



## Safety Concerns – Animal Facility Areas

### Introduction:

UConn Health is actively involved in working with animals. In performing your assigned duties, you may at times come in contact with animals or their environment. There are some hazards that you should be aware of when working in areas where animals are being housed and maintained.

If you have concerns regarding the welfare of animals, please contact **Alison D. Pohl** in the IACUC Office, (860) 679-3429, [pohl@uchc.edu](mailto:pohl@uchc.edu), or [ooacc@uchc.edu](mailto:ooacc@uchc.edu).

### Animal related hazards include the following:

- *Allergies*
  - Up to 73% of individuals with any existing allergy develop a worsening allergy to laboratory animals with repeated exposure [NIOSH.Pub.97-116]. If you are experiencing hives, a runny nose or eyes, coughing or shortness of breath (asthma) when you enter an animal area, it suggests an allergic reaction. You are strongly urged to discuss this with the UCHC Employee Health Service [EHS] (x2893) before you re-enter animal areas without dermal and respiratory protection.
- *Other hazards associated with animal maintenance areas*
  - Traumatic injuries (being bitten or scratched by an animal / pushing and pulling heavy items)
  - Animal-related infectious diseases
  - Chemical hazards (disinfectants / teratogens / carcinogens / gas anesthesia)
  - Machinery hazards
  - Entrapment in a rack washer
  - Falls (changing filters on BSCs)
  - Burns (high temperature equipment and steam released from autoclave and rack washer)
  - Noise
  - Repetitive motion injuries
  - Electrical hazards
  - Radiation scattering from imaging devices
  - Other radiation exposure to sealed and non-sealed sources
  - Confined space issues (asphyxiation, hazardous exposures)

### Common Practices that can protect you from animal related hazards:

- Before entering any animal housing areas, contact the animal facility manager for safety instructions.
- Do not enter animal rooms unaccompanied without proper training and authorization.
- If you are aware of personal health conditions such as allergies, asthma, pregnancy, or being immune compromised, that may prohibit you from working in animal maintenance areas inform your supervisor or EHS.
- Practice personal hygiene and always wash your hands after leaving animal maintenance areas.
- Be careful around animal facility equipment. If you notice exposed pinch points, belts, or other moving machine parts, do not approach the hazardous area. Contact your supervisor.
- Communicate any additional concerns directly to your supervisor.

For additional information on safety in animal areas, please contact: **Steve Jacobs**, Director, Environmental Health & Safety, x3825, [jacobs@uchc.edu](mailto:jacobs@uchc.edu).

I have read and understood this document. In addition, I understand it and have been informed that this information is available on the IACUC website at <https://ovpr.uchc.edu/services/rics/animal/iacuc/ohshome/>.

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Signature

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Printed Name

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Date