East Tennessee State University

Occupational Health and Safety Program for Personnel Exposed to Vertebrate Animals

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For information on this program please contact

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAM FOR PERSONNEL EXPOSED TO VERTEBRATE ANIMALS AT ETSU.
   A. Purpose
   B. Program Components and Administration
   C. Eligibility and Participation
   D. Training

II. HAZARDS ENCOUNTERED WHEN WORKING WITH ANIMALS
   A. Types of Hazards
   B. Hazard Containment
      1. Personal protection
         a. Personal hygiene
         b. Protective clothing and devices
         c. Hearing protection
         d. Eye protection
   C. If you work with RABBITS or RODENTS
   D. If you work with DOGS or CAT.
   E. If you work with FARM ANIMALS
   F. If you work with PRIMATES
   G. If you work with WILD VERTEBRATE ANIMALS OR ARE DOING FIELD RESEARCH
   H. If you work with HAZARDOUS AGENTS
   I. If you are PREGNANT
   J. If you have an IMPAIRED IMMUNE SYSTEM
   K. If you are INJURED while performing your duties at ETSU or suspect a JOB-RELATED ILLNESS

III. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM FOR PERSONNEL EXPOSED TO VERTEBRATE ANIMALS AT ETSU.
   A. Health care services for all personnel with exposure to vertebrate animals or their products at ETSU
      1. Education and training
      2. Risk inventory and health assessment
         a. Risk Inventory form
         b. Health Assessment form
         c. Annual reassessment of risk and health
      3. Tetanus prophylaxis
      4. Animal related allergies
      5. Reporting, assessment, and treatment of work-related illnesses and injuries
      6. Records and files
      7. Medical exclusion
      8. Employees electing non-participation in the Occupational Health Care Program
   B. Additional health care services for personnel working with large animals (cats, dogs, farm animals)
      1. Rabies pre-exposure prophylaxis
      2. Toxoplasmosis antibody screening
      3. Hearing test
      4. Medical recalls
   C. Additional services for DLAR personnel (exposure >20 hours per week)
      1. Preemployment health assessment
      2. Medical recalls.

IV. CONCLUSION
V. REFERENCES

VI. APPENDICES
1. Risk Inventory Form
2. Health Assessment Form
3. Universal Precautions in Animal Facilities and Laboratories
4. Animal-Related Allergies
5. Animal Bites and Scratches
6. Work- or Classroom-Related Injuries or Illnesses
7. Field Studies and Working with Wild Vertebrate Animals
8. Rabies
9. Tetanus
10. Toxoplasmosis
11. Maintenance Personnel, Visitors and Contractors
12. OSHA Form 301: Injury and Illness Incident Report
I. OH&S PROGRAMS FOR PERSONNEL EXPOSED TO VERTEBRATE ANIMALS AT ETSU

A. Purpose

The purpose of this OH&SP is to provide health and safety information related to use and care of laboratory animals and to minimize risks of occupational injury and illness by controlling or eliminating hazards in the workplace. The program is designed to protect personnel exposed to animals as well as the animals used.

This program is intended to comply with OSHA regulations and NIH requirements to establish an occupational health and safety program for personnel with animal contact. The ETSU program follows the recommendations published by the NIH and by the Institute for Laboratory Animal Resources in: “Occupational Health and Safety in the Care and Use of Research Animals.” (National Research Council, Nat. Academy Press, Washington, DC 1997, ISBN 0-309-05299-8).

B. Program Components and Administration:

The components of the OH&SP at ETSU are listed in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Administrator</th>
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<tr>
<td>Occupational Health Care Program</td>
<td>UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator Tel. 439-6498</td>
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<td>Workers’ Compensation Program</td>
<td>Human Resources, Tel. 439-5364 Pat Bellamy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of recombinant DNA material in animals</td>
<td>ETSU Biosafety Committee, Tel. 439-7066 Phil Scheuerman</td>
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C. Eligibility and Participation

All ETSU personnel who work in laboratory animal facilities or work with vertebrate animals or their viable tissues, body fluids, or wastes must be familiar with and participate in this program. Individuals involved in isolated one-time, non-recurrent exposure should be informed of potential risks and should take appropriate precautions but are not required to complete the entire program. These individuals are provided with the information sheet entitled “Information for Visitors, Maintenance Personnel, and Contractors” (appendix).
D. Training

An important factor in protecting the health of personnel engaged in animal care and research is training. All employees need to be aware of and understand the potential health risks when using experimental animals or hazardous agents. It is the responsibility of the supervisor, principal investigator, or lab director to inform the employee of the potential risks before exposure to animals or hazardous agents. Proper training in working with animals should be included in the health and safety training program for the laboratory. Universal precautions to be applied in animal facilities and animal use laboratories are similar to the precautions for work with human pathogens. The “Universal Precautions in Animal Facilities and Laboratories” are provided in the Appendix.

II. HAZARDS ENCOUNTERED WHEN WORKING WITH LAB ANIMALS

Cuts, scratches, bites and allergic reactions are the most common hazards. In general, health and safety matters are related to the animal species, the frequency and type of contact, to facility design, equipment design, human behavior, and each person’s health status.

A. Types of Hazards:

Animal Bites and Scratches: Bites and scratches can expose animal technicians, laboratory personnel and others working with animals to biologic hazards transmitted through contaminated saliva, secretions or blood. These injuries are largely preventable through proper training in animal handling techniques. Inappropriate handling can induce discomfort, pain, and distress in an animal, provoking it to inflict injury on its handler. Anybody picking up or restraining an animal must be trained in proper handling techniques. Intractable animals might have to be sedated before they are physically restrained. Training in the proper handling techniques of laboratory animals is available at ETSU in the Division of Laboratory Animal Resources.

Animal bites, including those with little tissue damage inflicted by rodents can result in contamination by the normal oral flora of the animals. The early initiation of antimicrobial therapy for animal bites is warranted. All personnel working with animals must have current tetanus immunization. The biting animal should be evaluated by a veterinarian. Rabies, hantavirus infection, cat-scratch fever, tularemia, rat-bite fever, brucellosis, and Orf are among the specific diseases that can be transmitted by animal bites.

Allergens: Allergic reactions to animals are among the most common conditions that adversely affect the health of workers involved in the care and use of animals in research. All personnel should be aware that laboratory animals, particularly rats, rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters and birds, are sources of potent allergens. Products from animals that may induce allergic reactions are animal skin, dander, fur, urine, and saliva. The route of exposure is most often due to airborne allergens, however, contact allergies are quite common. Depending on the exposure, the allergic reaction may induce respiratory symptoms, itchy eyes and rashes. Symptoms usually evolve over an exposure period of 1-2 years. Latex in rubber gloves is another cause of contact allergies.

Persons with sensitivities to laboratory animals should avoid repetitive exposure. Development of aerosols and dust should be avoided when working with animals. Some work practices and personal protective equipment can reduce the potential development of allergies and perhaps alter the severity. Protective clothing such as a laboratory coat should be worn when working with animals. Additionally gloves are required to be worn when working with animals or their tissues. Once sensitization has occurred it may be necessary to wear a dust-mist respirator; disposable surgical masks usually do not provide sufficient protection. More details are described in the information sheet “Animal Related Allergies” in the Appendix.

Physical Hazards: Sharp objects, ergonomic hazards (heavy lifting or repetitive motions), high temperature, flammable materials, pressure vessels (compressed gas cylinders, high-pressure washing equipment, autoclaves), heavy machinery, electricity, lasers, x-ray equipment, excessive noise, slippery floors, broken or weak supports, and many other conditions are physical hazards encountered in an animal
housing facility and an animal use laboratory. Precautionary measures should be taken where these hazards occur.

**Radioisotopes:** Radioisotopes are radioactive forms of normally nonradioactive elements. They emit low levels of radiation, which makes them valuable as tracers in biological investigations of metabolic processes. Usually these types of isotopes are dangerous only if contacted directly. The use of some, however, requires stringent precautions and safety measures. A radiation monitoring badge that records radiation exposure must be worn by all staff working with radioisotopes. The Radiation Safety Officer may be contacted for information and advice at tel. 232-5640.

**Toxins and Hazardous Chemicals:** Toxins are poisonous substances produced by bacterial, plant, or animal cells. For example, the bacterium *Clostridium tetani* produces tetanus toxins, and castor bean plants produce a toxin called ricin. Anesthetic gases and drugs may be toxic. Potentially hazardous chemicals used in the laboratory or animal housing areas may be found in disinfectants, cleaning agents, or pesticides, and as feed and bedding contaminants. Toxic and chemical waste should be handled with special precautions. The Health and Safety Officer may be contacted with questions concerning chemical safety and hazardous waste removal at tel. 439-6028.

**Mutagens:** Mutagens are substances that cause changes in chromosomes and thereby induce the occurrence of mutations. Carcinogens are substances that can produce cancer directly.

**Pathogens:** Pathogens are live infectious bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites that pose a threat to humans and animals. Many pathogens are blood-borne. Other pathogens are utilized as a component of research studies. In all cases a set of standard precautions should be developed by the facility/laboratory management to protect personnel.

**Zoonoses** are infectious diseases of animals transmissible to man. As a rule, the incidence of zoonoses is low among personnel handling or using laboratory animals and a long listing of these diseases may produce a distorted impression of the actual risks involved. Overall, the scope of possible zoonotic infections is quite large - over 150 diseases may be classified as zoonotic. Only the more important diseases for laboratory workers will be described in this document. Further information can be obtained from the office of the Division of Laboratory Animal Resources, from the ETSU Department of Medical Microbiology, from the UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator or from your personal physician or on Internet sites such as the NIH Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [http://www.cdc.gov/health/diseases.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/health/diseases.htm), and [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/listing.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/listing.htm), or Health Canada, Office of Biosafety at [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgpsp/msds-ftss/index.html#menu](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgpsp/msds-ftss/index.html#menu).

**B. Hazard Containment:**

Exposure to potentially hazardous physical conditions or biological, chemical, radiological agents should be monitored. Protective devices should be used when possible, and safety practices consistent with current safety guidelines should be adopted.

While working with animals every effort must be made to prevent human infection and to protect the animals from exposure to human carriers. The Universal Precautions for working with blood borne pathogens are widely accepted in laboratories where human tissue is handled. The "Universal Precautions in Animal Facilities and Laboratories” are very similar and are attached in the Appendix.

There are some common sense steps that can be taken to lessen the risk of infection in general. These include cleanliness in routine tasks around animals, wearing protective clothing, protection against animal bites and scratches, and hand washing after completion of animal work. A certified biological safety cabinet and gloves should be used when handling infectious materials, and a certified fume hood should be used when handling toxic materials. All work surfaces should be decontaminated after each use. All contaminated materials should be decontaminated (by autoclaving or chemical disinfection) before washing, reuse, or disposal.
1. **Personal protection**
   a. **Personal hygiene**: This is probably the most important factor in protecting the health of personnel engaged in animal care and research. Hand washing is a crucial activity for safeguarding personnel in the animal facility and in laboratories. Hands should be washed after contact with contaminated or potentially contaminated surfaces, animals, their body fluids or waste and after removal of contaminated gloves. Personnel should avoid touching their eyes, face, mouth, or other body surfaces with contaminated hands or gloves.

   Hands should be routinely washed before eating, drinking, applying cosmetics, before touching contact lenses, and before leaving the animal facility. Effective hand washing consists of at least a 30-second lathering with soap and warm water followed by a thorough rinse.

   Showers are an excellent adjunct to personal hygiene, and may be required when working with certain hazardous agents. Showers are available in both animal facilities as well as on the second floor of Building VA 119 and on the first floor of Building VA 178.

   **Eating, drinking, smoking, chewing (gum or tobacco products) or application of cosmetics are not permitted in animal rooms and auxiliary support areas or in research laboratories where animals or their tissues are handled.**

   Employee’s food and beverages should be stored only in refrigerators and/or freezers designated exclusively for such use and placed away from animal care and use areas.

   b. **Protective clothing and devices**: For personnel exposed to animals or their waste and tissues, protective clothing depends on the procedures to be performed. As a minimum, a clean lab coat must be worn when entering an animal room or when handling animals or animal tissues in the laboratory. Additionally glove must be worn when handling animals or their wastes. For employees with allergies to animals, other appropriate items, such as respirators, may need to be worn. Uniforms are provided for all employees in the DLAR and are worn while performing care and maintenance duties within the animal facilities.

   Soiled protective clothing should not be worn outside the laboratory or the animal facility. Laundry should be provided by the employer for washable protective clothing. Never should protective clothing be worn home or taken home to be laundered. Disposable protective clothing should be discarded when soiled.

   Disposable gloves are useful to prevent the transmission of diseases between animal rooms and in limiting disease transmission between animals and humans. They are also useful to limit exposure to contact allergens. Disposable gloves are available in every animal room and should be available to personnel in the laboratory. Some personnel may develop contact dermatitis allergy to the material that is used to lubricate disposables gloves or to the glove material itself, especially latex; alternative gloves or lubricants are available for these cases.

   Special equipment and clothing may be required when personnel are engaged in studies that involve hazardous agents. The specific measures needed must be appropriate for the agents used.

   c. **Hearing protection**: Noise levels may reach potentially damaging levels in certain areas of the animal facility, especially in the dog housing rooms and in the cage wash areas. Hearing protection devices, such as head-set type protectors and disposable foam ear plugs, are available in the animal facilities and should be worn by personnel entering areas with high noise levels.

   d. **Eye protection**: Protective eye wear should be used by employees who handle corrosive or otherwise dangerous liquids. These devices should completely shield the eyes. Persons wearing contact lenses should use safety eye glasses or goggles in high-dust areas.
C. If you work with RABBITS or RODENTS (e.g. GERBILS, GUINEA PIGS, HAMSTERS, MICE, RATS)

Rodents and rabbits used at ETSU arrive from pre-approved sources where the animals were tested and found to be free of human and animal pathogens. After receipt at ETSU, these animals are usually maintained pathogen-free through use of proper control measures, e.g., quarantine and health monitoring, including laboratory tests. Thus the chance of contracting an infectious disease from a small laboratory animal at ETSU is minimal. However, precautions against injury (bites and scratches) should be taken when handling these animals. Contact with wild rodents requires special precautions. Also, everybody working with rodents and rabbits should be aware of the possibility of allergic reactions.

Some of the diseases reportedly acquired from rodents and rabbits in laboratories are rat bite fever, toxoplasmosis, lymphocytic choriomeningitis (LCM), hantavirus infection, salmonellosis, tularemia, leptospirosis, bubonic plague, tapeworm infection as well as ringworm, and other dermatomycoses.

D. If you work with DOGS or CATS

Contact with dogs and cats requires precautions against such infections as rabies (dogs and cats), tetanus (dogs and cats), cat scratch fever, campylobacteriosis (dogs), brucellosis (dogs), helicobacter infections (most animals), toxoplasmosis (cats), and Q fever (cats). Parasites such as visceral larval migrans, some tapeworms, and sarcoptic mange are a potential risk to those handling infected animals. Ringworm, a fungal disease of the skin, is a common infection in cats and is readily transferable to man. Those working with cats also should be conscious of possible allergic reactions. Strict adherence to personal hygiene practices during and after handling dogs and cats is essential.

Dogs and cats used in long term studies at ETSU are vaccinated against rabies. An exception is made for those animals used in acute experiments (housed at ETSU less than one (1) week). Even though the dogs and cats are under a veterinarian's supervision, some risk of exposure to rabies exists because the observation period may be too short to allow typical symptoms of the disease to develop. All animal care technicians as well as investigators, students, and other staff who come in contact with unanesthetized dogs or cats are required to participate in the pre-exposure rabies vaccination program. Further details are described in the informational sheet on “Rabies”.

Cat scratch disease is a zoonotic infection caused by the rickettsia Bartonella henselae and is characterized by a skin papule at the site of the cat scratch followed by regional lymphadenitis and signs of systemic infection, including a mild and short-lasting fever. While the prognosis usually is excellent and the disease in most cases is self-limiting, an examination by a physician is recommended.

Women of child-bearing capacity and immunosuppressed persons planning to work with cats should be aware of possible exposure to toxoplasmosis and are encouraged to have a blood sample drawn for a Toxoplasma antibody titer prior to beginning work with cats and annually thereafter. Please refer to the informational sheet in the Appendix for more details on toxoplasmosis.

E. If you work with FARM ANIMALS (e.g. CATTLE, GOATS, SHEEP, PIGS)

Q fever is a potentially serious human disease. It is caused by the rickettsia Coxiella burnetii, an organism shed abundantly from the placental membranes of sheep as well as other animals. Gloves, mask and protective clothing are required for individuals working with pregnant sheep and goats. Infected persons can be treated with antibiotics.

Erysipelas in pigs can be transmitted as a severe focal skin infection to man. Pigs showing diagnostic lesions should be handled with care. Similar appearing, though less severe, skin lesions are seen on the hands after contact with sheep and goats infected with contagious ecthyma (Orf).

Rabies can be a threat when working with large animals, such as cattle and horses and participation in the pre-exposure rabies prophylaxis program is encouraged. Campylobacter, Helicobacter, and Salmonella spp. can be transferred between humans and from animals to humans. Precautions, such as careful hand washing, should be taken after contact with feces of farm animals.
F. If you work with PRIMATES (e.g. BABOONS, CHIMPANZEEs, MONKEYS)

Non-human primates are not housed at ETSU at this time. However, contact with these animals or their tissues and waste at other institutions may pose significant health risks. The occupational health and safety program at the institution of exposure should be consulted for details on personal protective measures.

G. If you work with WILD VERTEBRATE ANIMALS OR DOING FIELD RESEARCH

Field Studies, especially when handling wild animals, may expose persons to a variety of infectious agents. Salmonella spp. are frequently harbored in turtles and other reptiles and amphibians. External and internal parasites may be transmitted from wild animals to humans, e.g. the ascarid causing raccoon roundworm disease. Therefore, if wild animals or their products are handled, wearing gloves and good hand washing are always recommended. Personal protection against injury is important. Protection against blood-sucking mosquitos and animal parasites (fleas, ticks, mites) should be stressed, as these can transmit a variety of infectious agents.

Unusual research species pose certain other risks. Birds may transmit diseases such as psittacosis, avian tuberculosis, and campylobacteriosis. Only inspected and properly quarantined birds should be used in research studies or teaching demonstrations.

Rabies can be a threat in blood-sucking bats. Therefore, personnel working with these species or entering caves where these animals might live are advised to participate in the pre-exposure rabies prophylaxis program. Contact the UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator or the Office of the Division of Laboratory Animal Resources for further information.

H. If you work with HAZARDOUS AGENTS

All hazardous agents to be used in vertebrate animals must be approved by the University Committee on Animal Care. Instructions on handling the agents, on personnel protection, on special animal housing and waste removal must be developed before approval of use of these agents in animals is granted. In addition to the use of hazardous agents for research purposes one should not overlook that potentially hazardous chemicals may be found in disinfectants and cleaning agents.

Hands should be washed after handling chemicals, infectious materials, animals, and before leaving the laboratory. A biological safety cabinet should be used when handling infectious materials and a fume hood when handling toxic materials. All work surfaces should be decontaminated daily. All contaminated materials should be decontaminated (by autoclaving or chemical disinfection) before washing, reuse, or disposal.

Pregnant women or those planning to become pregnant should confer with their physician, or with the UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator prior to exposure to toxins, hazardous chemicals, infectious agents or radioactive substances.

I. If you are PREGNANT

Because of the risk of congenital Toxoplasma infection exists, precautions should always be taken. Pregnant women without immunity to toxoplasmosis should not be exposed to sources of Toxoplasma infection nor should they have contact with cats. Since asymptomatic Toxoplasma infection is common before child-bearing years, serum samples should be taken of all women handling high-risk animal species prior to beginning work to avoid confusion about the significance of positive antibody tests in case of subsequent pregnancy. Direct contact with cat feces should be avoided. Gloves should be worn when working in areas potentially contaminated with cat feces. Thorough hand washing after handling any potential source of infection is necessary.

Working with hazardous agents, in particular exposure to the possible inhalation of toxic chemicals, in the first trimester of pregnancy is discouraged.
J. If you have an IMPAIRED IMMUNE SYSTEM
The risk of contacting a disease from animals is minimal. However, individuals with an impaired immune system due to disease or medication should be aware of their increased risks of zoonotic infections and should limit their exposure to animals.

K. If you are INJURED while performing your duties at ETSU or suspect a JOB-RELATED ILLNESS
Employees and students should bring all work/classroom-related injuries and illnesses to the attention of the supervisor. An initial determination should be made whether treatment is necessary. When there is uncertainty, a physician or other appropriate health professional should be consulted; however, appropriate first aid should be administered immediately.

Registered students should report all work or classroom related injuries and illnesses to the supervisor or instructor and seek medical treatment at the Student Health Clinic in Lamb Hall, tel. 439-4225. For university employees ETSU has established a workers’ compensation program. A description of this program can be reviewed on the Human Resources web site: http://www.etsu.edu/humanres/workers.htm. Employees should report all work related injuries and illnesses to the immediate supervisor and to the Office of Human Resources using the OSHA Form 301 (http://www.etsu.edu/humanres/forms/OSHA301.pdf). If medical treatment is needed, ETSU employees should select a health care provider who is authorized to treat injuries for the State of Tennessee. The directory of the authorized providers is available for review on the following web site: http://www.etsu.edu/humanres/forms/workersdirector.pdf. Accidents to visitors and volunteers should be reported immediately to the Office of the Comptroller.

OSHA Definitions: Injuries include cases such as, but not limited to, a cut, fracture, sprain, or amputation. Illnesses include both acute and chronic illnesses, such as, but not limited to, allergies, skin disease, respiratory disorder, or poisoning. Only work-related injuries and illnesses should be reported. An injury or illness is considered work-related if an event or exposure in the work environment caused or contributed to the condition or significantly aggravated a preexisting condition. More information on conditions that should be reported under the Workers’ Compensation program is available on the ETSU Human Resources’ web site.

III. THE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM FOR PERSONNEL EXPOSED TO VERTEBRATE ANIMALS AT ETSU.
The occupational health care program at ETSU is designed
- to provide information on the risks of working with animals;
- to foster the prevention of occupationally acquired illnesses and injuries;
- to determine each individual’s physical fitness to perform the duties of his/her position satisfactorily and without risk to the health and safety of fellow employees, students and visitors;
- to offer occupationally indicated immunizations and tests; and
- to provide a mechanism for reporting and treatment of work related injuries and illnesses.

It is the intent of this program to ensure that risks associated with the use of research and teaching animals are kept to an acceptable minimum. Identification of at-risk individuals for inclusion in the occupational health care program is essential to ensure their protection. Participation in this program is mandatory at ETSU for all personnel exposed to vertebrate animals, their viable tissue or waste. This includes faculty, staff, students, visitors and volunteers.

A critical component of the program is the identification of potential hazards. Evaluation of proposed animal use studies by the University Committee on Animal Care (UCAC) includes a review of the potential hazards involved. This review process provides an opportunity for identifying personnel who will be involved in an animal study protocol and therefore the persons potentially exposed to the associated hazards.
Occupational health care services for this program are provided and coordinated by the Department of Family Medicine (UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator Tel. 439-6498). Physicians with expertise in occupational medicine, work related allergies and infectious diseases as well as individuals responsible for the overall ETSU Health & Safety Program are available as consultants.

A. Health Care Services for all personnel with exposure to vertebrate animals or animal products at ETSU

1. Education and training: Personnel training is the most important element of the safety program in a laboratory. It is the responsibility of the PI / instructor to establish safety rules and procedures in his/her laboratory, to monitor compliance with established procedures and to periodically review their appropriateness. Personnel working in the laboratory must be informed of the rules and procedures. As part of the training program the PI must:
   - inform his/her laboratory personnel and students of any possible exposure to zoonoses or hazardous material before the exposure occurs;
   - ensure that each exposed individual is familiar with the applicable parts of this occupational health and safety program and with precautionary measures as listed in the “Universal Precautions in Animal Facilities and Laboratories”;
   - train each individual in the proper use of protective clothing, equipment and hygiene practices;
   - educate the individual about early warning signs of occupational illness or injury that should prompt medical action or evaluation;
   - inform the individual of the requirement for current tetanus prophylaxis;
   - inform the individual of the availability of medical evaluation and treatment for occupational injuries and illnesses, including allergies; and
   - ensure that each individual with animal exposure receives annual training and updates in occupational health and safety.

2. Risk inventory and health assessment: A work and health history and a knowledge of workplace risks are the principal surveillance tool for this program. Before an employee or other person is assigned to working with animals, their viable tissues, body fluids, or waste the individual must be enrolled in the occupational health care program. To enroll, each participant in an animal study or teaching activity completes the Health Assessment form and, in addition, the PI completes the Risk Inventory form:

   a. Risk Inventory form. This form is completed annually by the principal investigator or instructor (PI) for his/her laboratory. The PI submits the Risk Inventory form directly to the UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator. All information will be reviewed by the Occupational Health Coordinator and as needed by medical consultants, to determine the risk exposure during an animal study.

   b. Health Assessment form. Each employee completes a Health Assessment form and forwards it directly in a sealed envelope, stamped 'CONFIDENTIAL' to the UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator, Box 70419. A copy of the most recent Risk Inventory from the PI’s laboratory should be included with the Health Assessment form.

   The Health Assessment form will be reviewed in strictest confidence by the UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator who will make any recommendations related to animal exposures. Significant health problems will be referred to the consulting occupational physicians for further evaluation. The UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator may contact the employee for further information and/or consultation.

   c. Annual reassessment of risk and health: An updated risk inventory (from the PI) and a health assessment (from each participant in an animal study) are required annually. The UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator will send notification for annual updates to each participant. Immunizations and testing will be offered according to the schedule suggested in this occupational
health care program, or as determined by the UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator or the medical consultants.

3. **Tetanus prophylaxis:** Every person handling vertebrate animals at ETSU must have proof of current tetanus vaccination. Tetanus vaccination should be administered at approximately ten-year intervals. Tetanus normally is associated with wounds contaminated with dirt or the feces of some animals. All bite wounds carry the risk of tetanus and should receive medical attention. If a contaminated wound occurs, including all animal bites, cuts and scratches, and it has been five or more years since tetanus vaccination, a booster may be administered at the time the person is seen for evaluation of the wound.

4. **Animal related allergies:** Animal care staff and others who handle animals may become sensitized to animal dander or other allergenic proteins. Individuals with preexisting allergies, asthma, seasonal rhinitis or eczema are encouraged to seek advice from their private health care provider before exposure to animals in the laboratory. Individuals with work-related allergies are encouraged to seek advice from the UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator and from Dr. Guha Krishnaswany, Professor, Department of Internal Medicine at ETSU.

5. **Reporting, assessment, and treatment of work related illnesses or injuries:** An individual is required to promptly report all work-related injuries and illnesses to his/her supervisor or instructor. Appropriate first aid should be administered immediately. Registered students injured by an animal during teaching or research activities should report to the Student Health Service in Lamb Hall, Room 055, tel. 439-4225, for medical evaluation and treatment. ETSU employees and student workers needing medical attention should seek medical treatment from one of the physicians included in the long list of providers authorized to treat injuries for the State of Tennessee: [http://www.etsu.edu/humanres/forms/WorkersDirector.PDF](http://www.etsu.edu/humanres/forms/WorkersDirector.PDF). All individuals injured by an animal at ETSU must complete an OSHA form 301: [http://www.etsu.edu/humanres/forms/OSHA301.pdf](http://www.etsu.edu/humanres/forms/OSHA301.pdf) and forward it to Human Resources. Animal bites from potentially rabid animals (dog, cats, bats) must be reported immediately to the Division of Laboratory Animal Resources, tel. 439-6292, so that arrangements can be made for diagnostic evaluation of the biting animal. Personnel should also report any gastrointestinal, respiratory or dermal illness with signs or symptoms which resemble those occurring in the animals with which they have contact.

6. **Records and files:** A medical records file will be established by the UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator for each participant. The results of all occupational health evaluations and clinical tests will be maintained in this file. Copies may be made available to a participant and/or their private health provider upon written request by the participant.

7. **Medical exclusion:** During pre-assignment evaluations, employees determined to have a medical condition which could impair their ability to safely work with animals will be removed from further consideration. Examples of medical conditions which would disqualify an applicant may include, but are not limited to, severe and uncontrollable allergies to the animal species involved, immunosuppression for any reason, and inability to manipulate equipment or animals associated with the intended position.

Once a participant has been assigned to his or her responsibilities, every reasonably effort will be made to resolve short-term medical conditions (e.g. pregnancy) through temporary reassignments to other duties, if available, or medical leave of absence. If a temporary medical condition places an employee at risk of injury in the opinion of the consulting physician, the supervisor may require the employee to take medical leave until the condition is resolved. In cases where permanent or long-term medical conditions arise after assignment to duty (e.g. immunosuppression due to long-term chemotherapy, chronic illness, or severe allergies to animals), every reasonable effort will be made to
accommodate the participant by assignment to non-hazardous duties. However, other steps (including
disability retirement or dismissal) may be necessary in order to protect the employer.

8. Employees electing non-participation in the Occupational Health Care Program: Persons
who decline participation must sign the Health Assessment form in the space provided. Refusal to
participate in the Occupational Health Care Program or parts of it may be grounds for disapproval to
work with certain or all animals and associated potentially infectious materials and may affect the
individual's employment status.

B. Additional medical services for personnel working with large animals (cats, dogs, farm
animals)
In addition to the services described above, employees who have contact with dogs, cats, or certain wild
animals receive the following:

1. Rabies pre-exposure prophylaxis: Individuals who have contact with dogs and cats and certain
wild animals are offered rabies pre-exposure vaccination. This vaccination consists of a series of three
0.1 ml injections of human diploid cell rabies vaccine (HDCV) into the upper arm on days 0, 7, and 28.
Serologic testing for rabies antibodies is performed every two (2) years thereafter. Booster injections of
the vaccine is indicated only if the titer falls below the limit recommended by the testing laboratory.
More information can be found in the informational sheet in the Appendix on Rabies and the
preexposure vaccination program at ETSU. If a person elects not to receive the HDCV, he/she must
sign a release form to that effect.

2. Toxoplasmosis antibody screening: Toxoplasmosis antibody titers are determined annually on
any female employee or student of childbearing capacity and immunosuppressed workers who are
occupationally exposed to cats or their feces and whose *Toxoplasma* titer is unknown or has been
negative previously. A titer of <1:16 by immunofluorescent testing is indicative of the absence of
immunity. Females of childbearing capacity who lack immunity and plan to work with cats must be
informed of their susceptibility and be provided additional information on toxoplasmosis by the PI or,
upon request, by the UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator. Every effort should be made by the
supervisor to arrange a temporary job re-assignment while a susceptible employee or student is
pregnant. When this is not possible, consultation with a physician should be encouraged to identify
other ways to protect the employee or student.

3. Hearing test: Personnel with recurrent exposure to high-noise areas, e.g. to dogs in their housing
quarters or to cage wash areas, are offered an annual hearing evaluation through the UCAC
Occupational Health Coordinator.

4. Medical recalls: Certain procedures should be repeated on a periodic basis. Rabies antibody titer
is checked every two years and a booster injection is given if the titer falls below the safe limit.
Toxoplasmosis antibody titer is monitored every year. When an individual is due for such service or
procedure, he/she will be contacted by the UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator and an appointment
will be scheduled.

C. Additional services for DLAR personnel
Due to the nature of their work, employees of the Division of Laboratory Animal Resources (DLAR)
receive the following additional services:

1. Preemployment health assessment: When hired, these employees will report to the UCAC
Occupational Health Coordinator for a health assessment with medical and work history, recording of
allergies, immunizations, immunosuppressive diseases or the use of immunosuppressive medications, and physical limitations. They will receive a tetanus vaccination update, if needed. Tuberculin skin testing (PPD) will be administered if there is no history of a prior positive test. A chest radiograph is required if the individual offers a history of a prior positive test and cannot provide documentation of a normal chest radiograph two years or more following the discovery of the positive tuberculin skin test.

2. **Recalls**: Personnel in this group will return to the UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator for an annual health assessment update, and a TB skin test or chest radiograph - see above; vaccination and antibody titer updates are given as indicated.

IV. **CONCLUSION**

On a day to day basis, each person is responsible for his/her own actions, and for strict adherence to the practices and procedures established by each laboratory and each department to minimize occupational hazards. This can be accomplished by using common sense, wearing appropriate personal protection equipment, participating in the occupational health and safety program, attending educational programs and following established standard operating procedures for the work to be done.

V. **References**:


Allergic reactions to animals are among the most common conditions that adversely affect the health of workers involved in the care and use of animals in research. The estimated prevalence of allergic symptoms in this group ranges from 10% to 44%. Up to 73% of persons with pre-existing allergic disease eventually develop an allergy to laboratory animals.

Allergy is most often manifested by nasal symptoms, itchy eyes and rashes. Symptoms usually evolve over an exposure period of one (1) to two (2) years. Occupation-related asthma, a more serious disorder, can develop in about 10% of persons with allergic disease who work with laboratory animals. This condition can lead to chronic symptoms, persisting for months to years, even after exposure ceases.

Contact urticaria ('hives') is typically due to the application of an allergen (usually a protein or glycoprotein) directly onto the skin. A common example is the development of wheal and flare reactions that produce welts when a person's skin and the tail of a mouse or rat come into contact. Scratches by cats and dogs can produce similar responses. Latex in rubber gloves is another cause of contact urticaria.

In rare instances, a person who has become sensitized to an animal protein experiences a generalized allergic reaction termed anaphylaxis when bitten by an animal. Anaphylactic reactions vary from mild generalized urticaria reactions to profound life-threatening reactions. Anaphylaxis can be evident as diffuse itching hives, and swelling of the face, lips, and tongue. Some people experience difficulty in breathing because of laryngeal edema or develop asthma with wheezing. In some cases shock can lead to loss of consciousness.

The diagnosis of animal sensitivity is based on the history of symptoms in conjunction with exposure as well as on ‘allergy tests’, the demonstration of specific IgE antibodies to animal allergens.

Exposure reduction and exposure avoidance measures should be undertaken when people become sensitized and develop animal-related allergy symptoms. Medicines to reduce or prevent allergic reactions might be necessary. Many highly sensitized people will continue to have symptoms in spite of exposure reduction and appropriate medication and therefore must avoid animal-allergen exposure completely.

Persons with sensitivities to laboratory animals should avoid repetitive exposure. Also some work practices and personal protective equipment can reduce the potential development of allergies and perhaps alter the severity. Development of aerosols and dust should be avoided when working with animals. Protective clothing such as a long-sleeved coat and gloves should be worn when working with animals. Once sensitization has occurred it may be necessary to also wear a dust-mist respirator, disposable surgical masks usually are not sufficient for protection.

Remember: If you think you are developing allergy symptoms related to laboratory animal exposure, you should consult with your physician or contact the UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator for a consultation.

Field Studies or Working with Wild Vertebrate Animals

All wild animals are potentially dangerous to researchers either from traumatic injury due to direct contact or from infectious diseases that are carried by the animals or their parasites. Therefore, researchers as well as their staff and students dealing with wild-caught animals in the field or in the laboratory should work under the assumption that the animals they are handling pose some risk to their health and safety.

Field studies, especially when handling animals, may expose personnel to a variety of infectious agents. *Salmonella* spp. are frequently harbored by turtles and other reptiles and amphibians. Birds may transmit diseases such as ornithosis, avian tuberculosis, and campylobacteriosis. Mammals may serve as reservoirs for numerous rickettsial and bacterial agents causing diseases such as murine typhus, salmonellosis, histoplasmosis, toxoplasmosis, leptospirosis and pasteurellosis. A number of infectious diseases may be acquired without direct contact with the animals. Arthropod-borne diseases such as Lyme disease, relapsing fever, Ehrlichiosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, bubonic plague and encephalitis (caused by various arboviruses) are examples of these agents. Tularemia can be transmitted to humans by arthropoda or by handling or eating infected animals. Internal parasites may be transmitted from wild animals to humans, e.g. the ascarid causing raccoon roundworm disease. The list of pathogens that humans can acquire directly or indirectly from wild animals continues to grow, principally because new technologies have become available to detect them.

The risk of injury and infection can be substantially reduced by common sense and good personal hygiene. Field workers should wash their hands frequently and definitely before eating, drinking and smoking. Appropriate training and wearing personal protective equipment (protective clothing, appropriate gloves) will minimize the chances of being bitten or scratched. Direct skin contact with blood and other body fluids or feces should be avoided as they may contain parasites or pathogens that affect humans. Protection against blood-sucking mosquitos and animal parasites (fleas, ticks, mites) is important as these can transmit a variety of infectious agents. Field clothes and tools that come in contact with animals or their blood or body fluids should be washed as soon as possible. Precautions should be taken to prevent contamination of food and living areas with droppings and urine.

All ETSU employees and students participating in field studies or handling wild animals must enroll in the Occupational Health Program and maintain up-to-date tetanus immunizations. Rabies can be a threat when working with carnivores or bats - personnel working with these animals or entering caves where bats might live, are advised to participate in the pre-exposure rabies vaccination program at ETSU (contact the DLAR, ext. 9-6292, for more information).

Individuals who are injured during or become ill after participating in a field study or after handling wild animals in the laboratory should seek medical help. It is important to inform the physician of the possible exposure to agents carried by the animals or their parasites, and the geographic region in which the field work was performed. This information may be critical to receiving prompt and appropriate testing and treatment. Registered ETSU students should report all field work, classroom or laboratory related injuries and illnesses to the instructor and seek medical treatment at the Student Health Clinic in Lamb Hall, tel. 439-4225. ETSU Employees should report all work related injuries and illnesses to the immediate supervisor and to the Office of Human Resources using the OSHA Form 301 (http://www.etsu.edu/humanres/forms/OSHA301.pdf). If medical treatment is needed, ETSU employees should select a health care provider who is authorized to treat injuries for the State of Tennessee from the directory at http://www.etsu.edu/humanres/forms/workersdirector.pdf. Accidents to visitors and volunteers should be reported immediately to the Office of the Comptroller. All patients needing emergency medical care should proceed immediately to an emergency rooms in one of the area hospitals or clinics.

More information on infectious diseases and the ETSU Occupational Health Program for Personnel Exposed to Vertebrate Animals can be found on the web site of the University Committee on Animal Care: http://www.etsu.edu/animals/dlar/OHSP/OHSP.index.htm
Rabies is caused by a number of different strains of highly neurotropic viruses. The virus infects all mammals, but the main reservoirs are wild and domestic canines, cats, skunks, raccoons, bats, and other biting animals. However, historically the disease has not posed a problem in the animal laboratory setting. The incidence of rabies in wildlife in the U.S. has been rising in recent years, and the possibility of rabies transmission to dogs or cats with uncertain vaccination histories must be considered. In addition, rabies-susceptible wildlife introduced into the laboratory have the potential to harbor the infection.

Mode of Transmission: Rabies virus is most commonly transmitted by the bite of a rabid animal or the introduction of virus-laden saliva into a fresh skin wound or intact mucous membrane. Airborne transmission probably can occur in caves where rabid bats roost. Since the 1950s bats have increasingly been implicated as wildlife reservoirs for variants of rabies virus transmitted to humans. Apparently even limited contact with bats or other animals infected with a bat variant of rabies may be associated with rabies virus transmission. The virus also has been transmitted through corneal transplants from persons with undiagnosed central nervous system disease. Personnel who handle tissue specimens or other material potentially laden with rabies virus also should be regarded as at risk for infection.

Clinical Signs: The incubation period can range from five (5) days to many years. The disease produces an almost invariably fatal acute viral encephalomyelitis. Patients experience a period of apprehension and develop headache, malaise, fever, and sensory changes at the site of the prior animal-bite wound. Further progression of the disease is marked by paresis or paralysis, inability to swallow and the related hydrophobia, delirium, convulsions, and coma. Death is often due to respiratory paralysis.

Diagnosis and Prevention: Rabies is usually diagnosed with specific immunofluorescent antibody staining of brain tissue, corneal smears, mucosal scrapings or frozen skin-biopsy specimens. Virus isolation (usually from mice injected with tissue from suspected rabid animals) can be used to confirm the diagnosis. Most cases of human rabies in the U.S. result from a lack of identification or recognition of risks (e.g. contact with bats) and failure to administer treatment. Any bite or scratch from a potentially rabid animal should be reported immediately to the supervisor. Also, the attending veterinarian (ETSU Division of Laboratory Animal Resources) should be notified, so that arrangements can be made for diagnostic evaluation of the biting animal. Immediate and thorough washing of all bite wounds and scratches with soap and water markedly reduces the likelihood of rabies. Human rabies immune globulin and rabies vaccine are recommended for bites as well as for exposures that do not involve bites (inhalation of dust in caves with bats) unless the patient has been previously vaccinated.

Preexposure Rabies Prophylaxis: Rabies pre-exposure vaccination is offered at no cost to individuals who have direct contact with unanesthetized dogs and cats and certain wild animals at ETSU. The vaccination consists of a series of three 0.1 ml injection of human diploid cell rabies vaccine (HDCV) into the upper arm on days 0, 7, and 28. Serologic testing for rabies antibodies is performed every two (2) years thereafter. Booster injection of the vaccine is only indicated if the titer falls below the limit recommended by the testing laboratory.

Hypersensitivity reactions to HDCV are possible: A type I reaction or immediate hypersensitivity reaction is characterized by bronchospasm, laryngeal edema, generalized puritic rash, urticaria and/or angioedema. Individuals with possible type I reactions should not receive further doses of HDCV. A type II reaction occurs 2-21 days after a dose of HDCV is received. This delayed allergic reaction is characterized by a generalized puritic rash or urticaria, arthralgia, arthritis, angioedema, nausea, vomiting, fever and/or malaise. Individuals with presumed type II hypersensitivity reaction should not receive any further doses of HDCV unless they are bitten by a rabid animal or they are likely to be inapparently or unavoidably exposed to the rabies virus.

East Tennessee State University

Visitors, Contractors and Maintenance Personnel
Risk Assessment and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Department of _______________________ Building _________________ Room ______________

*Hazards are highlighted. Wearing the required PPE will reduce risks when working in the lab.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hazard</th>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>PPE Required</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animals/Animal Waste</td>
<td>Allergy</td>
<td>Gloves, Lab Coat</td>
<td>See Information Sheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isotopes</td>
<td>Radiation</td>
<td>Gloves, Lab Coat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tissue Culture</td>
<td>Infection</td>
<td>Gloves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bacterial Culture</td>
<td>Infection</td>
<td>Gloves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Viral Cultures</td>
<td>Infection</td>
<td>Gloves, possible Gowns/Full Covering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hazardous Waste</td>
<td>Infection</td>
<td>Gloves</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Skin/Inhalation</td>
<td>Gloves</td>
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<td>UV Light</td>
<td>Burn</td>
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<td>Avoid exposure to skin and eyes.</td>
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<td>Chemicals</td>
<td>Poisioning</td>
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<td>Caustic</td>
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<td>Explosive</td>
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<td>Noise = 85 decibels</td>
<td>Hearing Loss</td>
<td>Earplugs, Ear Muffs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liquid Nitrogen -178C</td>
<td>Freezer burn</td>
<td>Thermal Gloves, Goggles &amp; Face shield</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Super Cold Freezers below -50 C</td>
<td>Freezer burn</td>
<td>Thermal Gloves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharps</td>
<td>Cut/puncture</td>
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<td>Handle closed container only.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hot Surfaces</td>
<td>Burn</td>
<td>Thermal Gloves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compressed Gas</td>
<td>Explosion</td>
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<td>Secure from tipping over.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Poisoning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural Gas Lines</td>
<td>Fire/Explosion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Obtain hot work permit before use of flame or heat source near natural gas lines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lasers</td>
<td>Burn</td>
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*Remove all PPE and wash your hands prior to leaving the lab.*

In Case of Emergency – Contact: ____________________________________________________________
**Tetanus**

Tetanus is an acute, often fatal, disease caused by an extremely potent exotoxin produced by *Clostridium tetani*. It is characterized by generalized rigidity and painful convulsive spasms of skeletal muscles. The muscle stiffness at first involves the jaw (lockjaw) and neck and then becomes generalized. In recent years about 30-40 cases have occurred throughout the US. The case to death ratio for many years has been approximately 30%.

*C. tetani* is a Gram-positive, anaerobic rod that may develop spores. The spores are very resistant to heat and antiseptics. They can survive autoclaving at 121°C for 15 minutes. The bacilli are widely distributed in soil and in the intestine and feces of animals and humans.

**Mode of Transmission:** *C. tetani* usually enters the body through minor or major wounds. Under anaerobic conditions, the spores germinate. Toxins are then produced and disseminated via blood and lymphatics.

**Clinical Signs:** The incubation period varies from three (3) to 21 days, depending on the site of the injury. The first sign of the disease is trismus or lockjaw, followed by stiffness of the neck, difficulty in swallowing and rigidity of abdominal muscles. Other symptoms include sweating, elevated blood pressure and episodic rapid heart rate. Spasms may occur frequently and last for several minutes. These spasms continue for three (3) to four (4) weeks. Complete recovery may take months. Laryngospasm may lead to interference with breathing. Fractures of the spine or long bones may result from sustained contractions and convulsions.

**Diagnosis and Prevention:** There are no laboratory findings characteristic of tetanus. The diagnosis is entirely clinical and does not depend upon bacteriologic confirmation. Most cases of tetanus occur after acute injuries such as punctures, lacerations and abrasions and animal bites. Almost all reported cases of tetanus are in persons who have either never been vaccinated, or who completed a primary series, but have not had a booster in the preceding 10 years. Tetanus toxoid has proven to be a safe and useful vaccine. In adults it is given in combination with diphtheria antigen as *Td vaccine*. While some persons may be protected for life, most persons have antitoxin levels that approach the minimal protective level by 10 years after the last dose. Therefore, routine boosters are recommended every 10 years. To ensure adequate protective antitoxin levels in individuals who sustain a wound that is other than clean and minor, a booster is recommended if more than five (5) years have elapsed since the last tetanus vaccination.

**Remember:** Routine boosters are recommended every 10 years. To ensure adequate protective antitoxin levels in individuals who sustain a wound that is other than clean and minor, a booster is recommended if more than five (5) years have elapsed since the last tetanus vaccination.

**Reference:** Tetanus, CDC Fact Sheet: http://www.cdc.gov/nip/publications/pink/tetanus.pdf

06/02
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.
Info from visitors, maintenance personnel, and contractors

Visitors, including contractors, must report to the Office of the Division of Laboratory Animal Resources before entering any area in one of the animal housing facilities. While in the facilities they should avoid direct contact with animals, their waste or any other potentially contaminated materials unless these are directly related to their duties.

Hazards Encountered When Visiting the Laboratory Animal Facilities At ETSU

There are certain risks involved when visiting the animal facilities at ETSU. In general, health and safety matters are related to the animal species, the frequency, and type of contact, to facility design, equipment design, human behavior, and each person’s health status.

For the occasional visitor who does not have direct contact with or handles the animals, allergic reactions are the most common hazards.

**Allergic reactions** to animals are among the most common conditions that adversely affect the health of workers exposed to animals in research. All personnel should be aware that laboratory animals, particularly rats, rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters and birds, are sources of potent allergens. Products from animals that may induce allergic reactions are animal skin, dander, fur, urine, and saliva. The route of exposure is most often due to airborne allergens; however, contact allergies are quite common. Depending on the exposure, the allergic reaction may induce respiratory symptoms, itchy eyes, and rashes. Symptoms usually evolve after repeated exposure over a period of 1-2 years; however, allergic reactions may happen on first exposure.

Development of aerosols and dust should be avoided when working around animals. Some work practices and personal protective equipment can reduce the potential development of allergies and perhaps alter the severity. If you know you are allergic to some animals, it may be necessary to wear an N95 respirator.

If you notice symptoms of an allergic reaction such as a skin rash or hives, itchy eyes, or difficulty breathing while in the animal facility or within 3 days after having been in an animal facility you should notify your supervisor. If you seek medical treatment, you should mention to your physician that you might have been exposed to laboratory animals.

**Physical hazards** such as slippery floors, excessive noise, sharp objects, hot surfaces, pressure vessels (compressed gas cylinders, autoclaves), and many other conditions may be present in the animal facility. Precautionary measures should be taken where these hazards occur.

**Radioisotopes:** Radioisotopes are radioactive forms of normally nonradioactive elements. They emit low levels of radiation, which makes them valuable as tracers in biological investigations of metabolic processes. Usually these types of isotopes are dangerous only if contacted directly. If radioisotopes are present in a room in the animal facility, there will be a warning sign describing the hazard and recommended protection measures posted on the entrance door.

**Biohazards:** These are pathogens that may be live infectious bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites that pose a threat to humans and animals. Pathogens are transmitted by contact, inhalation, or ingestion. If any known pathogens are present in a room in the animal facility, there will be a warning sign describing the hazard and recommended protection measures posted on the entrance door.

**Hazard Containment:** Eating, drinking, smoking, chewing (gum or tobacco products), or application of cosmetics are not permitted in the animal facility.

**Protective clothing:** Individuals exposed to animals, their waste, or other products must wear protective clothing, a lab coat and gloves must be worn when entering an animal room or other areas with potential contamination. Persons with allergies to animals may need to wear N95 respirators. These protective devices are available in the Office of the Division of Laboratory Animal Resources.

Personnel should avoid touching their eyes, face, mouth, or other body surfaces with contaminated hands or gloves. Used protective clothing and devices should not be worn outside the animal facility. Disposable protective clothing should be discarded when soiled. Never should soiled protective clothing be worn or taken home.

**Personal hygiene:** Hand washing is a crucial activity for safeguarding personnel in the animal facility. Hands should be washed after contact with animals, their waste or with contaminated or potentially contaminated surfaces and materials, and after removal of contaminated gloves. Hands should be routinely washed before eating, drinking, applying cosmetics, before touching contact lenses, and before leaving the animal facility.

Effective hand washing consists of at least a 30-second lathering with soap and warm water followed by a thorough rinse.

**Hearing protection:** Noise levels may reach potentially damaging levels in certain areas of the animal facility, especially in the dog housing rooms and in the cage wash areas. Hearing protection devices, such as headset type protectors and disposable foam earplugs, are available in the animal facilities and should be worn by personnel entering these areas.

**Eye protection:** Persons wearing contact lenses should use safety eyeglasses or goggles.

Further Information can be obtained from the Office of the Division of Laboratory Animal Resources (439-6292), the UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator (439-6498) or from your personal physician.
Work- or Classroom-Related Injuries or Illnesses

Employees and students must bring all work- or classroom-related injuries and illnesses to the attention of the supervisor or instructor. Appropriate first aid should be administered immediately. Initial determination should be made whether treatment is necessary. If there is uncertainty a physician or other appropriate health professional should be consulted.

Registered students must report all work- or classroom-related injuries and illnesses to the supervisor or instructor and seek medical treatment at the Student Health Clinic in Lamb Hall, tel. 439-4225. They will be referred to an appropriate care provider as determined by the health professionals in the Student Health Clinic.

For university employees ETSU has established a workers’ compensation program. A description of this program can be reviewed on the Human Resources web site: http://www.etsu.edu/humanres/workers.htm. Employees should report all work related injuries and illnesses to the immediate supervisor and to the Office of Human Resources using the OSHA Form 301 (http://www.etsu.edu/humanres/forms/OSHA301.pdf). A copy of OSHA Form 301 should also be forwarded to the UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator, Dept. Family Medicine, Campus Box 70419. If medical treatment is needed, ETSU employees should select a health care provider who is authorized to treat injuries for the State of Tennessee. The directory of the authorized providers is available for review on the following web site: http://www.etsu.edu/humanres/forms/workersdirector.pdf.

Visitors and volunteers should follow the above procedures for university employees and report accidents immediately to the Office of the Comptroller.

Employees and students should also report any gastrointestinal, respiratory or dermal illness with signs or symptoms which resemble those occurring in the animals with which they have contact.

Animal bites from potentially rabid animals (e.g. dogs, cats, bats) must be reported immediately to the Division of Laboratory Animal Resources, tel. 439-6292, so that arrangements can be made for diagnostic evaluation of the biting animal.

**OSHA Definitions:**

**Injuries** include cases such as, but not limited to, a cut, fracture, sprain, or amputation. **Illnesses** include both acute and chronic illnesses, such as, but not limited to, allergies, skin disease, respiratory disorder, or poisoning. Only work-related injuries and illnesses should be reported. An injury or illness is considered **work-related** if an event or exposure in the work environment caused or contributed to the condition or significantly aggravated a preexisting condition. More information on conditions that should be reported under the Workers’ Compensation program is available on the ETSU Human Resources’ web site: http://www.etsu.edu/humanres/workers.htm.
1. A Health Assessment form must be completed for each participant on an Animal Study Protocol and submitted in a sealed envelope to the UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator Department of Family Medicine, Box 70419.

2. A copy of the Risk Inventory form for the laboratory in which you will be working with the animals must be attached to this form – see your supervisor for review and a copy of that form.

3. The Occupational Health Coordinator will review the Health Assessment form in strictest confidence. Significant health problems will be referred to the consulting occupational health physician or immunologist or infectious disease specialist and, upon written request by the employee, may be forwarded to his or her personal health provider.

4. Annual updates of the information provided will be requested by the Occupational Health Office.

5. Please use black ink to complete this form. Please print clearly.

Date: Month Day Year
Name: (Last) (First) (MI)
Employee SS#: XXX-____-_____ Gender: F or M Date of Birth:
Job Title: Department: Supervisor:
Campus Address: E-mail: Phone:
Home Address: Home City/State/Zip: Phone:
Name of personal health care provider: Provider Address:
City/State/Zip: Provider phone: Phone:

Nature of Exposure
List all animal species approved in the protocol(s): ____________________________________

Specific Risk Categories (check all statements applicable to the Animal Study Protocol(s) you will be working on)
☐ I will not be exposed to animals or fluids or tissues or waste, nor will I work in areas where animals are used. (Health Assessment Form does not need to be submitted).
☐ I will work in rooms or areas where vertebrate animals are used, but I will not handle animals or fluids or tissues or waste. Duration of animal exposure (hours/weeks): ______________________
☐ I will work with and handle vertebrate animals or their fluids or tissues or waste - duration of animal exposure (hours/week): ______________________
☐ I will provide routine veterinary care or husbandry to animals.
☐ I will work on an animal use protocol involving field study.

Personal health information necessary to assess occupational risk is requested below
☐ I agree to provide such information.
    Signature: Date:

☐ I decline to provide such information. In declining, I specifically release ETSU, the State of Tennessee, its offices and employees from liability for damages incurred as a result of my refusal. Please note that non-participation in the program may be grounds for disapproval to work with certain or all animal species at ETSU.
    Reason for non-participation:
    Signature: Date:

Have you had prior animal exposure (including pets)? Y N
How many years? Types of animals:

Have you ever contracted a disease from animals or had an injury related to working with animals (including bites, scratches, needle sticks, etc.)? Y N

If the answer is yes, please explain:
1. **Do you have any history of:**

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heart disease</td>
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<td>Heart valve disease or surgery</td>
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<td>Lung disease</td>
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<td>Diabetes</td>
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<td>Hearing problems</td>
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<td>Problems with vision</td>
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<td>Back injuries or problems</td>
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<td>Musculoskeletal injuries or problems</td>
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<td>Previous work-related injuries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limitations in activity</td>
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</table>

2. **List any surgeries you have had:**

3. **If you are female and you anticipate working with cats:**

   Are you pregnant? Yes_______ No_______ 

   Are you physically capable of becoming pregnant? (Answer without regard to use of contraceptives) Yes No 

4. **Do you take daily medications?** Yes No

   A. Medication | Frequency | Dosage | B. Allergy Shots | Frequency 

5. **Do you have problems with your immune system?** Yes No

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corticosteroid therapy</td>
<td>Chemotherapy</td>
<td>Other (list)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Splenectomy</td>
<td>Other (list)</td>
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</table>

6. **Previous Immunizations?** (Provide the following information if applicable)

   | Last Tetanus Booster | Date: | Tetanus vaccination is required every 10 years and is the responsibility of each participant. Immunizations are available for a small fee at the Washington County Health Department or at the ETSU Student Clinic (registered students only) |
   | Last Rabies Booster: | Date: | Last Rabies ab Titer: | Date: |
   | Last PPD: | Date: | Results: |
   | Last Toxoplasmosis ab Titer: | Date: | Results: |
   | Last Audiogram: | Date: | Provider: |
   | Last Pulmonary Function Testing: | Date: | Results: |

Please confirm that the principal investigator has obtained approval from the University Committee on Animal Care for the project before you work with the associated animals. Further, make certain that you have been informed of all risks involved in working with the animals and of measures, including appropriate training, to protect your own health and safety.

Employee Signature ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
1. A Risk Inventory form must be completed by the Principal Investigator for all laboratories used in an animal study and must be submitted to the UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator, Department of Family Medicine, Box 70419 before an Animal Study Protocol can be approved by the University Committee on Animal Care.

2. The Occupational Health Coordinator will review the form for determination of risk exposure of personnel working with the animals in your laboratory(ies).

3. An update of the Risk Inventory will be requested annually by the Occupational Health Office.

4. A copy of the Risk Inventory form must be attached to the Health Assessment form submitted by each individual working in your laboratory(ies).

5. Please use black ink to complete this form. Please print clearly.

Animal Study Protocol #(s) ___________________________________________________________________________________

Laboratory(ies): Building and Room #(s) _________________________________________________________________________

Protocol Title(s): ____________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________

PI’s Name: ____________________________________Title: ________ Position: _________________ Tel. No: ________________

Department: __________________________________________________ e-mail: ________________________________________

A. Instructions
Review each listing below and check those situations applicable to your laboratories where animals are used. This information will be reviewed by an occupational health professional to determine the occupational health risk of personnel working in your laboratories.

B. Nature of Exposure
List all animal species approved in your protocol(s):

C. Specific Risk Categories (check all statements that apply to your laboratory(ies)) and Animal Study Protocol(s).

1. Animal hazards exposure
   - Bite tendency moderate to high (e.g., dogs, cats, rodents, pigs, wild mammals)
   - Scratch tendency high (e.g., cats, rabbits, wild mammals, catfish, raptors)
   - Allergy potential high (e.g., rats, mice, guinea pigs, horses, cats, birds)
   - Venomous potential high (e.g., certain reptiles)
   - Kicking, butting, compression potential high (e.g., horses, cattle, swine, sheep, goats)
   - Zoonotic disease potential high (e.g., cats, random source dogs, pregnant sheep, wild animals)
   - Not applicable

2. Animal product hazard exposure
   - Aerosolized (while cleaning animal areas) animal wastes
   - Feces
   - Urine
   - Blood
   - Fresh carcass or tissue
   - Not applicable

3. Radiation exposure
   - Research nuclides – radioactive materials – List materials:
   - X-ray only
   - Lasers:
     - List class:
Other List:___________________________________________________________________________________

Not applicable

4. Biological hazard (to humans and/or to other animals) exposure

Agents (list name(s))

- Viruses ________________________________
- Bacteria ________________________________
- Yeast ________________________________
- Fungi ________________________________
- Molds ________________________________
- Protozoa ________________________________
- Other __________________________________

- Not applicable

5. Chemical/Laboratory exposure

- Anesthetic gases
- Compressed gases in tanks
- Controlled drugs
- Toxic Materials
  - Carcinogens (e.g., formaldehyde, aflatoxins, benzene, ethylene oxide)
  - List: __________________________________________
  - Mutagens/Teratogens (e.g., cyclophosphamide, thalidomide, lead, mercury)
  - List: __________________________________________
  - Other toxic materials
  - List: __________________________________________

- Flammables
  - Solvents (e.g., acetone, diethyl ether, methyl alcohol)
  - List: __________________________________________
  - Solids (e.g., naphthalene, nitrocellulose, paraformaldehyde)
  - List: __________________________________________
  - Corrosives
  - Acids (e.g., acetic, nitric, sulfuric)
  - List: __________________________________________
  - Bases (e.g., ammonium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, sodium hydroxide)
  - List: __________________________________________
  - Other caustics
  - Reactives (e.g., alkali metals, magnesium nitride, picric acid)
  - List: __________________________________________

- Not applicable

6. Physical hazards

- Hypodermic needles and sharps
- Repetitive motion
- Excessive noise over 85 decibels (e.g., communication within 2 feet requires shouting)
- Lifting (e.g., expected to lift or move 50 lbs. or more as part of the job)
- Extreme temperature or humidity
- Outdoor field collections

- Slip/trip hazard (e.g., standing in water, working on slippery floors)
- Low/reduced light levels
- Ladders used (e.g., climbing ladders)
- High pressure/temperature devices used
- Ultrasound used
- Electrical devices used
- Grinding or chipping operation
- Not applicable

This form must be submitted to the UCAC Occupational Health Coordinator, Department of Family Medicine, Box 70419 before the University Committee on Animal Care will approve your Animal Study Protocol. In the Animal Study Protocol form you will be asked to enter the date when you submitted this form. Also, each individual working in your animal laboratory must attach a copy of this form to his/her Health Assessment form to be submitted annually to the Occupational Health Office.

PI’s Signature: ____________________________________________ Date: __________________