

Animal Activities Potential Hazards Factsheet

For Contractors, Facilities Personnel, or Visitors to Animal Facilities

The Animal Activities Program is for individuals with exposure to animals at Iowa State University. For more information about this program and the topics below, visit the Environmental Health and Safety Animal Safety website:

<https://www.ehs.iastate.edu/research/biological/animals>

ZOONOSES

Zoonotic diseases are diseases of animals that are also transmissible to humans. Zoonotic diseases can be transmitted through bites, scratches, needle sticks, aerosol droplets, mucosal secretions, feces, and urine. Many zoonotic illnesses start with flu-like symptoms. If you need to visit your healthcare provider about an illness in the next few weeks, mention that you have had contact with animals.

ALLERGIES

Exposure to animal hair and dander can lead to allergic reactions and asthma. Inhalation is the most common route for allergens to enter your body. Allergic reactions to animal allergens include itchy eyes or nose, chest tightness, wheezing, or shortness of breath. Protecting yourself from animal allergens will decrease your risk of developing animal allergies.

INJURIES FROM ANIMAL HANDLING

Animals are capable of inflicting physical injury to personnel who have contact with them. Being aware of how animals behave is vital in preventing those injuries. Before activities begin, the supervisor in charge should train you on the specific hazards associated with the animals you will be in contact with.

IMMUNOCOMPROMISED OR PREGNANT

If you are immunocompromised (i.e., taking steroids regularly, diabetic, on chemotherapy drugs, etc.) or pregnant, you could be at a higher risk of acquiring a zoonotic disease. Questions about how your contact with animals could affect your health should be directed to your health care provider.

ACCIDENT/INJURIES

If you are injured as a result of contact with an animal, apply first aid immediately. This might include washing a wound if you were bitten or scratched. Immediately report your injury to the person in charge of the facility or supervisor. For life threatening injuries, call 911 to request an ambulance. For non-life threatening injuries, your supervisor should arrange medical care with McFarland Clinic, Occupational Medicine. For emergencies and after-hours treatment, visit Mary Greeley Medical Emergency Department.

The supervisor and/or affected party are responsible for completing a First Report of Injury (FROI) via the ISU Incident Portal within 24 hours of the incident being reported. (<https://live.origamirisk.com/Origami/incidententry/Welcome>) Contact Environmental Health and Safety at 515- 294-5359 for guidance and assistance, especially when a serious injury or major loss occurs.

Your supervisor should schedule an appointment with McFarland Clinic, Occupational Medicine if follow-up or additional medical care is necessary.

PROTECTING YOURSELF

Wash your hands.

Hand washing is an essential way to eliminate material from your hands and stop organisms from being transmitted. Hands should be washed after leaving areas where animals are housed, after touching materials that could be contaminated, and after removing gloves.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

It is important to wear appropriate PPE to prevent exposure to infectious materials or allergens. The supervisor of the facility will advise you about what PPE to wear. Possible PPE includes eye protection, gloves, respiratory protection, fully-enclosed footwear, and clothing protection. Remove PPE before leaving the animal facility.