



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

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To: Dr. Richard G. Wyatt, Executive Director  
Office of Intramural Research, OD

Dr. James F. Taylor, Director  
Office of Animal Care and Use, OIR, OD

Director, Division of Occupational Health and Safety (DOHS)  
Scientific Resources, ORS

Subject: Medical Surveillance of Transient Visitors into NIH Animal Facilities

As outlined in the NIH *Exposure Control Program for Non-Hospital Personnel*, participation in the NIH Animal Exposure Surveillance Program (AESP) is mandatory for all personnel who have direct contact with animals, their viable tissues, body fluids, wastes, or living quarters. NIH employees are eligible for the NIH AESP if they participate in at least one of the following activities: 1) direct care of animals or housing; 2) direct contact with animals (live or dead), their tissues, body fluids, or wastes; or, 3) work with a zoonotic disease agent.

Transient visitors to NIH animal facilities are not required to participate in the NIH AESP. A transient visitor is defined as anyone who is required to enter into an animal room, but who does not have direct contact with animals as described above. Transient visitors may include, but are not restricted to, employees of the Federal government, contractors, or members of the general public. To provide adequate protection to transient visitors, they must be accompanied and supervised by an NIH employee with appropriate training in safe entry into animal rooms. In addition, transient visitors who enter an animal room are required to wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), as defined by the facility entry standard operating procedures. Appropriate PPE for entry into animal rooms where infectious agents may be in use, would, at a minimum, need to meet the PPE requirements outlined in the CDC/NIH publication, *Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories*.

NIH maintenance personnel who enter animal rooms to perform maintenance and repair work are not required to participate in the NIH AESP. However, to minimize the potential for exposure to potentially hazardous materials, the animals must be removed from the immediate area prior to entry; the area must be adequately cleaned and disinfected; and the maintenance personnel must be informed of any potential hazards and appropriate protective procedures, including PPE. Maintenance personnel, just as any other transient visitors, must be accompanied and supervised by another NIH employee with appropriate training in safe entry into animal rooms.

Transient visitors to NIH non-human primate (NHP) animal facilities are not required by the NIH Division of Safety to have a tuberculin skin test prior to entry into NHP animal rooms. Transient visitors are required to wear a single-use dust-mist mask, as well as other appropriate PPE, as outlined in the NIH Policy Manual Chapter 3044-2, *Protection of NIH Personnel Who Work with Nonhuman Primates*. However, since this is not strictly an occupational safety and health issue, but also an animal health issue, the final decision on whether a tuberculin skin test is required for entry into a NHP animal room rests with the animal program director.

If you have any questions or comments regarding these issues, please contact me at (301) 496-2960.

Deborah E. Wilson, DrPH