



Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

Policy on Appropriate PPE and Apparel to be Worn While Working in the Animal Facility

Background

Biosecurity and biocontainment practices are important to preventing disease outbreaks resulting from exposure to pathogens in imported or resident animal colonies and to ensure the safety of personnel.

- Unintentional infection of laboratory rodents can compromise scientific research as well as the health of the animals and animal handlers.
- Animal microbial quality determines the repeatability and reproducibility of animal experiments.
- Protect the integrity of the research and academic programs.
- Protect the resident and imported animals from pathogens brought in by personnel exposed to pets, pet rodents, or rodents used as food for other pets (e.g. feeder mice used for a pet boa constrictor) is a known risk factor for the introduction of rodent diseases to research rodent colonies.
- Introduction of zoonotic agents can endanger animal handlers.

The purpose of this policy is to identify a minimum standard of attire for personnel who are handling animals in animal rooms, procedure rooms, and investigator laboratories.

The attire should provide a minimum level of protection for animal workers and their clothing from contamination with animal materials such as excretions, dander, and body fluids.

Attire should also minimize the exposure of animals to contaminants carried on the clothing and footwear of personnel working with the animals. For the purpose of this policy it should be clear that the Biomedical Research Support Facility (BRSF) is divided into personnel areas (offices, conference room and rest rooms) and the "animal facility" where animal procedures, housing and sanitation occur.

Policy

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is to be worn inside the animal facility to protect personnel from allergens and biological hazards, as well as to reduce the potential of introducing animal pathogens into the facility. Appropriate use of PPE is an important part of the University's Occupational Health and Safety Program as required by Federal regulations and accrediting agencies. The minimum standard for appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and apparel to be worn while working in the animal facility include the wearing of shoe covers, and a disposable gown. Shoe covers and gowns should be donned upon entering the animal facility. All other PPE should be donned upon entering the animal housing or procedure rooms where the animal work will be performed. PPE should be changed when soiled or contaminated, and must be removed before leaving the animal facility. The following PPE and work practices must be implemented when in the animal facility:

- It is the IACUC's requirement that a disposable gown and shoe covers must be worn at all times upon entering and while working in the animal areas within the BRSF.
- Once PPE has been worn in the animal facility it may not be worn outside of the facility. PPE may be contaminated and thus pose a risk to non-animal users. Personnel who wear PPE in public areas often touch doorknobs, elevator buttons, and other surfaces with gloved hands. Others touch those same surfaces may thus be unwittingly and unnecessarily exposed to potential

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hazards. Exiting or re-entering the animal facility while wearing PPE is a breach of occupational health policy and OSHA guidelines.

- PPE should not be worn when transporting animals to and from the animal facility through public areas. When transporting animals between the animal facility and laboratories, transport containers must be decontaminated between use, and covered appropriately.
- Wearing a dust/surgical mask, and latex or nitrile gloves can minimize the risk of development of animal allergies and exposure to zoonotic disease. Surgical masks are designed to prevent the transmission of infectious aerosols from the animal handler to the laboratory animal and provide the wearer a barrier against small splashes. Surgical masks will also protect the worker's nose or mouth from accidental contact with hands contaminated with allergens or zoonotic agents, but will not provide appropriate protection against airborne allergens. Workers with known animal allergies may be required to wear an EH&S approved respirator (N95 dust mask, cartridge respirator or powered air purifying respirator).
- Personal items such as, but not limited to coats, backpacks, and hats must not be taken into animal housing areas. These items can be stored in the lockers provided in the facility vestibule. Lockers are for day use only. Locks are not provided.
- Wearing open-toed shoes, flip fops or sandals is **prohibited**.

The suggested attire are a minimum standard for protection and are not to limit more stringent requirements for personal protections and animal biosecurity that may be needed in some animal areas. Requirements posted at animal housing room and procedure room entry points supersede the requirements listed in this policy.

This policy applies to both live and dead, as well as preserved and unpreserved animals and their tissue.

Personal Hygiene: All personnel should wash their hands after handling animals and/or their tissue.

References

Purdue University IACUC Policy on Personal Hygiene and Attire in Animal Facilities, July 2013

Penn State IACUC Policy III – Personal Protective Clothing for Work with Laboratory Animals