

DIVISION OF COMPARATIVE MEDICINE STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Written By: C. Novotney, D.V.M	Page: 1 of 5	SOP #:4F-4
Approved By: IACUC	SUBJECT: Animal Facility Escorted Visitor Policy	
Supersedes: All prior SOPs	Revised: 10/6/14	

Purpose: There are valid reasons that escorted visitors should be permitted to enter the DCM animal facility: Visitors may enter animal facilities as part of a collaborative scientific effort to demonstrate protocol effectiveness, an educational effort, to assist in fund raising, or in an effort to promote awareness of the need to use animals for experimentation.

This policy will state the limits within which visitors may visit University animal facilities while protecting the research animals, research endeavors and the visitors themselves. This policy is also intended to prevent incursions and disruptions of research activities by unauthorized individuals.

Policy Definitions:

Visitor: A visitor is any person not otherwise authorized to enter an animal facility as part of their specific academic position or job responsibilities at the SUNY Downstate or by law or regulation. Thus a visitor is a person seeking to enter the animal facility who is not:

- An employee, student or staff member of the University authorized to participate in one or more IACUC approved protocols AND whose animals are housed in the specific facility being entered
- A non-paid veterinary, veterinary technician, technologist or student extern of the Division of Comparative Medicine (DCM)
- A consultant or other non-SUNY Downstate faculty, staff or student registered as an authorized agent or guest and approved for work on a specific IACUC-approved protocol involving animals housed in the facility
- Outside vendor or a University employee not otherwise approved on a specific IACUC-approved protocol but authorized by appropriate DCM or other facility supervisor staff for the purpose of facility maintenance.

For example, for the purpose of this policy a visitor could be:

1. Anyone who does not have IACUC or facility staff-approved access to the specific animal facility.
2. A SUNY Downstate staff member or student not included as an authorized and trained participant in an IACUC-approved research protocol involving housing of animals in the facility.
3. A member of the SUNY Downstate faculty or staff who does not utilize experimental animals.

Children: Children are defined as persons under the age of 16 years of age, escorted or unescorted by an adult.

Animal Facility: An animal facility is any area housing vertebrate experimental animals of any species. This **does not** include laboratory spaces. Access to laboratory areas, including laboratory areas where animals are temporarily kept, by visitors is the responsibility of individual Principal Investigators and members of their research teams.

Public Tours: A public tour is a pre-arranged and coordinated tour of one or more animal facilities by several persons under the supervision of an authorized University representative or guide.

Guide: A guide is an authorized individual required to accompany a visitor(s) or tour participants on any visit or a public tour to an animal facility. In general, a guide is a faculty member with experimental animals housed in the animal facility to be toured or a member of the DCM staff.

Animal Visitors: Pets (client owned animals) serving as experimental animals under an approved IACUC protocol – this does not currently pertain to studies at SUNY Downstate.

GENERAL POLICY ON VISITORS TO ANIMAL FACILITIES

Visitors may be permitted in animal facilities of the SUNY Downstate if approved in advance by the facility management as long as appropriate safeguards are in place to screen visitors for health issues related to animal exposure and the visitor is accompanied at all times by an authorized guide.

Visitors must be under the direct supervision of guide at all times during a tour or visit. In addition to IACUC- approved investigators, other individuals who may serve as guides include a member of DCM management (Director, Facility Manager, Veterinary Technician, or Husbandry Supervisor). Visitors are not permitted to handle or touch experimental animals.

Faculty guides must also notify a member of DCM management that they will be sponsoring a visitor. The guide must provide DCM with the visitors' name, the reason for the visit, the planned visit time and facility location by E-mail or in writing at least 3 days in advance of the visit.

Animal visitors may enter the animal facilities as approved as part of an IACUC-approved protocol. Additional testing requirements may be applicable to assure that the pet is as free of viral, bacterial, protozoan and mezoan pathogens as are the purpose bred animals in the facilities. Such animal visitors may be accompanied by their client owners as deemed necessary by the faculty investigator and supervising veterinarian. Other pets may not enter animal facilities.

Public tours through animal facilities are generally not permitted and if permitted provide for no access to animal colonies or rooms. Tour participants' access to animal facilities is limited to business areas and/or viewing of animals through door windows. If a public tour is planned, this must be arranged at least 30 days in advance with written documentation and consent of the Director of DCM or designee. Such tours generally may only be initiated through the Office of the Dean of the College of Medicine and in consultation with the IACUC.

Specific policies:

- 1. Health assessment of the visitor prior to visit.** The need for Occupational Health to perform risk assessment for visitors will depend on the level of risk to the visitor, to the experimental animals and to the research. The level of risk will depend on whether the visitor intends to enter animal housing or procedure rooms when animals are in residence or just enter the hallways and business areas of the animal facility.

- a. Healthy, adult, non-immunocompromised visitors may enter animal facilities, tour hallways and view animals through doorways without entering animal housing or procedure areas without prior occupational health screening.
 - b. Visitors who wish to enter animal housing or procedure areas while animals are in residence must have previously participated in occupational health screening in advance of the visit at our facility. We accept participation in another Institution's occ health program provided the following are current: 1. annual physical/medical review including identification of animal related allergies with awareness of preventive measures 2. negative TB test within 1 year 3. measles immunity or vaccination 4. N-95 fit test
 - c. In addition, visitors entering animal research areas are asked to review a summary of how exposure to research animals can include risk to visitors and to research animals and then upon being clearly informed of the risks involved, sign a waiver of liability. All visitors must follow facility rules regarding gowning and donning personal protective equipment.
 - d. Visitors who wish to handle animals must participate in hands on training class. All such visitors must become registered with the IACUC as part of the specific protocol under which the animals are registered. Note that such individuals when meeting these requirements are not considered visitors under this policy (see Definitions).
 - e. Children shall not be approved as visitors except as part of tours where adequate adult supervision is present.
- 2. Informing visitors of the potential health risks of entering the animal facility.** It is the responsibility of the faculty or facility guide to inform the visitor those immune-compromised or unhealthy persons may not visit an animal facility. If there is any question that the health of a potential visitor is not appropriate, the visit must not occur until such time as the visitor is clearly informed of risks. When there is a question of health status, the guide and visitor must consult with Occupational Medicine prior to the visit. Persons who have active tuberculosis, influenza or other respiratory diseases are not permitted to visit. Persons with allergies to animals are advised not to visit since animal dander may be present in hallways and support areas.
- 3. Visitor Photography in the Animal Facility.** Visitors shall not be permitted to take still or video photographs in the animal facility unless the visitor is serving as a photography vendor for the faculty and/or DCM guide and the photographs are:
- a. necessary or allowed for the documentation of work under an IACUC-approved protocol
 - b. the original negatives or electronic media are retained as the property of the SUNY Downstate.

The faculty member or guide should advise visitors concerning the prohibition of photography at the time of entrance into an animal facility and in conjunction with any request for a visit. Visitors requesting photographs may commission the University to provide such photographs under the provisions noted above and through the activity of their guide.

***SUNY Downstate Medical Center, Waiver of Liability for
Visitors Exposed to Laboratory Animals, Animal Tissue, and/or who have
Access to Areas Where Animals are Housed or Used***

Identification (PRINT OR TYPE)

Last Name_____ First_____ Gender (M/F)
Email_____ Phone ()_____

In Case of Emergency (Optional) Notify

Name_____
Relationship_____ Phone ()_____

Risk of Infection or Illness

Typically animal research colonies maintained by commercial suppliers and used in laboratories today are closely monitored for infectious diseases, thus minimizing the likelihood that laboratory workers will be exposed to infectious animals. All persons working with these species should be immunized against tetanus. Proper handling and restraint procedures will minimize the risk of animal bites and transmission of disease.

Allergies: Rodents are commonly identified as a cause of allergies in people. Dander, serum, urine, and saliva are just some of the materials that can induce an allergic reaction. Allergic responses generally are seen immediately after handling an animal, but may not appear for several hours after exposure. Sneezing, tearing, and red, swollen eyes are typical responses; however, a rash, wheal, hives, or other type of skin inflammation also may be seen. It is thought that use of personal protective equipment (PPE) reduces exposure to animal allergens. Personnel with known or suspected allergies to animals should report their condition to their supervisor and Medical Center Employee Health Services.

My signature below indicates that I have read this document and understand the risks posed by entering animal research areas, and/or handling animals or animal or human tissue.

Signature_____ **Date**_____