

University of California, Merced
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee Policy

Version No. 1

Policy No. 107

Occupational Health Program

I. Purpose:

This section outlines the medical surveillance requirements for individuals having animal contact and the services available to meet these requirements. Services for this purpose are provided by UC Merced Occupational Health Clinic.

II. Definition:

Individual at Increased Risk: refers to employees, IACUC members and students who, in the course of their employment, service, research or education, are exposed to live vertebrate animals in a way that exposes them to an increased risk of an occupational illness, such as a zoonotic disease, physical injury by the animal, or an animal allergy.

- A. Deciding whether a particular category of workers or students falls into an "increased risk" category requires an objective evaluation of the nature of the exposure and the types of animals involved. Supervisors and instructors are encouraged to consult with Environmental Health & Safety, UC Merced Occupational Health Clinic for guidance in risk assessment.
- B. As a general rule, individuals working with animals as a component of their employment should be enrolled in the Occupational Health Program, as described below.
- C. Students whose only exposure to animals will be participation in a teaching exercise will not normally be required to enroll in the Occupational Health Program, but they should be provided with information about any health considerations relative to the species with which they will be working.
- D. Students who are also employees will be subject to the same risk assessment and enrollment criteria as other employees. Such students will be required to enroll in the Occupational Health Program. In all cases, the decision to enroll or not to enroll will be based on risk assessment of the work rather than on the employment status of the worker.
- E. Instructors seeking information about animal-associated health risks should contact the Office of Research.

III. Policy:

It is the policy of UC Merced to comply with all pertinent Federal, State, and local statutes, standards, and regulations regarding the provision of personnel health programs for individuals who have animal contact.

A. Notification of Occupational Health Clinician/Provider

Supervisors of individuals at increased risk, as discussed above, must require those individuals to notify the Occupational Health Physician, by submitting a Confidential Medical Information Questionnaire in conjunction with the Supervisor's submission of a

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Risk Assessment Form. Supervisors must also notify the UC Merced Occupational Health clinic when individuals discontinue activities involving animal contact.

B. Costs for Preventive Medical Treatment

The review of the Confidential Medical Information Questionnaire and the Risk Assessment Form, and all preventive medical services are provided and managed internally by the UC Merced Occupational Health Program.

C. Training

Supervisors of employees and students at increased risk must provide training about zoonoses, personal hygiene, and other considerations, such as precautions to be taken by pregnant women. Occupational hazards, including animal bites and allergies, should be recognized and methods for preventing and treating them should be discussed. Supervisors may contact the Office of Research & Economic Development for assistance in conducting this training.

D. Personal Hygiene

High standards of personal cleanliness among individuals at increased risk are necessary to maintain human and animal health. Clothing suitable for use in the animal facility must be provided along with appropriate laundry arrangements and locker storage space for street clothing, when necessary. Eating, drinking, and smoking are prohibited in animal contact areas.

E. Physical Examinations and Medical History

All individuals at increased risk must complete an Animal Contact Medical Review Form and submit it to the UC Merced Occupational Health Clinic. The Occupational Health Clinician will then prescribe subsequent actions to be taken. These actions may range from counseling to tetanus vaccination and serum banking. Additional histories and physical examinations, immunizations, and laboratory studies may be required at appropriate intervals, as determined by the Occupational Health Provider/clinician.

F. Treatment of Illness or Injury

1. Individuals must notify their supervisor of suspected zoonosis or any illness accompanied by diarrhea, numbness, faintness, stiff neck or joints, cough, or fever. If the disease is thought to be work-related, it must be reported immediately to the UC Merced Occupational Health Clinic.
2. Injured persons must report to UC Merced Occupational Health Clinic for treatment or referral. Bites and scratches should be flushed immediately with water and then scrubbed with soap and water prior to reporting for treatment.
3. Supervisors must report work-related illness by completing an Employee RSS Injury & Illness Report within 24 hours.

G. Responsibility:

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- The Institution – it is the policy of UC Merced to comply with all pertinent Federal, State, and local statutes, standards, and regulations regarding the provision of personnel health programs for individuals who have animal contact.
- The PI/Supervisor – supervisors of individuals at increased risk, as discussed above, must require those individuals to enroll in the OHSP. It is the responsibility of the PI/Supervisor to ensure their staff, students, and visitors are aware of the risks associated with working with animals and/or animal tissues in biomedical research and teaching.
- All Personnel – each individual at risk, as discussed above, must be familiar with the risks associated with working with animals and/or animal tissues in biomedical research and teaching and the steps required to mitigate those risks.
- The UC Merced Occupational Health Clinic – based on the review of associated risks and personal medical history, the Occupational Health Clinic Provider will determine appropriate safe working conditions, applicable medical restrictions, and provide recommendations for personal protective equipment.
Note: Final determination of required personal protective clothing and equipment (PPE) for specific tasks is the responsibility of Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S).

V. Related Policies:

- Policy 100 Research and Instruction Using Animal Subjects

VI. References:

- [*The Animal Welfare Act*](#) (Public Law 89-544, amended by Public Law 91-579, Public Law 94-279, and Public Law 99-198)
- Institutional Animal Care and Use Guidebook (OLAW 8th edition)
- Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (NIH Publication 86-23)
- Revised Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, NIH Guide, Vol. 25, No. 28
- PHS Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals
- UCM Assurance of Compliance with Public Health Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, Committee on Animal Research
- *UCM Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) Website*