

PROTECTING YOURSELF & THE ANIMALS

It is important to read all posted signage to ensure that you are following the proper procedures for protecting both yourself and the animals.

- **Plan ahead.** Contact the ULAM Husbandry Supervisor for your area before entering any facility to receive proper safety instructions. If you are aware of personal health conditions, such as allergies, which may prohibit you from working in an animal facility, inform your direct supervisor.
- **Wear proper personal attire while in animal facilities.** Proper attire completely covers the torso, legs, and feet. Long hair should be pulled back.
- **Dress in appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).** Refer to signage (i.e., Room Entry Signs) throughout the facility for specific PPE requirements (e.g., gloves, gowns, respiratory protection, hearing protection) for that area. Proper PPE should be worn as directed by Room Entry Signs and before handling cages and/or animals. PPE should be properly disposed of before leaving the facility to avoid contaminating public spaces.
- **Be mindful of personal hygiene.** Personal hygiene while in animal facilities includes not touching your face with gloved or unwashed hands. Always wash your hands when leaving the facility.

Most importantly, be careful and alert in your surroundings, and report any concerns directly to your supervisor.

REPORTING ANIMAL CONCERNS

The University of Michigan is strongly committed to the humane care and use of animals in research, training, and instruction.

If you have any concerns regarding the welfare of animals, please contact the Animal Care and Use Office at acuoffice@umich.edu or (734) 763-8028.

Reports may also be submitted online at animalcare.umich.edu/hotline. Anonymous reports are acceptable, and all are investigated.

NEED ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE?

The University of Michigan is committed to maintaining a safe and secure workplace for all individuals.

Questions or concerns about occupational health incidents that occur while in our animal care facilities should be directed to EHS at (734) 647-1143 or ehs-animalsafety@umich.edu.

If an incident requiring medical treatment occurs, please contact your direct supervisor and proceed to the nearest emergency room for immediate medical attention.



Occupational Safety in Animal Care Facilities

*What You Should Know
About Working with Animals*



**ANIMAL CARE &
USE PROGRAM**
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Environment, Health & Safety

(734) 647-1143

ehs-animalsafety@umich.edu
ehs.umich.edu/animals

INTRODUCTION

The University of Michigan (U-M) supports the humane, judicious use of animals in research and instruction to advance scientific understanding and improve health outcomes for both humans and animals. Part of your work duties may include contact with animals and/or animal care facilities. Although minimal, there are some hazards associated with working around, and with, animals.

This brochure is designed to provide you with a brief summary of these hazards, including important health and safety tips to minimize occupational risk(s). Please note that this brochure is not all-encompassing.

For a more detailed discussion of occupational health and safety considerations when working in animal care facilities, consult with the U-M Department of Environment, Health & Safety.

ANIMAL-RELATED HAZARDS

The types of hazards associated with animal research are varied. **Specific animal-related hazards to be aware of include:**

- **Allergies.** Allergic reactions (inflammation of the skin, nose, and eyes; and rashes) are common occupational hazards in animal facilities. If you begin to experience any symptoms when entering an animal area, report this to your supervisor.
- **Animal Induced Injuries.** Individuals who have sustained an animal bite, scratch, or similar injury should seek prompt medical attention to avoid any potential complications.

- **Zoonotic Diseases** are diseases that can be transmitted between animals and humans. Although uncommon, many zoonotic diseases can be serious. Follow all posted safety procedures, wear appropriate PPE, and report any exposure incidents.
- **Chemical Hazards.** Animal facilities often employ chemical cleaners and chemicals administered to animals, including anesthetic gases. Special handling procedures can be found on Safety Data Sheets in the facility.
- **Biological Hazards.** Animals exposed to potentially infectious microorganisms are housed in specialized areas. These areas will be clearly identified, with additional safety precautions and training required for entry.
- **Physical Hazards** may include:
 - **Injuries**, such as injuries caused by moving racks or slips in wet areas.
 - **Accidental needle stick/puncture.** Needles, syringes, pipettes, and scalpels are commonly used in animal facilities. Sharps disposal containers located throughout the facility should only be handled by trained staff.
 - **Radioactive hazards.** Approved locations will be identified on door signage, and additional safety precautions may be required for entry.
 - **Electrical hazards** may be present, including in wet animal facility areas (e.g., cage wash). Damaged equipment should NEVER be used. Repairs made with electrical tape are not acceptable.

HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

An individual's risk will depend on a combination of factors, including health history, animal species, and chemical or hazard type.

- Females who are pregnant or plan on becoming pregnant should discuss work tasks with their physician. Exposure to hazardous substances or zoonotic diseases may cause harm to unborn children.
- Exposure to animal-acquired infections may cause serious health problems in individuals who are immunocompromised or immunosuppressed.
- Many gloves used in the animal care facility are made of latex. In case of latex allergy, other glove types are available from the ULAM Husbandry Supervisor. Contact information is found on the Room Entry Sign posted on every animal housing room door.
- Smoking, eating, drinking, and applying cosmetics are strictly prohibited in animal care facilities.