**UAA Occupational Health and Safety Risk Categories Based on** **Animal Contact and Exposure**

Participants who work with vertebrates are assigned one of three categories based on categorical risks generally associated with the species of animals with which the participant will be working, the average amount of contact per week and the potential risks associated with that category. Contact means working in a room or field setting with animals present, handling animals, tissues, fluids, secretions, and/or excretions, handling caging and/or equipment contaminated by animal tissues, fluids, secretions, and/or excretions. Incidental contact refers to duties performed under circumstances or conditions that bear low opportunity for animal related illness or injury. The category assignment is finalized by Veterinary Services in conjunction with UAA EH&S with input from the Contract Health Care Provider. The categories are guidelines only and all persons involved must use good judgment to assure that all participants in the Occupational Health and Safety Program use all means possible to minimize their risks.

The extent and level of participation of individuals in the program will be based on the hazard exposure of each individual engaging in animal research. Program participants will fall into one of three categories, Risk Level 1, Risk Level 2 or Risk Level 3. Risk Level 1 participants are considered to have moderate to high levels of exposure to animals based on their frequency and duration of tasks conducted with animals. Risk Levels 2 and 3 participants are considered to have a low exposure. Examples of each are listed below.

**Risk Level 1 Participants**

* Animal care technicians.
* Faculty, staff and students involved in animal protocols.
* University employees who provide custodial or facility support services in areas where animals are housed and are subject to direct aerosol exposure to animal based allergens for greater than 5% of their total work time (i.e. greater than 2 hours/week for full-time 40 hour/week employees)

**Risk Level 2 Participants** (Other UAA employees and affiliates)

* Principal Investigators who do not have direct contact with animals
* Undergraduate students enrolled in classes that use vertebrate animals and animal by products
* University employees who provide custodial or facility support services in areas where animals are housed and spend less than 5% of their time directly exposed to animal based allergens.
* IACUC members (including non-affiliated member, non-scientist) participating in semi-annual inspections spending less than 5% of their time directly exposed to animal based allergens.

**Risk Level 3 Participants (non-UAA employees)**

* Casual visitors
* Outside contractors who will be working in the animal facilities for greater than 5% of their total work time (i.e., greater than 2 hours/week for full-time 40 hour/week employees).

**UAA Occupational Health and Safety Program (OHSP)**

UAA is responsible for establishing an OHSP that should include:

* All research, including animal contact as well as non-animal activities
* Distinguishes between observational studies and animal contact activities for enrollment
* Includes all relevant regulations, such as but not limited to:
  + NIH – PHS Policy and the Guide
  + OSHA – general industry standards for PPE, housekeeping, etc.
  + OHSA - activity or material specific standards such as, but not limited to:
    - Bloodborne pathogens
    - Occupational noise/ hearing conservation
    - Respiratory protection
    - Formaldehyde
    - Laboratory standard

The program should have input from an Occupational Healthcare provider.

**Program components:**

* Personnel training
* Disaster planning/ Emergency preparedness
* Hazard identification and Risk assessment – identifying the hazards of the activity and appropriate safeguards, and identifying risks individuals may take and appropriate safeguards
* Health assessment of individuals
* Medical treatment
* Facilities, Equipment, and Monitoring

**Requirements of the Program**

* Pre-placement medical evaluation – questionnaire reviewed by occupational health provider or trained personnel
* Identification of the hazards to personnel and safeguards for those hazards
* Appropriate medical testing as warranted
* Vaccinations recommended
* Training of personnel – relating to all of the regulations/ standards applicable to the activity
* Assignment or recommendation of PPE
* Policies and facilities that promote cleanliness
* Provisions for treating and documenting job-related illness or injury
* Facilities, equipment, and procedures designed, selected, or developed to reduce the possibility of injury or health risks to personnel
* Good hygiene practices
* Program needs to include everyone, including but not limited to:
  + Pregnant personnel
  + Immunocompromised personnel
  + Persons not involved with animal care, such as but not limited to:
  + Visitors
  + Maintenance workers
  + Emergency workers
* Program should cover:
  + Animal exposure
  + Medical surveillance
  + Health history questionnaire
  + Vaccinations
  + Biological materials
  + Reproductive concerns – Chemical hazards
  + Respiratory protection – considering medical considerations, exposure to allergens, exposure to hazardous materials
  + Other occupational injuries or illnesses
* Resources to provide:
  + Medical SOPs for health providers
  + Agent specific training to personnel
  + Hazard specific training to personnel