

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in Animal Facilities



Personal protective equipment (PPE) is to be worn inside animal facilities 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. PPE including gloves, shoe covers, gowns, lab coats, masks and head covers should be donned when entering the animal facility, changed when soiled or contaminated, and removed before leaving the animal care facilities.

Once personal protective equipment (PPE) has been worn in animal facilities it should not be worn outside those facilities.

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 hazards. Exiting or re-entering animal facilities 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 care facilities through public areas. When transporting animals between the animal facility and laboratories, transport containers should be decontaminated and covered appropriately.

It is each investigator's responsibility to ensure that their laboratory staff are informed and trained in the appropriate use of PPE. Please keep the workplace free of materials that are potential health hazards. This ensures the health of the animals and all those involved in animal related research.

For the protection of everyone and of the research animals, The Department of Comparative Medicine will restrict the access to animal care facilities by those who do not adhere to appropriate use of PPE.

If you have any questions regarding the appropriate use of PPE, please contact Evelyn Lewis, RN, BSN, COHN-S, Occupational Health Coordinator at 448-5630, Francine Rogers, Institutional Biosafety Officer, or Timothy Mandrell, DVM, Chair, Department of Comparative Medicine at 448-5656.