



**TITLE: Animal Contact Program Enrollment**

**Purpose:** A fundamental responsibility of occupational health at FIT is to reduce the health and safety risks and hazards associated with animal contact. For individuals who have regular exposure to animals and/or animal facilities, risk is assessed by enrollment in University's Animal Contact Program (ACP), through the completion of an Animal Contact Risk Questionnaire. The information obtained in the questionnaire is connected with other campus hazard identification data and animal use materials. This information is used to determine required immunizations, use of personal protective equipment, hygiene practices, medical surveillance, and training. The information provided will be confidential (protected by Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) and only reviewed by FIT Health Services medical staff. The level of occupational health and safety practices required will be determined by the hazards and risks imposed by the environment, the degree of contact with animal species, and the length of the contact.

**Definition:**

- Animal Use Area. Established animal facilities (vivaria), procedure areas, and PI laboratories where animals are housed and or used/studied and conveyances in which animals are transported between animal use areas.

**PROCEDURE :** This procedure identifies 4 groups of employees, students, and visitors and outlines when enrollment in the ACP is required:

Group 1: Anyone who through their employment, training or service at FIT has regular contact with animals and/or animal use areas must enroll in the ACP. This includes:

- Faculty, staff, and students named in an approved animal care and use protocol for teaching, research, or outreach must enroll in the ACP. In cases where an individual is the Principal Investigator on a FIT protocol but is employed by a different institution (e.g., FWC) while holding a zero-dollar appointment at FIT, a risk assessment from their home institution may suffice. This requires approval by the Environmental Regulatory and Compliance (ERC) Office.
- Researchers, and any staff working within animal facilities. Staff who work outside animal facilities and have no animal contact are not required to enroll in the ACP. In cases where staff work in an animal facility but do not come into direct contact with animals and have minimal exposure to animal associated risks, it may not be necessary to enroll in the ACP. The ERC Office will determine the level of risk and the need for enrollment on a facility basis
- Animal care staff. This includes individuals who work or volunteer in animal facilities.
- IACUC members, including lay members and ex-officio.

Group 2: Students. There are 3 categories of students relevant to this procedure. This includes:

- Students working in a PI's laboratory fall into the Group 1 category. As such, these students will be listed on a research protocol and will therefore be required to complete the ACP enrollment.
- Students working for an animal facility. The majority will have regular contact with animals and/or animal facilities. These students must enroll in the ACP.
- If a student's role in a facility is associated with minimal animal handling and animal-associated

risk (e.g., feeding fish in a pond), a position description will be reviewed for risk and if deemed appropriately low, the student does not need to enroll in the ACP. This decision is made by the ERC Office.

- Students enrolled in a class that involves animals. There are 2 categories:
  - a. A course associated with minimal exposure to animals is associated with a small risk. In this case, the instructor(s) will make an announcement and there will be signage/documentation of the potential risks. Enrollment in the ACP is not required. The designation of a course not warranting enrollment will be made by the ERC Office.
  - b. For a class with more than minimal animal contact and/or exposure (e.g., a class that involves taking care of animals) the instructor(s) and students must enroll in the ACP.

Group 3: Visitors. A visitor is defined as any individual who is not authorized to normally be in an animal use area. All visitors to animal areas must be trained in the proper use of and wear the same personal protective equipment required of all other University personnel in the same animal area on campus. This includes compliance with all OSHA standards including the respirator use standard (29 CFR 1910.134). There are 2 categories of visitors relevant to this procedure:

1. Visitors to areas where the risk of illness or injury is low and where there will not be more than very casual, short-term direct animal contact. In this case, the visitor needs supervision, and there will be signage/documentation of the potential risks (e.g., Contractor, inspector).
2. Visitors who will experience more than minimal exposure will be required to have either:
  - a. prior risk assessment from a different institution: Communication of prior assessment and acceptance to FIT Health Services. This communication will be facilitated by supervisor of the animal facility.
  - b. enrolled in the FIT ACP.

Group 4: FIT Service Personnel (nonanimal facility employee, e.g., physical plant personnel).

All service personnel need to communicate with a facility employee point-of-contact prior to entering the facility. For service personnel who will not come in direct contact with an animal and thus the overall risk is deemed minimal, clear signage and PPE are sufficient.

Additional requirements for all 4 groups defined above:

- **Training Documentation.** All required training provided to the above groups must be documented. A copy of this documentation will be retained.

See also IACUC Procedures “Animal Area Security and Access Control”; and “Photography and Videography in FIT Animal Use Areas.”

**Approved by the IACUC 29 June 2015**

**Author(s): S. Emer, C. Bashur**