

**UC Davis  
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)**

***Title: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) When Working with Animals in Investigator Laboratories and Animal Facilities***

**I. Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to describe the minimum personal protective equipment (PPE) required for working with research animals in laboratories and animal facilities. The purpose of PPE is two-fold. First, it ensures potential allergens and other hazards do not have direct contact with the investigator/researcher. Second, PPE minimizes the exposure of research animals to potential human contaminants.

**II. Policy:**

[UCOP Personal Protective Equipment Policy](#) dictates the following minimum work attire requirements for all laboratory areas and vivaria: Full length pants or equivalent, closed-toe and closed-heel shoes (this is interpreted as a shoe covering the entire foot) the area between the shoe and pants should have no exposed skin. If pants/skirt do not cover the ankles, then socks that cover the exposed skin must be worn. Shirts and pants/skirt should overlap or be of a length to ensure that there is no exposure of the torso.

Working with rodents requires, at minimum, a lab coat and disposable gloves worn over work attire described above. Working with other small mammals requires the use of a lab coat or other dedicated protective clothing (i.e., scrubs, uniform). Aquatics may be handled with clean hands or non-powdered gloves depending on the species. A lab coat is also recommended.

PPE and university supplied uniforms cannot be taken home and must be laundered on-site or by a commercial university-approved laundry service.

Individual facilities and/or specialized laboratories may have additional requirements. PPE requirements for animal housing areas and field situations are described in the Attending Veterinarian Standards of Care "[Animal Care Program Personal Protective Equipment Policy](#)".

When working in a laboratory or animal facility appropriate footwear, which consists of closed-toe and closed-heel shoes, must be worn at all times. If required, booties or shoe covers are acceptable when worn over appropriate close toe/close heeled footwear.

### III. Procedure:

Rodents: PPE for rodents includes a clean lab coat and gloves. A disposable lab coat is preferred over a cloth lab coat but either will fulfill the intent of the policy. Please check the vivarium signage before entering. In some areas cloth lab coats are not permitted under any circumstances (disposable PPE must be worn). Soiled lab coats must be removed and placed in an appropriate receptacle for laundering. PPE is required at all times when the cages are open. For most rodents (e.g., mouse, rat, hamster, peromyscus, gerbil, vole) this is when the filter top is removed to access the animal. For guinea pigs, this is when handling the animal, as they are not routinely housed or transported in filter-topped caging.

Small mammals other than rodents: PPE recommended for small mammals other than rodents, includes a lab coat or dedicated clothing (e.g., uniform or scrubs). Rabbits should be handled wearing a disposable lab coat if possible to avoid contamination with fur. Traditional cloth lab coats that are contaminated with rabbit fur must be placed in an appropriate receptacle and turned in for laundering. Cats, dogs, and other small mammals should be handled wearing a lab coat or dedicated clothing.

Livestock: For livestock, clean clothing, including long pants, and closed-toe/closed-heel footwear are required. Rubber boots or steel-toe shoes may be required depending on the facility. Each facility should have a policy or standard operating procedure developed for PPE based on species and health status of the animals. Other situational PPE required will be provided by the facility.

Non-human Primates: PPE for nonhuman primates is established by facility standard operating procedures and must be adhered to at all times.

Outer PPE (i.e. lab coats and gloves) must not be worn out of the work area. Dedicated protective clothing (i.e., scrubs, uniform) must not be worn in break rooms, bathrooms, or other non-animal procedure or non-laboratory space if an outer layer of PPE was not worn, i.e., lab coat or Tyvek gown, when working directly with animals. PPE must be disposable or maintained clean and laundered by a commercial university-approved laundering service or on-site if a campus washer and dryer is accessible. Dirty PPE must not be used to handle animals. Under no circumstances should torn, dirty, or soiled lab coats be reused. If you are unsure about where to wear your PPE, ask yourself the following question: May I eat or drink in here? If the answer is yes, remove your animal facility or laboratory PPE, dispose of appropriately, and wash your hands before entering the dedicated staff space.

Always wash your hands when you have removed your PPE and are leaving the animal work areas and facilities. PPE should be removed in the order prescribed by the facility.

### IV. Resources:

1. ILAR, Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals  
<http://nap.edu/12910>
2. Occupational Health and Safety in the Care and Use of Research Animals

<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/4988/occupational-health-and-safety-in-the-care-and-use-of-research-animals>

3. University of California Policy "Personal Protective Equipment"  
<https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/3500597/PersonalProtectiveEquip>
4. SC-10-102 "Animal Care Program Personal Protective Equipment Policy"  
<https://research.ucdavis.edu/wp-content/uploads/SC-10-102.pdf>
5. SC-20-109 "Cleaning of Uniforms and Non-Disposable PPE"  
<https://research.ucdavis.edu/wp-content/uploads/SC-20-109.pdf>