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1.0 PURPOSE

This standard operating procedure (SOP) outlines the process to receive a medical evaluation **at no cost** for University employees whose responsibilities expose them to laboratory animals. The Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) will oversee the administration of the Animal Exposure Program.

2.0 SCOPE

The Animal Exposure Program is available to a worker who comes in contact with laboratory animals or who works near laboratory animals during the course of their duties at USC. Such a person is considered an “animal worker” for this document.

3.0 ABBREVIATIONS

AAALAC	Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care
ARA	Animal Risk Assessment
BMBL	Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories
BSO	Biosafety Officer
BSP	Biosafety Specialist
DAR	Department of Animal Resources
EH&S	Environmental Health & Safety
HR	Human Resources
IACUC	Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
IBC	Institutional Biosafety Committee
IM	Keck Internal Medicine
PI	Principal Investigator
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
USC	University of Southern California

4.0 RESOURCES

AAALAC Guidelines	https://www.aaalac.org/about/guidelines.cfm
BMBL	http://www.cdc.gov/biosafety/publications/bmbl5/
Guide for the care and use of laboratory animals	https://www.aaalac.org/resources/theguide.cfm
Occupational health and safety in the care and use of research animals	https://library.usc.edu/uhtbin/cgisirsi/x/0/0/5?searchdata1=4440734{CKEY}

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 General Responsibilities

EH&S provides funding and oversight of the Animal Exposure Program. Principal investigators (PIs) and supervisors will:

- Identify animal workers who have exposure to laboratory animals while working in or visiting their departments.
- Ensure that each person with animal exposure is added to the relevant IACUC protocol on iStar. The iStar software program shall notify individuals when they are due for the periodic risk assessment.
- Encourage their employees and other animal workers to participate by sharing information concerning the program and by allowing employees time to complete the Animal Exposure Risk Assessment and to attend any follow-up medical appointments.

5.2 Office of Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S)

The EH&S Biosafety Occupational Medicine Division is responsible for the administration of this program.

5.3 Biosafety Officer (BSO)

The Biosafety Officer defines, refines, and manages the program; consults with an appropriate physician regarding the medical requirements of the program; and reviews the program annually to ensure that all components meet national, state, and local guidelines.

5.4 Biosafety Specialist (BSP)

The Biosafety Specialist(s) assist the BSO in endeavors related to the Occupational Medicine Program including the Animal Exposure Program. The BSP enters programmatic information into the Occupational Medicine database, fields questions, and manages the financial transactions concerning this program in concert with the Administration Operations Financial Analyst.

5.5 USC IBC

The USC IBC members are subject matter experts and are responsible for reviewing PI's proposed research protocols for any issues that may require an additional Occupational Medicine item such as respirator use and physical or immunizations.

5.6 Other EH&S Employees

Other EH&S employees will support this program in varying capacities that include information gathering, training setup, providing materials, and answering questions regarding this program.

5.7 Non-USC Vendors, Consultants, and Contractors

The Sharp Rees-Stealy Medical Group is currently the healthcare provider for the Animal Exposure Occupational Medicine Program.

A Sharp Rees-Stealy Occupational Medicine physician acts as a consultant to the Biosafety Program by reviewing the confidential medical information in the form of the Animal Exposure Risk Assessment, contacting those employees who require further evaluation, and informing the BSO or BSP that medical follow-up may be required.

5.8 Department of Animal Resources (DAR)

The DAR administration shall provide a list of current and new employees that require participation in the Animal Exposure Program. USC employees that enter the facility for ancillary purposes such as repairs, maintenance, and housekeeping, are also offered participation in the Animal Exposure Program.

The DAR administration will provide appropriate information and warnings regarding the hazards of laboratory animals to non-USC contractors and vendors who enter USC animal facilities. The contractors and vendors are encouraged to seek medical advice through their company or private physician.

6.0 PROCEDURES

6.1 Identifying Animal Workers

There are three methods used to identify animal workers and provide them with information about the Animal Exposure Program.

- A. Employees listed as participants on an IACUC protocol are required to participate in the Animal Exposure Program by completing an Animal Risk Assessment form (ARA) initially then reassessed every three years.
- B. DAR employees or employees listed by DAR as having access to animal facilities are required to participate in the Animal Exposure Program by completing an Animal Risk Assessment form (ARA) every three years.
- C. Personnel who work near but not with animals, and any other employees who may have occasional exposure to animals AND are not entered into the program by the means above may self-identify or be identified through an associate.

6.2 Completing Animal Risk Assessments

Animal workers with exposure to laboratory animals complete an initial Animal Risk Assessment (ARA) and are reassessed every three years.

The animal worker completes the ARA online utilizing the HIPAA-compliant web-based software REDCap. A link to the survey will be provided via email communication through the iStar software. Your supervisor and other USC employees do not have access to your personal information. EH&S Biosafety will receive your name, the date of ARA completion, the opt in or out information, and the recommendation for USC Internal Medicine review, if applicable. We will assist you with making your appointment with Internal Medicine.

OPT IN surveys will be reviewed by an Occupational Medicine physician. The physician will communicate to the BSO the animal workers that will need to visit the clinic through secure communication through REDCap. The Occupational Medicine physician may supply notes to the clinic consulting physician if deemed appropriate. Notes will be part of the communication process through REDCap. Identified physicians with USC Internal Medicine will be given access to the REDCap system.

The Biosafety Program will authorize the appointment and notify the animal worker when they are approved for the visit.

The animal worker's completed Animal Risk Assessment form is kept confidential using the REDCap system.

6.3 Recommendations by Occupational Medicine Physician

The Occupational Medicine Physician shall review the information in the risk assessment and recommend one or more of the following:

- A. State that the worker has no restrictions for animal work.
- B. Refer to EH&S for a respirator (including fit test and physical).
- C. Refer for consultation to USC Internal Medicine.
- D. Recommend another action.

The recommendation(s) above are sent electronically or hard copy to the Biosafety Program managers who follow up with each individual.

6.4 Evaluation by Keck Internal Medicine Physician

- A. A worker identified as needing a follow-up evaluation after review of their ARA will be sent an email by the Biosafety Program with the following information.
 - a) An authorization form to sign and take to the appointment
 - b) Instructions on how to make an appointment
 - c) Instructions of the check in procedure
- B. The Biosafety Program will provide Patient Liaison Office in advance with the names of the workers who will be making appointments.
 - a) The Patient Liaison group will make appointments for the worker with one of the following doctors who have been trained in their role to evaluate the worker. Currently these are:
 - 1. Dr. Carrie Ward
 - 2. Dr. Haig Aharonaian

7.0 PROGRAM MAINTENANCE

The Biosafety Program will be responsible for follow up.

- A. A reminder is sent to non-responders to the Risk Assessment after two weeks.
- B. A phone call is made to non-responders who receive two notices.
- C. The two steps above are used for non-responders to the request for a physical.

EH&S works with IACUC to ensure that all persons with animal exposure who are listed on an IACUC protocol are compliant with the Animal Exposure Program.

The requirements of this program will be reviewed annually by the Biosafety Officer or designee. Other USC service departments will review the program as necessary.

This SOP will be reviewed biennially as well as updated as necessary whenever there is a change in the guidance documents that govern the requirements.

8.0 INFORMATION DISSEMINATION OF PROGRAM

EH&S provides information on the Animal Exposure Program via:

- A. Biosafety training
- B. IACUC/DAR training
- C. EH&S Occupational Medicine Program webpage
- D. Factsheet on animal allergies

9.0 ANIMAL EXPOSURE RECORDS

The records regarding the animal workers participating in the program, and what sections of the program they are offered and have fulfilled is kept via a database administered by the Biosafety Program.

Confidential medical records including completed Animal Risk Assessments are kept by the Occupational Medical provider.

10.0 DOCUMENTS

Documents associated with this program may be found at this link:

<https://ehs.usc.edu/research/bio/animal-research-biosafety-program/>.

- Animal Exposure Program
- Animal Exposure Risk Assessment
- ARA Instructions
- Animal Exposure Risk Assessment Follow-Up Authorization
- Animal Allergy Fact Sheet
- Animal Exposure Program SOP