ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
SAFETY POLICY COMMITTEE

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH
PROGRAM – ANIMAL
LABORATORIES

Approved: October 10, 2005
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1. **Purpose**

For their protection, staff, faculty and students who work in laboratory animal facilities or have sustained animal contact are required to participate in an Occupational Health Program (“Program”). The Program employs safeguards and mechanisms to assess and reduce the risk of disease transmission between human and animal, to reduce occupational hazards and to comply with Public Health Service (“PHS”) rules.

2. **Applicability**

This Program applies to all personnel who work in laboratory animal facilities or have frequent contact with animals. The Program requires that each principal investigator be responsible for ensuring that all persons involved in projects under his or her direction comply with the provision of this Program. Any principal investigator who fails to carry out this responsibility will be denied the use of animals until full compliance has been established. Because the risk involved in animal contact varies with the species of animals, the degree of participation of each individual in the Program will be determined by the species of animal handled.

Violations of this Program or approved safety procedures will be forwarded to the appropriate principal investigator, department chair and/or IIT’s Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (“IACUC”) for action as necessary.

3. **Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment**

This Program seeks to establish and enforce sound occupational health and safety practices to prevent or minimize the occurrence of injury or illness to personnel. Occupational health and safety concerns are addressed at the project level in order to address each project’s unique risks, circumstances and conditions. Supervisory personnel, such as laboratory managers, research team leaders, husbandry and custodial managers and principal investigators, are responsible for the implementation of occupational health and safety protocols and procedures. Each investigative, technical and animal care staff member is also responsible for his or her well-being. Personnel must comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations, including IIT’s Animal Welfare Assurance with the PHS, regarding sound occupational health and safety practices.

Each new project involving animal research will be evaluated at its inception for potential hazards by the principal investigator (or designee) and IIT’s Director of Environmental Health and Safety, or designee ("DEHS") using an occupational health hazard process based on an internal audit of the anticipated hazards. It is at this time that any hazard controlling strategies will be identified and incorporated into the project’s health and safety plan. This process should identify the project’s engineering and administrative controls, work practices, personal protective equipment and/or clothing, air monitoring, emergency response procedures, required vaccinations, target organ(s) identification, medical surveillance, exposure protocols, potential for zoonoses and employee training and recordkeeping issues. Hazards should be communicated consistent with IIT’s Hazard Communication Program.
Walkthroughs of all laboratory areas will be performed by the DEHS in collaboration with the IACUC. As a general rule, these walkthroughs should be unannounced and performed while animal work is in progress. Operations should be observed, obvious signs of exposure, if any, noted and the use of equipment and performance of procedures inspected during a walkthrough. The DEHS will then prepare a report and distribute it to the principal investigator (or designee), department chair or department head and IIT Safety Policy Committee for review of this inspection and for follow-up for corrective actions, if any.

Risk assessment will be aided by taking into account the injury and illness experience among animal care people, including, but not limited to, animal bites, back problems, animal allergies, skin reactions and latex allergies. Data will be analyzed from workers' compensation records and internal first aid logs. Particular care will be given to assess the risk of allergies in workers who will be in contact with rodents and rodent facilities, rabbits and rabbit facilities, and felines and feline housing to monitor these workers for compliance with proper protective protocols as well as for signs of allergic reactions.

4. Personnel Training in Occupational Health and Safety

Personnel will receive training from their immediate supervisors and other experienced senior level personnel to assure that they can properly and safely accomplish an assigned task. Records of such training will be maintained by providers and must be made available upon request of the DEHS or the IACUC for inspection.

The DEHS will provide annual training programs on personal protective equipment and hazard communication as it pertains to animal care and use. All laboratory personnel will be encouraged to participate in professional organizations and conferences for current trends and information. Information from NIOSH, OSHA, CDC and NIH will be made regularly available to the research staff and incorporated into ongoing employee training and educational programs.

A library of Standard Operating Procedures (“SOPs”) for animal experimentation involving hazardous or potentially hazardous materials will be maintained by and available for review from the DEHS. SOPs will be distributed as needed to animal care workers, laboratory managers and principal investigators. SOPs should detail aspects of animal experimentation including the handling of contaminated animals and contaminated equipment and instruments and minimizing exposure to animal-related hazards and experimental-related hazards such as animal caging equipment that may be contaminated with carcinogen.
5. **Personal Hygiene and Protection**

Technicians and animal care personnel will be provided, and are required to wear, protective clothing to minimize exposure to animal-related hazards. Protective clothing includes, but is not limited to, clean surgical scrubs, lab coats, head covers, shoe covers, sleeve covers, a wide variety of masks, respirators, aprons, safety glasses, gloves, and disposable coveralls. The clothing used will be based on the needs of a particular project's health and safety plan. Wash basins will be available for all personnel and will be located in close proximity to the animal rooms. Emergency showers and eyewashes will also be spaced in appropriate areas.

IIT adheres to a policy of a smoke-free work place. Eating or drinking in or in close proximity to any of animal facilities or laboratories is prohibited. On-the-job injuries should be handled in accordance with the IIT’s *Procedures for Handling On-The-Job Injuries*, a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

6. **APPROVAL**

The IIT Safety Policy Committee has reviewed and recommended the adoption of this Program on September 19, 2005, and this Occupational Health Program - Animal Laboratories is approved and effective this 10th day of October 2005. The Safety Policy Committee will review the contents, implementation and effectiveness of this Program no less than annually (but as often as necessary) to ensure that it meets all required legal and regulatory requirements and is adequately providing a safe and healthful environment for IIT faculty, employees and students.

By:  /s/ Allan s. Myerson  
Provost and Senior Vice President

By:  /s/ John P. Collins  
Vice President for Business & Administration
EXHIBIT A

PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING ON-THE-JOB INJURIES

1 Depending upon the nature of the illness or injury, Main Campus employees injured on the job may be referred to MercyWorks Occupational Medicine Network or to an emergency room for further treatment. The employee may instead choose to see his/her own physician. The supervisor should contact Public Safety at 8-6300 to transport the injured employee to MercyWorks for treatment. MercyWorks’ hours are 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. It is located at 2600 South Michigan, telephone 312.567.2979.

Other campuses refer injuries to other locations, to a private physician or, as necessary, to an emergency room.

2 The supervisor must contact Human Resources immediately to report the injury. Both the supervisor and the employee must complete, within the next two working days a report of injury provided by Human Resources. Upon receipt of this, Human Resources will complete the documentation required by the state and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and will coordinate follow up.

3 The supervisor will communicate with Human Resources on the disposition of each case including whether the employee received first aid, was sent home for one or more days, or was referred for further treatment.

4 The injured employee is responsible to immediately contact his/her supervisor to report the outcome of treatment and to report the necessity of any further absence from work.

5 Time sheet entries for all days absent beyond three (3) days should be coded as unpaid absence.

6 If the employee has been treated by an outside physician, he/she must bring a release from the attending physician and present it to IIT Human Resources before beginning work.

7 An employee released for work with restrictions must have his/her case reviewed by Human Resources prior to being scheduled to return to work.