

Washington State University

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee

Guideline #13: Proper Attire and Personal Protective Equipment in Animal Facilities

Approval Date: 12/14/2021

A. Purpose

This document is intended to provide the minimum standards for attire and personal protective equipment (PPE) for employees and volunteers while in animal facilities and working with animals. A risk assessment is to be conducted to determine the proper level of PPE within each facility based on the specific hazards present. Additional PPE requirements may be implemented based on project needs and health and immune status of the animals.

PPE requirements serve two primary purposes; 1) To reduce human exposure to allergens, zoonotic disease and other hazards and 2) To minimize the animal's exposure to potential contaminants.

General WSU requirements for personal protective equipment can be found at:
<https://policies.wsu.edu/prf/index/manuals/2-00-contents/2-60-general-requirements-for-personal-protective-equipment/>

B. Guideline

All animal housing facilities are to meet or exceed the PPE requirements outlined in this guideline.

General Guidelines:

1. The supervisor is to:
 - Evaluate workplaces/area to identify hazards requiring the use of personal protective equipment.
 - Ensure that such requirements are communicated to staff/students and are clearly posted in areas where PPE is required.

- Ensure that personnel are provided with and are trained in the proper use of personal protective equipment.
- 2. Reusable PPE (e.g. cloth lab coats, coveralls) should be laundered onsite or by a commercial vendor and should not be taken home. This ensures contaminants are not dispersed outside the work environment. PPE should not be worn outside the facility or in common areas like breakrooms
 - For additional information and contacts on laundry facilities and services available, please visit the links below:
 - [Blue Ribbon Supply](#)
 - [U.S. Linen and Uniform](#)
 - [Cintas](#)
- 3. Personnel should wash and/or disinfect hands and change clothing as often as necessary to maintain good personal hygiene.
- 4. Individuals should wear closed toed shoes and clean outerwear while in animal facilities or procedure space.
- 5. Work areas with high noise levels (machine and equipment shops, cage wash areas, dog kennels, swine housing, etc.) should have WSU EH&S provide a risk assessment to determine if worker exposure warrants enrollment in the hearing conservation program. Hearing protection, even when not required, should be provided to employees upon request.
- 6. Eye and possibly respiratory protection should be provided in areas where chemicals are mixed or when there is aerosolization/splash potential with corrosive agents. Risk assessment of the hazards may be warranted.

Species Specific Guidelines:

Rodents:

- A minimum of closed toed shoes and appropriate, clean outerwear are required for entry to rodent rooms.
- A lab coat/gown/long sleeved scrubs or equivalent and gloves are required when handling rodents or their bedding.
- Engineering controls like individually ventilated caging, cage change stations, bedding dump stations should be used to limit exposure to potential allergens. When engineering controls cannot be used, individuals should be offered respiratory protection. Any required or voluntary use of a respirator should be consistent with [WSU's respiratory protection plan](#).
- In rooms with open top rodent cages, PPE should be donned prior to entering the room to minimize contamination on personal clothing.

Cats, dogs, and small non-rodent mammals (e.g. rabbits):

- A lab coat or other dedicated clothing should be worn while handling dogs, cats and other small laboratory mammals
- Ferrets may require handling with leather gloves to protect from bites.
- Gloves may be required depending on the species and health status.

Bats (closed laboratory colony only):

- A lab coat or dedicated clothing and gloves should be worn while handling bats and working in the housing rooms.

Aquatics:

- Closed toed shoes and appropriate and clean outerwear must be worn while in aquatic housing rooms.
- A lab coat/gown/long sleeved scrubs or equivalent and gloves are required when handling tanks and aquatic species.
- Water resistant apron or coat and eye protection may be required if there is aerosolization/splash potential with soiled aquarium water.
- Slip resistant shoes or boots are advisable in areas where the floor is wet.

Captive Wildlife:

- Closed toed shoes or boots and appropriate and clean outerwear must be worn.
- Coveralls are recommended when performing husbandry duties like pen cleaning.

Avian:

- Due to the wide variety of species and facilities in which avian species are housed, each unit should have a policy or standard operating procedure developed for PPE based on species and the bird's health status.
- A laboratory coat and gloves or other suitable covering or dedicated clothing are recommended and should be available. Hearing protection should be made available for use in areas where vocal/loud species are housed.

Agricultural Animals:

- Facilities housing agricultural animals must have a program in place to meet the requirements in the *Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in*

Research and Teaching (current edition). Dedicated footwear and clothing can be effective for both personal hygiene and biosecurity.

- A minimum of close toed/close heeled shoes or boots and appropriate and clean outerwear (long pants or equivalent) are required while at the facility.
- Facilities should consider the use of boot cleaning stations upon entering and exiting the facility. This will depend on the facility's biosafety concerns/plan but can also minimize tracking contaminants to personal vehicles/homes.
- Dedicated coveralls that are laundered on site are highly recommended. Facilities should review their procedures to determine if certain tasks require dedicated clothing or other PPE. This may include procedures like mucking stalls, spraying pens, rectal palpation or artificial insemination, treating sick animals, or other procedures where risk of contamination of street clothes is high.
- Safety footwear may be required for personnel determined to be at risk of foot injuries in the performance of their duties.

A. References

1. Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals. 8th Edition. 2011.
2. Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching. 4th Edition. 2020.
3. WSU EH&S Workplace Safety <https://ehs.wsu.edu/workplace-safety/>
4. WSU EH&S Personal Protective Equipment <https://ehs.wsu.edu/workplace-safety/personal-protective-equipment/>
5. WSU SPPM "General Requirements for Personal Protective Equipment" <https://policies.wsu.edu/prf/index/manuals/2-00-contents/2-60-general-requirements-for-personal-protective-equipment/>
6. WSU Zoonoses fact sheets <https://iacuc.wsu.edu/zoonoses/>
7. WSU Occupational Health and Safety for Individuals with Animal Contact <https://iacuc.wsu.edu/occupational-health-and-safety-for-individuals-with-animal-contact/>