



**Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee**  
**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

**Policy on the Research/Instructional Occupational Health & Safety Program**

The University of Georgia (UGA) Office of Research/Instructional Compliance Occupational Health and Safety Program (OHSP) applies to all UGA faculty, staff, students, volunteers, or visitors who, as part of their research work or as an instructor for an academic class:

- work with vertebrate animals, or animal tissues, fluids, secretions, and/or excretions; or
- handle caging and related equipment contaminated by animal tissues, fluids, secretions, and/or excretions; or
- enter into facilities where research animals are maintained; or
- have contact with any biohazardous agent, in vitro (e.g. on the benchtop) or in vivo (e.g. within an infected animal).

In general, alternate provisions will be made to prevent persons who do not enroll in the Occupational Health and Safety (OHSP) from having incidental contact with animals used in University research or teaching. For the purpose of this policy, UGA faculty, staff, students, volunteers and visitors, hereafter referred to as UGA personnel, are defined as those having specific roles as designated within UGA's ID Management System. Non-UGA personnel can also participate in the program but only on a fee-for-service basis.

The purpose of the UGA OHSP is first and foremost to provide a safe workplace for personnel involved in animal research or instruction or working with biohazards of concern. The OHSP also is intended to address a number of regulatory mandates<sup>1, 2</sup>. The Office of Research Compliance, providing oversight for the Office of Animal Care and Use and the [Office of Biosafety](#), administers and manages the OHSP for personnel using animals and/or working with some biohazards (those which require Institutional Biosafety Committee approval). Regional First Care's Occupational Health Service (RFC OHS) and the UGA Office of Research Clinical Translational Research Unit (CTRU) are contracted to provide occupational medicine support for the program. The National Research Council's [Occupational Health and Safety in the Care and Use of Research Animals](#) and the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) [Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories](#) are used to provide guidance and benchmarks for the UGA OHSP. The CDC's 2008 *Human Rabies Prevention - Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices* is also used as best-practice standards<sup>6</sup>.

The Office of Research Compliance offers all UGA personnel who are listed on an Animal Use Protocol or a Biosafety Protocol the opportunity to participate in the OHSP free-of-charge and to obtain most recommended services without cost. UGA personnel enroll into the program by completing an online Occupational Health and Safety Questionnaire, accessed with their UGA MyID and Password. Use of the login credentials stands in place of signature on this form. The Office of Research Compliance offers all

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non-UGA personnel who are listed on an Animal Use Protocol or a Biosafety Protocol the opportunity to participate in UGA's OHSP if they do not have appropriate coverage at their home institution or with their private medical provider. Medical charges associated with their participation are billed to the Principal Investigator listed on the protocol. There are no administrative fees with this charge but all direct costs will be billed. Non-UGA personnel wishing to enroll in the program must contact the Office of Research Compliance Training Core to obtain a limited time access link to the online Affiliate Occupational Health Questionnaire. Use of this limited-time link stands in the place of signature on this form.

The animal resources director, Principal Investigator, supervisor or instructor must provide guidance in assisting the employee with the accurate completion of this form so that their related risks are clearly identified and managed. The Principal Investigator, supervisor or instructor will assure that all personnel working in animal research or instruction are informed of the risks associated with animal contact. The Principal Investigator, supervisor or instructor will assure that all personnel working with biohazards are informed of the risks associated with these agents. Participation is typically voluntary though strongly encouraged. Personnel who do not wish to participate must decline services on the questionnaire and submit it for documentation purposes. Certain personnel are **required** to participate in the program. These include:

- University Research Animal Resources personnel
- Researcher working with A/BSL-3 agents
- Personnel working macaque primates
- Personnel working with certain biohazards as determined by the Institutional Biosafety Committee

Personnel who enter any animal facility but who do not have any animal contact must enroll as, non-contact OHSP participants. The non-contact program consists of written educational materials, and an enrollment form that reviews the inherent hazards encountered in an animal facility and what should be done to mitigate the risks. Additionally, some occupational health services are provided for non-contact participants who will enter high containment facilities or nonhuman primate housing facilities. The form "Medical Surveillance Non-Contact Information Sheet for High Containment/High Security Facilities" is for personnel entering high containment facilities, and the online "UGA OHQ for Incidental NHP Exposure" is for personnel entering nonhuman primate housing areas. The online form "UGA Medical Surveillance Information Sheet for Non-Contact Animal Exposure" is for personnel entering all other animal facilities. UGA personnel can access the online forms with their MyID and Password. Use of the login credentials stands in place of signature.

The completed Occupational Health Questionnaires are processed by the Office of Research Compliance for preliminary risk assessment. Responses that suggest any increased risk or issues of concern are sent to contracted health professionals for further evaluation and risk assessment. After this thorough review, occupational health services recommendations are relayed to the individual. The individual is responsible for making an appointment with Regional First Care (RFC) to obtain these services. The RFC Occupational Health Physician may prescribe additional risk-specific preventative measures and health monitoring to reduce workplace related risk. The physician will alert personnel as to extraordinary

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animal related risks due to medical conditions and inform the Office of Research Compliance as to fitness for assigned duties. Most recommended services will be provided free-of-charge to UGA personnel. Please review the *Office of Research Compliance Occupational Health Fee Sheet* for specific information on covered services.

The responsible PI or supervisor, in consultation with the University Research Animal Resources Director or designee and other oversight and safety groups as needed, will develop safety protocols when studies impose health risks beyond the routine. Personnel are responsible for following training, reporting injuries, reporting concerns, and to heed the recommendations of the RFC OHS and their consulting physicians.

Annually, participants are encouraged to provide updates on exposure to new species or hazards, or changes in medical status by submitting an online "Occupational Health Update" Questionnaire. Personnel who are required to participate in the OHSP, as described above, are required to complete this update annually. Other participants are required to complete an updated Questionnaire at least every 3 years. Animal Use Protocols and Biosafety Protocols that have personnel rosters that include persons who do not meet these requirements will not receive protocol approval.

### Health & Medical Surveillance Procedures

All injuries, illnesses, or accidents must be reported immediately to the personnel's supervisor. The general mechanism is for the person injured or exposed/potentially exposed to report the incident to his/her direct supervisor, who then reports it to the appropriate entities (Worker's Compensation, the Office of Research Compliance, Office of Biosafety, Office of Research Safety, Environmental Safety Division, Occupational Health Clinic).

The Office of Research Compliance, occupational health professionals, and PIs will collaborate to determine personnel risk based on species of animals, intensity of contact, and inherent to the research being conducted or the research environment.

The following health safety procedures are mandatory for all personnel who are **required** to participate in the OHSP as identified above:

- Must enroll in the OHSP **BEFORE** beginning any animal work or having any contact with biohazardous agents.
- Must be immunized for tetanus every 10 years, unless contraindicated by the Occupational Health physician.
- Must undergo relevant [training in biosafety, zoonotic disease and animal allergy risks.](#)
- Must undergo training on effective use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Animal care personnel, must undergo training in handling and husbandry procedures for species with which they work.

The Office of Research Compliance maintains the completed Occupational Health Questionnaires and tracks and assures recommendations are addressed. If personnel choose to not procure services as recommended by occupational health professionals, their choice is noted. In certain high risk research,

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information about this choice is conveyed to appropriate oversight authorities in order to inform the study director and/or regulatory authority that an individual may not be appropriately protected. In these situations, choice to decline the recommendations could result in inability to work in certain high-risk areas. Questionnaires are treated and secured by the Office of Research Compliance as sensitive employment-related documents.

Non-compliance issues will be reported to the Office of Research Compliance, the Office of Animal Care and Use, the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, the Office of Biosafety, and/or the Institutional Biosafety Committee, as appropriate, for review and remedial action.

### Reference:

1. [Public Health Service Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals](#)
2. [Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals, NRC](#)
3. [Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Agricultural Research and Training, FASS](#)
4. The National Research Council's [Occupational Health and Safety in the Care and Use of Research Animals](#)
5. CDC's [Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories](#)
6. CDC's 2008 Human Rabies Prevention- Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices