to your supervisor immediately. Seek medical attention for parenteral, mucous membrane or non-intact skin contact.

Do not eat, drink, smoke, use tobacco products, apply cosmetics or lip balm, or handle contact lenses in the animal facility, in the lab, or around potentially infectious materials.

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