



Occupational Health and Safety Program for Animal Workers

In accordance with the Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, which requires awardee institutions to establish an Occupational Health and Safety Program for all personnel who work in laboratory animal facilities or have frequent contact with animals, NIU has established the following policy with which all personnel who work around live vertebrate animals should be familiar.

This Occupational Health and Safety Program for Animal Workers is administered by the Office of Research Compliance and Integrity (ORCI) under the guidance of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

1. Who should participate?

The program covers all personnel involved in live vertebrate animal care and use at Northern Illinois University. Participation in this program is mandatory. This includes, but is not limited to researchers, instructors, students and NIU employees, full or part-time.

2. How to participate:

Activities with live vertebrate animals have been divided into general categories of risk. However, a particular activity may change its risk category based on information provided. The Laboratory Safety Manager and Attending Veterinarian, in consultation with the IACUC, will make the final determination for each protocol's Hazard Level. The chart below provides a general guide to activities likely to fall into each hazard level.

Hazard Level	
Low	Course work with animals Observational Field Work Field research with fish, amphibians, nonvenomous reptiles, & birds
Moderate	Animal facility husbandry Laboratory animal research activities Field research with venomous species and & mammals other than non-human primates
High	Laboratory animal research involving biological or chemical hazards Field research involving non-human primates

At the low hazard level:

1. ORCI will provide the PI with protocol specific information on potential hazards and protective measures available to participants.
2. The PI is required to:
 - a. Distribute the information regarding hazards and protective measures to participants prior to contact with the animals, through lecture and/or written document.
 - b. Review the provided hazard-specific information with all participants.



- c. Document that the information has been provided to all participants (with provided sign in form) and submit this documentation to the Laboratory Safety Manager, ORCI.

At moderate hazard level, in addition to the actions listed above:

1. Participants will complete a Health Questionnaire, obtain a medical authorization from the Lab Safety Manager. Take both to Physicians Immediate Care. They will perform a physical and review the information on the form with you. Physicians Immediate Care will evaluate each participant and make a Health Assessment that will include one of the following:
 - a. The individual can work with no restrictions.
 - b. The individual can work with the specific restrictions: _____.
 - c. The individual should not participate. Further follow-up requested.

At the high hazard level, in addition to the actions listed above:

1. Physicians Immediate Care will also receive the potential hazards and has the opportunity to provide input.

Regardless of the risk level designated by the IACUC, any person involved with the care and use of animals through an NIU-associated teaching, research, or training activity may request consultation with Physicians Immediate Care at any time by contacting the Laboratory Safety Manager.

To ensure confidentiality and comply with all federal and state regulations, all medical information provided will be given directly to Physicians Immediate Care without review by NIU.

3. Vaccinations

The following vaccinations are strongly suggested for all participants. Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (Tdap) in the past 10 years, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and annual flu shot.

4. Testing

Participants in all protocols involving nonhuman primates (regardless of hazard level) will be required to have an annual tuberculosis (TB) skin test. A waiver is given only after consultation with the Occupational Health Specialist.

5. Special precautions for pregnancy, illness, immune suppression

Any condition which may put the worker at additional risk such as pregnancy, illness or compromised immunity should be discussed with a physician. Information about the type of work performed and the animals in use should be shared. Any suggested accommodations should be forwarded to the supervisor/ principal investigator for implementation, or alternatively, participants may complete a Health Questionnaire form and submit it to the Occupational Health Specialist.



6. Hazard and Risk Identification and Assessment

Hazard and risk assessment will be conducted annually for the animal facility staff in Montgomery Hall and Psychology. Hazard and risk assessment for each protocol will be done in cooperation with the PI. Please contact ORCI for the most recent assessment information and Hazard Analysis Form.

7. Access by Housekeeping, Maintenance, or Other Non-Animal Care and Use Personnel

In situations where housekeeping, maintenance, or other non-animal care and use personnel must access the animal rooms, they are briefed on appropriate precautions and provided any appropriate PPE and are permitted in the area for a limited amount of time. A member of the animal care staff will be available for escort if needed. If there is extensive or prolonged work to be done the animals are removed prior to the individuals being allowed into the room.

8. Reporting and Treating Injuries

a. Accident/Incident Report

In the event of an illness or injury, supervisors and/or the principal investigator will complete an accident/incident report and send it to Laboratory Safety (ORCI). The report includes the name of the injured person, his/her contact information, status (student, faculty, staff, or visitor), a description of the accident/incident, the response and medical treatment, if any, and any follow up or corrective action.

b. Obtaining Medical Treatment

In the event of bites, scratches, illness or injury, supervisors and/or the principal investigator should be notified. In the case of a minor injury, Physicians Immediate Care is available M-F 8am -8pm, Saturday and Sunday 7:30 am-4:30 pm. Kishwaukee Community Hospital Emergency Room is available 24 hours daily. In the event of a serious injury, medical assistance should be sought immediately. In the case of a medical emergency, a call will be made to 911. Patients should NOT be taken to University Health Services for medical emergencies.

References:

Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, Institute of Laboratory Animal Resources, commission of Life Sciences, National Research Council, National Academy Press, 2011.

Occupational Health and Safety in the care and Use of Research Animals, Committee on Occupational Safety and Health in Research Animal Facilities, National Research Council, National Academy Press, 1997.

