

**NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTIONAL ANIMAL CARE AND USE PROGRAM  
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAM FOR ANIMAL  
WORKERS**



**FORM 1**

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND REQUIREMENTS**

**I. Purpose and Regulatory Compliance Requirements**

The purpose of an occupational health and safety program (OHSP) for animal workers at New Mexico State University is to decrease the risk/hazard associated with use of vertebrate animals in research, teaching, and service consistent with an overall goal of maintaining a safe and healthy workplace. New Mexico State University is required by United States Department of Agriculture and Public Health Service (PHS) regulations and NMSU Policies of the Board of Regents to have an OHSP for employees, students, and visitors who work in NMSU animal facilities or have significant contact with vertebrate animals.

Requirements and recommendations relating to OHSP for animal workers are included in the Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals (NRC, 1996), the Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Agricultural Research and Teaching (FASS, 1999), and the Occupational Health and Safety in the Care and Use of Research Animals (NRC, 1997). A description of the OHSP must be included in the NMSU Assurance of Compliance with the PHS. The OHSP for animal workers at NMSU is a joint effort of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), the Office of Compliance, Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S), and the University Health Center. In addition, the Institutional Biosafety Committee and the Radiation Safety Committee may become involved in specific cases in which animal workers use radioactive materials or work at Biosafety Level II.

**II. Participation**

Individuals involved in the direct care and(or) use of animals (including faculty, staff, students, visiting faculty, and part-time employees) are required to participate in the program.

Personnel who do not directly work with animals but who frequently work in the animal facilities (maintenance personnel, custodial services, members of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, staff of Environmental Health and Safety) should be familiar with the OHSP for Animal Workers and should wear personal protective equipment as appropriate for their job function.

**III. Program Support**

**A. Office of the Vice President for Research, Graduate Studies, and International Programs (OVPRGI) and Compliance Office**

The Vice President for Research, Graduate Studies, and International Programs (VPRGI) is the Institutional Official for the NMSU Institutional Animal Care and Use Program. The Compliance Director ensures that NMSU remains in compliance with federal regulations and the IACUC oversees animal care at all NMSU facilities. The NMSU Administration provides the resources to support essential elements of the OHSP for animal workers including funds to support Environmental Health and Safety as well as funds to support medical costs associated with participants in research operations.

## **B. Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee**

All teaching and research activities involving vertebrate animals conducted at NMSU facilities or by NMSU personnel must be approved by the IACUC. In addition, the OHSP for animal workers is a component of the animal care and use program and is, therefore, included in the semiannual program reviews conducted by the IACUC. Likewise, faculty, staff, and students listed on IACUC protocol applications must have completed the requirements of the OHSP for Animal Workers before the protocol will be approved.

## **C. Principal Investigators (PI) and Supervisors**

Supervisors and PIs are responsible for providing workers with safety information specific to their work environment which will allow them to perform their job in a safe manner. Animal workers must know how to recognize potential hazards, how to protect themselves and coworkers from hazards, and how to react properly in case of an emergency. It is very important that all personnel are "safety conscious."

## **D. Environmental Health and Safety**

Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) provides instruction in safety for animal workers, hazard communication, chemical hygiene/laboratory safety, hazardous waste management, radiation safety, biological waste management, biosafety awareness, blood borne pathogens, lifting safety, respiratory protection and fit testing, ladder safety, and several other topics. Animal workers must complete training classes that are required by NMSU policy as well as those appropriate for their job activities and those identified in the medical monitoring program. The IACUC and EH&S work closely together to ensure that requirements of the OHSP for Animal Workers are effective and in compliance with regulatory mandates.

## **E. University Health Center**

University Health Center professionals review the medical health questionnaire, notify individuals of the recommended services based on their risk assessment, and provide informational brochures when indicated. The University Health Center is responsible for notifying individuals of any need for additional medical examinations and for maintaining records documenting entry medical status of animal workers. University Health Center personnel will notify EH&S when the recommended procedures have been completed or when the individual has signed a waiver declining participation in the recommended procedures. The University Health Center is also the initial contact point when an employee is injured while performing job-related activities.

## **F. Biosafety and Radiation Safety Committees**

The use of biological, chemical, and radioactive materials poses hazards to personnel. Use of these materials must be approved by the appropriate committee and all personnel must be trained accordingly.

## PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

All vertebrate animal research programs are required to have an OHSP for personnel that have contact with animals, their tissues, or their allergens. The purpose of this section is to explain the components of the OHSP for Animal Workers.

### I. Training Requirements

**A. IACUC Certification of Animal Welfare Training** – All animal workers must be certified by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. This requirement is met by attending the alternate-year IACUC Certification Seminar. Individuals who are unable to attend the seminar must view a DVD of the seminar.

**B. Occupational Health and Safety Program for Animal Workers – Program Overview and Requirements** - All animal workers must read and sign the document titled “Occupational Health and Safety Program for Animal Workers – Program Overview and Requirements.” This document describes the OHSP for Animal Workers and presents an overview of the IACUC program.

**C. Occupational Health and Safety Program for Animal Workers – Animal Worker Safety Training** – All NMSU employees and students who work with animals must complete this EH&S course.

**D. Employee Safety and Hazard Communication (Right to Know)** – All NMSU employees and students who work with animals must complete this EH&S course.

**E. BioSafety Awareness Training** – Employees and students working at Biosafety Level II must complete this EH&S class.

**F. OSHA Bloodborne Pathogen Training** – This EH&S class is required for all employees and students who have routine exposure and(or) contact with human blood, internal body fluids, unfixed tissues, or other human infectious material such as but not limited to HIV, HBV, and HCV.

**G. Radiation Safety** – All radiation permittees and users must complete this EH&S class.

**H. Respiratory Protection and Fit Testing** - If a respirator is required, animal workers must complete this class and fit testing annually.

### II. Risk Assessment/Medical Questionnaire

All animal workers must complete the NMSU Medical Health Questionnaire. This form is confidential and is used by the University Health Center to determine the level of health risk for each individual who works in the various NMSU animal facilities or other operation involving animals. Employees and students are encouraged to confidentially discuss their relevant conditions with the University Health Center medical professional or a personal physician. The University Health Center medical professional will evaluate the worker’s responses and submit recommendations to the animal worker. The worker will then agree to complete the recommendations or will sign a declination describing which of the recommended services they do not want to receive. A short notification of the animal worker’s decision to accept or decline services will be provided to the Office of Compliance for communication to the IACUC chair.

**FORM 2**

**NMSU Occupational Health and Safety Program  
for Animal Workers**



I have read "Occupational Health and Safety Program for Animal Workers - Program Overview and Requirements" and attended Animal Worker Safety Training.

Name [please print] \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Please return the original signed document to Environmental Health & Safety, MSC 3578, New Mexico State University, P. O. Box 30001, Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001.*