



# The University of Georgia

## **Policy on the Occupational Health & Safety Program in the Care and Use of Animals in Research and Instruction**

*Approved by UGA IACUC*

*Effective 1-17-08*

*Revised 10-20-08*

This program applies to any University of Georgia (UGA) employee (faculty, staff, students, volunteers, and visitors) who works with vertebrate animals, or animal tissues, fluids, secretions, and/or excretions, who handles caging and related equipment contaminated by animal tissues, fluids, secretions, and/or excretions, or routinely enters into facilities where animals are maintained. In general, alternate provisions should be made to prevent persons who do not participate in the OHSP from having incidental contact with animals used in University research or teaching.

The purpose of the UGA Occupational Health and Safety (OHSP) Program for personnel involved in animal research or instruction is first and foremost to provide employees a safe work place. The OHSP also is intended to address regulatory mandates<sup>1,2</sup>. Any documents or information generated or received by UGA related to occupational health and safety are part of your employment record, and your rights to the confidentiality of your personal health information will be strictly maintained. The Office of Animal Care and Use (OACU) administers the OHSP with the assistance of the Office of the Vice President for Research, the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, and [Regional FirstCare's Occupational Health Service](#) (RFC OHS). The National Research Council's *Occupational Health and Safety in the Care and Use of Research Animals* is used to provide guidance and benchmarks for the UGA OHSP.

The responsible animal resource director, principal investigator (PI), or supervisor must include University employees who are at risk in the OHSP. The director, PI, or supervisor will ensure the employee completes the [Occupational Health Questionnaire](#) or are otherwise enrolled in the program. Information contained in this questionnaire, and any documents generated or received by UGA related to occupational health and safety, are used to assess the risk of performing employment tasks at UGA. Participation in the program is required for all personnel listed on Animal Use Protocols, including the PI, and all animal care personnel.

The completed OHSP Health Questionnaire goes to the IACUC Coordinator in the OACU. The OHSP form is reviewed concurrently by occupational health professionals in consultation with the veterinary staff of the OACU. Review of the completed OHSP form permits appropriate recommendations that will be implemented by the responsible animal resource director, principal investigator, or supervisor.

The responsible principle investigator or supervisor, in consultation with the animal resource directors and other oversight and safety groups as needed, will develop safety protocols for animal care personnel when studies impose health risks beyond the routine. Annually, the OACU will initiate an update for each employee's Occupational Health Questionnaire.

The employee is responsible for following training, reporting injuries, reporting concerns, and to heed the recommendations of the RFC OHS and their consulting physicians.

### **Health & Medical Surveillance Procedures**

All injuries, illnesses, or accidents must be reported immediately to the employee's supervisor. An Incident/Accident Form must be filled out and submitted to the Department of Administrative Services/Risk Management. Forms can be obtained online at [UGA Human Resources](#).

The responsible PI or supervisor will assure that all personnel involved in animal research and instruction receive medical surveillance at the time of employment, and annually thereafter, to assess potential medical predisposition to animal related health risks. The principal investigator will ensure that all information regarding work with hazardous agents is conveyed accurately in the Animal Use Protocol.

Occupational health professionals will review the employee's OHSP medical history, prescribe risk-specific preventative measures, health monitoring to reduce workplace related risk, and maintain all employee OHSP medical records. The health care professional will alert employee as to extraordinary animal related risks due to medical conditions and inform supervisors only as to fitness for assigned duties.

The OACU and occupational health professionals will assign the employee to a risk category based on risks associated with species of animals, intensity of contact, and potential risks associated with that category. The following health safety procedures are required for all employees with animal contact duties before animal contact takes place:

- All employees with animal contact duties are required to complete a medical history questionnaire at the time of employment before beginning work with animals and annually.
- Tetanus immunization every 10 years and as recommended by physician.
- Each employee is required to undergo [training in biosafety, zoonotic disease and allergy issues associated with working with animals](#).
- Each employee is required to undergo training in personal protective equipment (PPE), handling and husbandry procedures for species they are working with.

The OACU maintains the completed OHSP questionnaires, tracks and assures recommendation completion. Non-compliance issues will be reported to the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee 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](#)