

# Occupational Health Program for Laboratory and Animal Research

**Responsible University Official:** Associate Vice President, Research Integrity and Compliance/Lee Seabrooke

**Policy Owner:** Occupational Health Program Manager/Steven Cummings, MD

**Policy Contact:** Occupational Health Program Manager/Steven Cummings, MD

## 1.0 Reason for Policy

Saint Louis University is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy research environment where exposure to biological, chemical, and physical health hazards is kept to minimum levels.

the OHP is to prevent occupational injury and illness.

The principal objective of

## 2.0 Policy Statement

Research at Saint Louis University must be conducted in full compliance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations as well as University policies/procedures. The Associate Vice President for Research Integrity and Compliance has established the OHP



If potential for exposure exists, all personnel must be vaccinated prior to participating in research activities with biological agents for which a safe and effective CDC recommended vaccine is available. The IBC determines if protocol specific vaccines are required or recommended.

Routine immunizations are arranged through OHP staff.

Protocol specific immunizations are arranged through OHP staff when needed.

### **4.3 Respirator Protection**

Research personnel listed on IACUC protocols and IBC protocols may be required to be medically cleared to participate in the Respirator Protection Program. Respirator medical clearance is provided through OHP staff.

The wearing of face sealing respirators such as N-95 respirators, half-face cartridge respirators, or full-face cartridge respirators requires fit-testing before use and annually thereafter. Fit testing is provided by OHP staff.

### **4.4 Medical Services Declination**

Declination of medical services offered or required under the OHP may preclude an individual from some positions, projects, and/or research activities that have requirements for medical evaluations and preventative medical care.

Required enrollment/participation in the OHP may not be declined regardless of any medical service declination.

### **4.5 Training**

Training is essential for adequate preparation to work safely in research laboratories and animal research facilities. The training and orientation of persons working in University animal research facilities will include an overview of the OHP and information regarding enrollment in the OHP. Mandatory Laboratory Safety and Compliance Training is provided by EHS and includes OHP awareness and enrollment instructions.

Personnel are required to complete all mandatory training.

Completion of OHP related training will be documented in accordance with applicable regulations.

## **5.0 Sanctions**

Individuals who fail to comply with this policy and associated procedures will be denied access to all University animal research facilities. Disciplinary actions for non-compliance can result in suspension or termination of research by the IACUC or the IBC. A report of suspected misconduct or a report to government funding/regulatory agencies may be required. Disciplinary action will be guided by the University Faculty Manual, Staff Handbook, or student guidelines as applicable.

## **6.0 Responsibilities**

The implementation of the OHP requires a collaborative effort in both laboratory and administrative offices.

The OHP is administered by the Associate Vice President for Research Integrity and Compliance supervising the OHP manager.

OHP collaborators include: Office of Research Integrity and Compliance (ORIC), Environmental Health and Safety (EHS), Department of Comparative Medicine (CM), the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), and the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC).

OHP collaborators meet as necessary to discuss, review, and advise on health/safety issues regarding University research activities and related facilities.

Other University offices or departments may be consulted as needed: Human Resources (HR), Risk Management, Office of General Counsel.

Primary collaborator responsibilities are outlined below.

**Authorized Personnel:** Individuals must be authorized by the University to be allowed access to University animal research facilities and/or to use/handle animals. Authorized Personnel must –

1. Be enrolled in the OHP consistent with the enrollment requirements contained in this policy and associated procedures
2. Comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and University policies/procedures regarding specific hazards to which they may be exposed during performance of research activities
3. Complete required training and continuing education
4. As applicable, be listed as a study associate on an approved IACUC protocol and/or IBC protocol

**Comparative Medicine (CM):** This department will –

1. Assist in establishing and maintaining the OHP for faculty, staff, and students who work with or have substantial contact with laboratory animals
2. Monitor standards of hygiene among individuals involved with animal care/use
3. Proctor an animal use orientation course as well as provide targeted training for safe use of animals in research
4. Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to all personnel who have contact with animals or hazardous materials within University animal research facilities
5. Advise on and monitor biohazard control policies/procedures as these apply to research animal care/use in collaboration with the IBC and/or EHS
6. Monitor laboratory animals for zoonotic diseases

**Environmental Health and Safety (EHS):** This office will –

1. Assist in establishing and maintaining the OHP for faculty, staff, students, and visiting scientists who work with Select Agents, Risk Group 3 recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules, all other Risk Group 3 biological agents, and any Risk Group 2 biological agents warranting OHP participation

2. Monitor compliance with training requirements designed to mitigate risk to various exposures including biological, chemical, and radiation
3. Collaborate with Comparative Medicine, OHP staff, and other University departments/offices in assuring Principal Investigator and Authorized Personnel are compliant with the OHP

**Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC):** This committee will --

1. Monitor IACUC animal use protocols to ensure that all faculty, staff, and students listed have completed required training
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of the OHP during each semiannual program review

**Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC):** This committee will –

1. Monitor IBC protocols to ensure that all faculty, staff, students, and visiting scientists who work with Select Agents, Risk Group 3 recombinant or synthetic nucleic acid molecules, all other Risk Group 3 biological agents, and any Risk Group 2 biological agents warranting OHP participation have completed required training
2. Ensure that these individuals are active in required OHP medical surveillance through follow-up during IBC protocol approval and review processes

**Occupational Health Program (OHP):** This office will -

1. Provide medical assessments based on risk assessments available at the time
2. Arrange for routine immunizations for OHP participants, and arrange for protocol specific immunizations as recommended or required
3. Provide respirator fit testing and associated respirator medical evaluation in compliance with OSHA regulations governing the Respirator Protection Program
4. Maintain a confidential medical record on each OHP participant
5. Provide OHP training in conjunction with Comparative Medicine

**Office of Research Integrity and Compliance (ORIC):** This office will –

1. Establish and administer the OHP for those working in or having access to animal research facilities
2. Revise and update the OHP as necessary in consultation with the IACUC, IBC, EHS, and OHP manager
3. Ensure that training is provided for University faculty, staff, and students regarding safety in the care and use of laboratory animals

**Principal Investigators (PI):** Individuals approved to be Principal Investigators will –

1. Provide a safe environment for research personnel (including faculty, staff, students, and visiting scientists) working under their supervision
2. Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to all personnel to ensure adequate protection for their assigned research activities
3. Make sure that all personnel receive training regarding risks associated with their assigned research duties and the safe conduct of those research duties



