

Health and Safety Services

Procedure on the Management of Exposure to Laboratory Animal Allergens

Introduction

1. For background information and advice it is recommended you read the Guidance linked to this document.
2. The University will take all reasonable steps to control hazardous exposure to allergens and to protect the health of staff, students and others that may be exposed to allergens in the course of their work.

Responsibilities

3. Effective implementation of this code of practice requires co-operative action between Health and Safety Services, Biological Support Facility (BSF), the scientific community represented by Heads of Schools and Research Group Leaders, and Estates and Services.
4. **Health & Safety Services are responsible for:**
 - Organising and executing an appropriate health surveillance programme for all who may be exposed to animal allergens in the workplace.
 - Advising on appropriate health protection measures
 - Advising on the management of persons sensitised to animal allergens.
 - Keeping abreast of developments in this field and advising / acting appropriately
5. **Manager, BSF is responsible for:**
 - Ensuring that all animal facilities are managed and supervised to minimise exposure to laboratory animal allergens.
 - Making available the necessary personal protective equipment for use in the animal facility and ensuring adequate instruction in their use. Records will also be maintained of use and maintenance of non-disposable PPE.
 - Ensuring all users are aware of the risk of exposure to laboratory animal allergens.
 - Provide training in the safe handling of animals and their caging.
 - Restricting access to the animal facilities to persons enrolled in the health surveillance programme
 - Notifying companies who are contracted to provide service to equipment located within animal facilities of the need to enrol their agents in an appropriate health surveillance programme.
 - Keeping abreast of developments in this field and advising / acting appropriately

6. Heads of Schools are responsible for:

- Ensuring that research groups comply with the terms of the code of practice and subsequent advice received.
- Ensuring that rooms outside BSF, used for work with animals, can comply with the Code of Practice governing such work.
- Ensuring all staff and students who may be exposed to animal allergens participate in the health surveillance programme prior to exposure

7. Research Group Leaders are responsible for:

- Ensuring that risk assessments for all work with laboratory animals are completed and that necessary control procedures are in place before work commences
- Ensuring that all members of the research group are provided with appropriate information and training on control measures.
- Ensuring that any visitors (e.g. visiting scientists) to the group who will be exposed to animal allergens are provided with appropriate information and training on the control measures.
- Ensuring that the control measures are observed.
- Complying with advice received

8. All persons working with laboratory animals are responsible for:

- Complying with control procedures
- Participating in the health surveillance programme and responding in a timely manner to requests for completion of the annual health surveillance questionnaire
- Reporting possible symptoms of allergy to University Health and Safety Services

Arrangements to control exposure

9. Only using laboratory animals where no practical alternatives exist.

This is guaranteed by both national Home Office Policy, and the Local Ethical Review Process.

10. Ensuring as far as is reasonably practicable that animal work is undertaken in purpose-built facilities, designed to ensure effective containment of aero-allergens.

Investigators are expected to work within BSF unless there is a compelling scientific reason for not doing so.

11. Ensuring that safe systems of work that minimise exposure to allergens are in place wherever animals are housed or used.

The risk assessment made at the planning stage of the project will include an assessment of the risk of exposure to laboratory animal allergens. Local rules will be drawn up specifying the control measures necessary to minimise exposure.

12. Such control measures will include:

- organising work to minimise the time spent in contact with animals*
- where possible procedures should be carried out in rooms with the lowest possible stocking densities*
- Work to be conducted in a procedure room, high-risk activities such as shaving should be carried out under a Class II equivalent hood. Or if not possible wearing appropriate respiratory protection.*
- Animals and soiled caging must only be transported using a filter bonnet or containment cabinet*
- All personnel must wear dedicated protective clothing when working with animals. The clothing must not be subsequently worn in non-animal areas*
- Ensuring all users are enrolled in a health surveillance programme.*

13. Ensuring that persons working with animals, or in areas where exposure to laboratory animal allergens may occur are provided with information, instruction and training on means of controlling exposure.

- All persons so working will be provided with copies of local rules /standard operating procedures before starting work.*
- The symptoms of laboratory animal allergy will be described at the start of the health surveillance programme.*
- Competency in basic handling techniques will be assessed and appropriate training will be provided to address any need.*
- Where respiratory protective equipment is indicated, users will be provided with full instruction on the correct use and maintenance of the equipment. A separate SOP is written and made available for each different piece of equipment.*

14. Ensuring that an effective system for monitoring the health of all persons exposed to laboratory animal allergens is in place.

- All persons who are likely to be exposed to laboratory animal allergens will be enrolled in the University's health surveillance programme. Entry to BSF will be dependent on evidence of such enrolment.*
- Group leaders will be expected to ensure compliance with the programme.*

15. Ensuring that persons developing allergic symptoms are provided with appropriate support to either continue their work without further risk to their health or are re-deployed.

- On first becoming aware of symptoms the individual must seek advice from Health and Safety Services. Likewise if a supervisor suspects an individual in*

their care may be showing symptoms of laboratory animal allergy they must refer the person to Health and Safety Services

- *Continued exposure to laboratory animal allergens may cause progression of allergic disease. Individuals found to be sensitised must follow stringent control procedures to minimise further exposure and must follow the advice given by the occupational health physician.*
- *If symptomatic disease progresses further exposure should be avoided. This may be achieved by adopting other protective measures (e.g. airstream hoods). It may be helpful for a joint meeting of health and safety services, the individual and their supervisor to be held to discuss options. Redeployment may also need to be considered.*

16. Ensuring that appropriate review mechanisms are in place to monitor the compliance and effectiveness of the code of practice.

- *Health and Safety Services will compile annual statistics showing the incidence of laboratory animal allergy compared with the number of persons exposed. Any significant upward shift will be rigorously examined to provide explanation, so if indicated, appropriate remedial action can be taken.*
- *All mechanical control methods will be checked at least annually.*
- *The health surveillance register will be cross-checked annually with the BSF list of licensed workers.*
- *In the event of a person becoming sensitised the local rules and or standard operating procedures will be reviewed.*

Document control box	
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Previous review dates:	July 2005
Next review date:	Upon any significant change
Equality impact outcome	Initial screening will take place during the consultation process.
Related documents:	<u>Guidance: Allergy To Laboratory Animals - What You Need To Know</u>
Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations	Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974, and relevant statutory provisions University of Manchester Statute XII(g) University of Manchester Statute XIII, Part III to do with disciplinary procedures for members of staff General Regulations, Regulation XVII, 3(f) and 5(a) to do with misconduct of students
Related Policies:	Health & Safety Policy
Related Procedures	A-Z of documents on specific health & safety topics, at http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/healthandsafety/CoPs&Guidance.htm
Related Guidance:	
Related information:	N/A
Policy owner:	Director of Health & Safety Services (currently Dr S A Robson)
Lead contact:	Director of Health & Safety Services (currently Dr S A Robson)