POLICY

It is the policy of the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) and University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) to minimize the risk of injury to personnel who have contact with animals/animal tissues or fluids, to promote health, and to protect the university. It is the responsibility of principal investigators to ensure that laboratory staff are informed of and participate in the UNMC/UNO Occupational Health and Safety Program (OHSP).

Personnel with animal or animal tissue/fluid contact are required to enroll in the OHSP and obtain medical clearance before access to animal facilities is granted. Enrollment also requires scheduled, periodic health evaluations/status reviews to obtain information that can be used to verify a change in work or health status and/or to verify the success of the OHSP in reducing occupational related illness and injury.

The program participation requirements are based on the type of animals personnel are, or will be, exposed to, the degree of exposure, other hazards that may be present, and the health status of the individual. A medical questionnaire is used to perform a risk assessment for clearance to work with specific categories of research animals. Enrollment in the OHSP and maintenance of medical clearance is a condition of continuing access to areas where research animals are housed.

The institution has ethical and legal requirements to inform individuals of potential health risks and appropriate precautions to be taken. Risks are mitigated through institutional policies, engineering controls, work practices, and the use of personal protective equipment.

Individuals who require limited, temporary access to research animals and/or facilities, (i.e. IACUC members/staff, regulatory inspectors/site visitors, public visitors, consultants), will be escorted by authorized personnel to animal housing locations. All individuals will be informed of potential health risks prior to entering the animal facility, will wear required personal protective equipment, and adhere to all UNMC, IACUC, and Comparative Medicine (CM) policies.

Report unsafe conditions to CM management. All accidents, injuries, and near-misses must be immediately reported to the direct supervisor, CM management, and Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S).

REGULATION

The use of animals for research, teaching, and testing at UNMC /UNO is regulated by, and conducted in accordance with, the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) of 1966 as amended, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) AWA regulations; the U.S. Public Health Service Policy on the Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (PHS Policy), and the Rules of Accreditation of the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care, (AAALAC International).

The PHS Policy and the AAALAC International Rules of Accreditation require UNMC/UNO to follow the National Research Council Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, (Guide 2011). The Guide indicates that an occupational health and safety program, based on “risk assessment” must be part of the overall animal care and use program. Failure to adhere to the requirements in The Guide and AAALAC International standards could result in the loss of federal funding at UNMC/UNO or loss of accreditation of the program.

The UNMC/UNO OHSP for Personnel with Animal Contact was established in 1992, and focuses on maintaining a safe and healthy workplace. The program is consistent with federal, state, and local regulations as well as the
National Research Council (NRC) publication, “Occupational Health and Safety in the Care and Use of Research Animals” (1997), which contains guidelines and references for establishing and maintaining an effective, comprehensive program.

PROCEDURE

1.0 UNMC Enrollment and Authorization:
   1.1 Complete and submit an initial Confidential Health History Questionnaire to the UNMC Employee Health Clinic through the Research Support System (RSS) for evaluation.
   1.2 Additional medical information or diagnostics may be required based on the information provided in the Questionnaire.
   1.3 Complete the educational presentation/examination entitled “Animal Contact Safety Training” through UNMC’s web-based training platform.
   1.4 The Employee Health Clinic medical personnel in conjunction with UNMC EH&S and Human Resources must authorize animal contact and/or animal facility access.
   1.5 Periodic health status reviews and reauthorization will be conducted via the submission of a confidential health history questionnaire to medical personnel at the Employee Health Clinic via the RSS.
      A. Category I clearance (routine animal facility access, contact with rodents, guinea pigs, rabbits, pigs, dogs, cats) will require renewal once every three years.
      B. Category II clearance (contact with sheep, goats, cattle) will require annual renewal.
      C. Category III clearance (contact with Non-human Primates) will require annual renewal.

2.0 UNO Enrollment and Authorization:
   2.1 Complete and submit an initial Confidential Health Assessment Questionnaire directly to the UNO Office of Health Services.
   2.2 Complete UNO’s Occupational Health and Safety interactive computer-based training program followed by a signed acknowledgement that the person has viewed the course materials, understands them, and knows where to seek additional information.
   2.3 Additional medical information or additional examinations may be required based on the information provided in the Questionnaire.
   2.4 UNO Health Services medical personnel in conjunction with UNO Human Resources must authorize animal contact and/or animal facility access.
   2.5 Periodic status reviews and reauthorization will be conducted via an interim/supplemental confidential health history questionnaire submitted to medical personnel at UNO Office of Health Services.
      A. Category I and Category II clearances will require renewal once every three years.
      B. Category III clearance will require renewal annually.

3.0 OHSP Clearance Denied or Access Restricted:
   3.1 Any refusal to enroll in this program or any refusal to comply with prescribed restricted access to animal facilities will be further evaluated by the Institutional Official (IO) in conjunction with UNMC or UNO Human Resources for further action, up to and including termination of employment.

4.0 Reporting Procedures for Health Related Incidents:
   4.1 Reporting Procedures for UNO:
      A. In the event of a serious or life threatening emergency, dial 911.
      B. In the event of a minor health-related event, signage in the animal facility will direct students/employees to do the following:
         1) Report to UNO Health Services (H&K 102; (402) 554-2374)
         2) Contact the Coordinator of UNO Animal Facilities: Heather Jensen at hajensen@unomaha.edu or (402) 554-2943, and the relevant PI (contact information posted
on the animal room door) for the project. Provide a written description of the health-related event.

4.2 Reporting Procedures for UNMC:
   A. For all serious and/or potentially life-threatening injuries, UNMC employees and visitors are directed to immediately call 9-5555. Treatment will be provided at the Emergency Department.
   B. For minor health-related events, employees should report to the Employee Health Department at the South Doctor’s Tower, Suite 600 (402-552-3563).
   C. All animal-related events should be reported to Comparative Medicine (402-559-4034), EH&S (402-559-8395), and the relevant PI.
   D. For biologic exposure guidance, call the OUCH line: 9-6824. The Medical Call Center will triage care and coordinate with CM, EHS, Employee Health (during normal business hours) or the Emergency Department (after hours).
   E. File appropriate injury reports with Human Resources.

5.0 Visitor Policies:

5.1 UNMC – Visitors with No Animal Contact:
   A. Visitors must read, complete, and sign the form, “UNMC Information Sheet for Visitors Entering Facilities”, located at the CM main office.
   B. A CM Manager must review and sign the form to grant approval.
   C. Completed forms will be filed by CM Administration.

5.2 UNMC - Visiting Scientist with Limited, Temporary Animal Contact:
   A. UNMC is a collaborative institution and welcomes visiting scientists. Limited access to work with research animals may be requested for various reasons and will be reviewed as such cases arise.
   B. Access Request and Processing:
      1) The UNMC research personnel must request a Visiting Scientist Form from the IACUC office. The form should be completed and returned to the IACUC office with any required supporting documentation for each individual requesting access.
      2) The IACUC office will perform an administrative review and proceed as follows:
         a) If the visiting scientist is not currently enrolled in an OHSP at their home institution, the IACUC office will send the form to the CM Director and the EHS Occupational Health Specialist (OHS) for review.
         b) If the visiting scientist is currently enrolled in an OHSP, the IACUC office will create “Visiting Scientist” in the RA database and process as a change in personnel for the IACUC protocol.
         c) Administrative review should be assigned to the CM Director, PAL, EHS – OHS, and Clinical Veterinarian for review.
         d) A risk assessment will be performed based on the amount of time access is requested, species and work to be performed, existing OHSP enrollment, exposure to hazards, etc.
         e) Research personnel will be notified of approval or denial of the request, in writing, from the IACUC office.
   C. Approval is granted based on the outcome of risk assessments for the visiting scientist, the collective UNMC research community and, the University system.
   D. If a request is denied, the visiting scientist may have the option to enroll in the UNMC OHSP and complete required training.

5.3 UNO - Visiting Scientist with Limited, Temporary Animal Contact:
   A. Individuals will be informed of potential health risks prior to entering the animal facility.
   B. Individuals who are experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness may not enter areas where non-human primates are present.
   C. Public visitors must have permission from the PI of an animal area in order to enter that area.
5.4 **The following rules apply to all visitors:**

A. Individuals must be accompanied by authorized personnel at all times while visiting the animal facility.

B. Visitors with known animal allergies may not visit housing locations where rodents are not held in filtered caging racks.

C. An individual entering a room where non-human primate(s) (NHP) are present must provide proper documentation verifying negative TB status and measles vaccination/protective titer. Comparative medicine staff members will ask to see proof of clearance prior to entry.

D. The PI/ research host is responsible for approved visiting scientists and must accompany these individuals at all times. Visitors must comply with all UNMC, IACUC, CM and Safety rules and regulations.

E. Visitors to CM facilities must sign in at the front office daily.