NOTIFICATION OF HAZARDOUS WORK IN ANIMAL CARE AREAS

PERFORMANCE STANDARD: All staff (Animal Care & Research) will be aware of potentially hazardous agents being utilized in their work areas.

BACKGROUND/PURPOSE: Effective communication of how to safely perform one’s work duties is driven by Federal standards and institutional policy. When animal research involves the use of hazardous agents (i.e. biological hazards, hazardous chemicals, radiologicals), it is imperative that workers are notified of the potential risks and how to work safely when such risks are present. The timely posting of warning signage on doorways and individual cages is critical in ensuring proper notification.

ROLES:
1. Researchers must assure all required signage is properly affixed and notification of pending (or on-going) hazardous work has occurred prior to working with the agent in an animal use area.
2. DLAR/DLC must provide sufficient staff training to recognize the hazardous work area.
3. The PI, along with the support of OESO, will prepare a standard operating procedure (SOP) that outlines safe work practices for the animal use area when hazardous agents are used.
4. DLAR/DLC will assign an appropriate housing that is consistent with the approved SOP.

PROTECTIVE MEASURES REQUIRED: Personnel protective equipment is required; appropriate to the species and the hazard being used.

POLICY OUTLINE:
When animals are dosed with a hazardous agent (biological chemical, radiological, etc.) the researcher must provide advanced notification to those who will take care of their animals and must label the cages of the animals with a cage card that indicates the applicable hazard. The card will list the following information: PI name, Protocol #, Start Date, Agent Name. The card will also include an “autoclaving” checkbox if the work involves hazardous chemicals/drugs (verifying whether or not to autoclave bedding according to the SOP for Use of Toxic Chemicals in Animals or the “Work Practices” section of the hazardous chemical/drug SOP).
Within the laboratory, cage labels can take any form that is recognizable to all laboratory workers.
For animals housed in DLAR-managed areas:

- **At least five business days prior** to dosing the animals, the researcher will notify DLAR of the dosing schedule, send the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for the chemical/drug and a copy of the OESO approved SOP for the Use of Toxic Chemicals in Animals to the DLAR Assistant Director, Head of Facility Operations as well as the Operations Manager of the animal facility, or their designee, where the work will occur. Contact information for these personnel can be found on the DLAR website under “Contact Us” and then “Husbandry and Facilities”.

The work cannot begin until the researcher has obtained confirmation that their scheduling notification has been received.

- When dosed animals are returned to their cages, the researcher will place hazardous agent cage cards (supplied by DLAR) on each cage, and the door sign (last page of the OESO-approved SOP) must be posted on the outside of the room door (with ALL information filled in). Note that cages occupied within the first 48 hours after dosing must be marked until the contents have been dumped. The cards and signs must be removed by the researcher once the hazard is no longer present. For chemicals/drugs, this is usually after the first cage change that takes place more than 48 hours after the animals receive the final dose. For biologicals, this is when the infected animals and biohazardous agents are no longer present in the room.

For more details and specific instructions on animals dosed with chemicals/drugs, see the OESO SOP: [Standard Operating Procedure for Handling Animals Dosed with ToxicChemicals (Including Chemotherapy and Hazardous Drugs)](#).

For biological agents used in animals, use the SOP template: “[Standard Operating Procedure Requirements for BSL2 and/or ABSL2 Containment](#)”. 

For radiological material used in animals, see the “[Radiation Safety Animal Care and Use Protocol Wizard](#)”. 

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