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**1. PURPOSE**

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This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) describes the McGill University Occupational Health Program.

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**2. RESPONSIBILITY**

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Principal investigator (PI) and their research staff, animal care staff, veterinary care staff.

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**3. INTRODUCTION**

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- 3.1. Activities involving the care and use of animals in research and teaching pose particular health risks not normally encountered in other activities. The magnitude of risk is dependent on:
  - 3.1.1. The nature of contact (direct or indirect) with animals, their tissues, excreta, body fluids, hair, animal cages, dander and
  - 3.1.2. The species involved.
- 3.2. In recognition of its responsibility to provide a safe working environment, the University has implemented measures for protection of faculty, staff, and students from health risks which may result from working with animals or working in animal care activities.
- 3.3. Objectives:
  - 3.3.1. Protection of individuals from hazards associated with animal care and use.
  - 3.3.2. Ensuring that individuals are thoroughly informed of the risks associated with their work.
  - 3.3.3. Provision of preventative medical services and delivery of prompt and adequate medical care and advice.
  - 3.3.4. Rehabilitation of employees whose health has been compromised due to occupational exposures.
  - 3.3.5. Ensuring that individuals are physically able to perform their assigned tasks without undue risk to themselves or fellow workers.
  - 3.3.6. Protection of animals from diseases they may contract from humans.

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**4. PROCEDURES**

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- 4.1. General Statement:
  - 4.1.1. Individuals involved in animal care and use are given protection from health risks through the following mechanisms:
    - 4.1.1.1. Education and training
    - 4.1.1.2. Isolation and containment of high risk activities
    - 4.1.1.3. Evaluation of health status prior to exposure
    - 4.1.1.4. Periodic health assessment
    - 4.1.1.5. Provision of emergency health care
    - 4.1.1.6. Administration of immunization or other prophylaxis for protection from specific risks
    - 4.1.1.7. Exclusion of unauthorized persons from animal facilities
    - 4.1.1.8. Exclusion of persons with active infectious diseases that are hazardous to fellow workers or to animals
    - 4.1.1.9. Use of appropriate apparel, equipment, and facilities
    - 4.1.1.10. Veterinary management of animal health
    - 4.1.1.11. Maintenance of records of illnesses, occupational diseases and injuries

- 4.1.2. This policy requires confidentiality in the handling of medical information. Individuals required to undergo any medical examinations, treatment, or monitoring must be fully informed of the associated benefits and risks.
  - 4.1.3. The services are to be provided at no cost to the individual. All activities related to this program are to be available during normal working hours.
  - 4.1.4. Note that for personnel in contact with non-human primates, the participation in the Occupational Health Program is mandatory.
- 4.2. Personal Hygiene
- 4.2.1. Persons working with animals are required to maintain a high standard for personal cleanliness to reduce the risk of contracting diseases transmitted by animals. It is essential that facilities and supplies for meeting this obligation be provided.
  - 4.2.2. Clothing suitable for use in an animal facility is to be worn by all persons coming into contact with animals. For animal care staff, the clothing should be separate from that worn outside the animal facility and should be supplied and laundered by the institution. Clothing exposed to potentially hazardous microbial agents or toxic substances is to be decontaminated prior to leaving the premises for laundering.
  - 4.2.3. Disposable gear, such as gloves, masks, head covers, coats, coveralls, and shoe covers should be used where appropriate.
  - 4.2.4. Hands should be routinely washed after handling animals or cage accessories to reduce the risk of disease transmission.
  - 4.2.5. Clothing should be changed as often as is necessary to maintain personal hygiene. Outer garments worn in animal rooms should not be worn outside the animal facility. Washing and showering facilities appropriate to the program are to be made available.
  - 4.2.6. Provision of advice on specific procedures to be followed is the responsibility of the animal care committee in conjunction with the unit director or principal investigator.
  - 4.2.7. Eating, drinking, smoking, or application of cosmetics in animal rooms is not permitted.
- 4.3. Education and Training:
- 4.3.1. Persons working with animals or in animal facilities should be fully informed as to the nature of possible risks associated with proposed duties. It is the responsibility of each laboratory director to inform research personnel of the specific risks involved and the applicable safety procedures. The University Animal Care Officer is responsible for providing instruction in safe methods of animal care and use.
  - 4.3.2. Training in the principles of radiation and chemical safety is the responsibility of the Environmental Health and Safety Office.
  - 4.3.3. The Biohazards Committee is mandated to develop protocols for research activities involving biohazards.
  - 4.3.4. The University Animal Care Committee is responsible for verifying that those conducting research with animals are duly qualified.
- 4.4. Medical Care Elements of Program:
- 4.4.1. This section is applicable to routine health surveillance activities involving animal care and use. Animal bites or other accidents involving animals are not covered in this section and should be considered for emergency treatment.
  - 4.4.2. Legend:
    - 1. Pre-placement assessment: medical history questionnaire and (if clinically indicated), medical examination.
    - 2. Tetanus immunization (if not already up to date). Booster every ten years.
    - 3. Selective pre-placement rabies immunization. Repeated as required.
    - 4. Pre-placement PPD skin testing (2-step).
    - 5. Hepatitis A vaccination; booster at 1 year follow-up
    - 6. Q fever immunization - information and consent forms: [Q-fever-OHS](#) [.doc]

#### 4.4.3. Definitions:

- 4.4.3.12. "Direct Contact" refers to those handling live animals, unpreserved tissues or body fluids, animal cages, cage accessories, animal waste or carcasses.
- 4.4.3.13. "Indirect Contact" refers to those who work in areas where animals are used or housed. These people are potentially exposed by means of accidental contact or aerosols.

SPECIES	DIRECT CONTACT	INDIRECT CONTACT
Non-Human Primates	1,2,4,5	1
Non-Domestic Mammals	1,2,3	1
Farm Mammals (excluding sheep)	1,2	1
Sheep	1,2,6	1,6
Rodents and Rabbits	1,2	1
Carnivores	1,2,3	1
Domestic Birds	1,2	1
Non-Domestic Birds	1,2	1
Reptiles	1,2	1
Amphibians	1,2	1

#### 4.5. Registration:

- 4.5.1. If you are working in a hospital or hospital research institute, please contact the local Health Office. They have their own occupational health program.
- 4.5.2. For non-hospital-research-institute members, contact the Occupational Health Program Administrator in the McGill Environmental Health and Safety Office at (514) 398-4766, fax: (514) 398-8047. The OHP application form is on their Web site at: <https://www.mcgill.ca/ehs/forms/forms/frequently-used-forms/> .
- 4.5.3. Macdonald campus staff and students: It has been arranged that the physician will hold a clinic on the Macdonald campus to meet with all personnel located at Macdonald Campus registered in the Occupational Health & Safety program. To arrange for an appointment please phone 398-7707.

#### 4.6. Hepatitis B Immunization:

- 4.6.1. Student Health Services provides the vaccine at no charge to full-time students working on research projects that require the handling of human blood and blood products. This service is provided on both campuses, by appointment only. Questions regarding specific details or eligibility should be directed to Student Health Services at 398-6017.
- 4.6.2. Staff who participate in the McGill Supplemental Health Plan are advised to arrange for immunization through a personal physician, medical clinic or local CLSC and submit a claim to Maritime Life, which will reimburse 80% of the cost.

### SOP REVISION HISTORY

DATE OF MODIFICATION	DETAILS
March 2016	Updated links to EHS forms and telephone numbers