

Animal Exposure Awareness

Occupational Animal Exposure

Both research and non-research animals have the potential to cause injury, transmit zoonotic diseases, and/or cause allergic reaction to those who have contact. These animal hazards can occur by either direct contact from handling an animal or just by being in close proximity, i.e., working or passing through an animal housing room.

Staff members who have indirect but close proximity exposure to animals, such as maintenance or building services staff, need to be provided with the appropriate awareness training. Understanding routes of disease transmission, disease or allergy signs and symptoms, personal protective equipment (PPE), waste handling, and emergency contacts is very important.

Animal Allergies

Cats, rabbits, mice, rats, birds, and guinea pigs are the most frequently implicated allergy causing species. Exposure to animal related allergens (fur, hair, dander, and protein from urine) may occur by inhaling contaminants or by direct contact.

Allergy symptoms include:

- rhinitis (runny nose and sneezing similar to hay fever)
- conjunctivitis (irritation and tearing of the eyes)
- asthma
- dermatitis (skin reactions)

Allergic reactions are implicated if symptoms reduce or stop after leaving the work place.

Zoonotic Diseases

Many diseases can be transmitted between animals and people; these are called zoonotic diseases. Rabies, Toxoplasmosis, Leptospirosis, Ascariasis, Psitticosis and Q-Fever are just a few examples of zoonotic diseases. Pregnant workers can be at very high risk for certain animal diseases. Awareness, common sense, personal protective equipment (PPE), and avoidance will protect against and prevent most of these diseases.

Personal Protective Equipment

Minimize the risk of development of animal allergies or zoonotic disease by:

- working in well-ventilated areas
- using good hygiene practices (proper hand washing technique)
- using personal protective equipment such as gloves, and wearing N-95 rated dust masks, laboratory coats, or coveralls

EHS can recommend specific types of PPE

Animal Exposure Do's

- Get permission to enter a research area from the Principal Investigator or lab personnel
- Utilize the appropriate PPE
- Discard used PPE properly
- Wash your hands properly
- Leave everything in research area as you found it (lights, locks, temperature, etc.)

Animal Exposure Don'ts

- Do not touch research animals
- Do not handle animal waste or bedding without the appropriate PPE
- Do not take animal soiled PPE or work clothes home
- Do not enter animal areas where you are not authorized to go
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Reporting

Report suspect allergic reactions or zoonotic illnesses to:

- Your Supervisor
- EHS (481-4197 or 481-4193)
- Occupational Healthcare Provider

Animal Allergy and Zoonoses Links

Preventing Asthma in Animal Handlers: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/97-116/>

Zoonotic Diseases:

<http://www.purdue.edu/research/research-compliance/regulatory/care-use-of-animals/zoonotic.php>

Purdue University Laboratory Animal Program: <https://www.purdue.edu/research/oevprp/regulatory-affairs/animal-research/>

Animal Exposure Occupational Health Program

If you would like to participate in the Animal Exposure Occupational Health Program due to your indirect contact with animals, please contact EHS (contact information is below).

EHS Contact Information: Stephanie Phillips – 481-4193 or steels@pfw.edu
 Erin Turner – 481-4197 or mckien01@pfw.edu

Training Documentation

I understand the information provided in this training document and will adhere to all applicable Purdue rules and regulations:

_____	_____
Employee name (please print)	Training date
_____	_____
Employee signature	Department
_____	_____
Supervisor's Name	Training given by

Supervisors/DTIs:

Please keep a copy of this certification page and distribute completed forms to:
 Environmental Health & Safety (SB, room SB G48)