This ARC guideline has been written to clearly communicate current standards for the facility users. Questions should be directed to Nachi Shukla (232-2043) or Dr. Glen Otto (471-2392).

### Personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements for personnel working with non-human primates at UT-Austin

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**DESCRIPTION:** The following guidelines specify the protective measures required to address the risks of infection to laboratory personnel when working in animal rooms and laboratories that are associated with non-human primates. These guidelines define the levels of protection that are commensurate with the risk encountered for different activities.

**BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE:** For over five years, all macaques procured for use at UT-Austin have been selected based on repeated negative B virus serology, and this practice will continue for the foreseeable future. Occupational exposure to the primates in our colonies can accordingly be considered to have a lower risk as compared to known-positive colonies or those of unknown status. For this reason, some of the more stringent guidelines regarding PPE that are in place for positive or suspect colonies are not appropriate. A good alternate model for "universal precautions" regarding mucus membrane and eye protection for research personnel in our low-risk colonies can be found in the OSHA requirements for exposure to human blood and bodily fluids:

**Masks, Eye Protection, and Face Shields.** Masks in combination with eye protection devices, such as goggles or glasses with solid side shields, or chin-length face shields, shall be worn whenever splashes, spray, spatter, or droplets of blood or other potentially infectious materials may be generated and eye, nose, or mouth contamination can be reasonably anticipated.

The two primary protective measures are **protective clothing** to prevent scratches and bites as well as skin contact with contaminated materials, and **mucous membrane splash protection** to shield eyes, nose and mouth from potentially hazardous contact with wastes or bodily fluids from primates.

**Protective clothing** includes a long-sleeved lab coat, dedicated uniform or surgical attire, gloves, and where necessary, shoe covers or dedicated shoes. As is the case in all laboratory environments, shoes that fully cover the feet must be worn in the animal facility. Sandals or perforated shoes are not appropriate. Because shorts or skirts leave large areas of skin unprotected even when a lab coat is worn, long pants are required as well.

**Mucous membrane splash protection** includes protection of nose and mouth with a face mask in conjunction with protection of eyes by ANSI-approved safety glasses or goggles designed to provide front and side protection, and/or a full face shield. For operations having a high splash potential, safety glasses or goggles must be used in combination with a face shield to provide appropriate protection. Regular prescription eyeglasses without side shields DO NOT constitute protective eyewear, nor do surgical masks that have a simple plastic eye shield attached.

**REQUIREMENTS:** The appropriate protection for specific primate-related activities depends on the degree of risk involved. Activities can be characterized as low, moderate, or high risk as detailed below. The sections that follow below describe the risk level and the required personal protection for a variety of activities. If a particular activity is not listed, use the example that provides the nearest match.
Low risk activities

Routine procedures that may involve exposure to primates via direct contact, splashes, or aerosols but have an overall low risk due to the relatively controlled circumstances under which they are performed.

Example 1) Procedure or treatment room: performing minor procedures on restrained or sedated animals.

This applies to minor procedures such as suture removal, venipuncture, anesthesia induction and physical exam. Double gloves can be used at the individual’s discretion, depending on the animal and procedure involved. Adequate eye protection is especially important when intubating animals.

Example 2) Physiology or behavior lab: activities requiring entry into isolation and recording areas

This category includes activities that occur during electrophysiological and behavioral experiments utilizing animals in a restraint device that has a shielded litter pan. The investigator or technician is working in the same room with an animal in the laboratory. Examples include applying head fixation, making adjustments to primate chair, actively running monkeys in behavioral rigs, caring for an implant, placing electrodes, or feeding an animal. Note that cleaning implanted cylinders with flush solutions is a high-risk activity (see below).

Required PPE:

1. lab coat, dedicated uniform or surgical scrubs/gown (long-sleeved)
2. impermeable gloves (vinyl, latex or nitrile)
3. mask (surgical or dust/mist “nuisance” type)
4. safety glasses or goggles

Comments: Laboratory personnel working with computers, electronic instrumentation, or conducting experiments remotely (i.e., at the electronics racks) while the monkey is fully enclosed in an adjacent isolation booth or a physically separated room in a physiology suite do not need to wear PPE. However, it is recommended that they be provided with primate-specific training so that they are aware of the risks in the adjacent areas.
Moderate risk activities

Procedures that a) result in exposure to primates within an animal holding room where the degree of surface contamination is greater and the primates are not restrained nor sedated, or b) surgical exposure where blood and tissue exposure is more likely.

Example 3) Animal housing room: all activities

Example 4) Operating room: Surgeon, assistant, or anesthesiologist

Required PPE:

1. lab coat, dedicated uniform or surgical scrubs/gown (long-sleeved)
2. impermeable gloves (vinyl, latex or nitrile)
3. mask (surgical or dust/mist “nuisance” type)
4. safety glasses or goggles
5. shoe covers over street shoes or dedicated shoes/boots

Comments: During the initial stages of pole & collar training or when animals are being immobilized with a squeeze mechanism, leather gloves (worn over impermeable gloves) to protect hands/arms near to the animal are recommended and should be made available. Double latex gloves are deemed advisable when hands are near the cage or primate chair or when the surgeon will be handling sharp instruments or working with bony tissues, including the skull. Shoe covers are always required in an operating room.
High risk activities

Procedures that may actively aerosolize primate wastes/bodily fluids or generate potentially contaminated fluids at either high velocity or high volume

Example 5) Performing dentistry or oral surgery

Example 6) Using a hose to wash down primate-contaminated cages or other equipment

Example 7) Flushing a recording cylinder by using a pressurized delivery system (e.g., a syringe and needle, an IV bag, a rubber bulb and pipette, etc.)

Required PPE:

1. lab coat, dedicated uniform or surgical scrubs/gown (long-sleeved)
2. impermeable gloves (vinyl, latex or nitrile)
3. mask (surgical or dust/mist “nuisance” type)
4. full face shield in addition to safety glasses/goggles.
5. shoe covers over street shoes or dedicated shoes/boots

Comments: The face shield must be ANSI-approved, so disposable plastic face shields are not sufficient.

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NOTE:

While these guidelines specify university-wide minimum standards, PI's may implement additional lab-specific guidelines that are appropriate to the unique circumstances of individual laboratories.

These guidelines apply specifically to non-infectious primates. Primates that are being used in research that involves the administration of potentially hazardous materials (e.g., infectious agents, toxins or rDNA) or that are known to be infected with a contagious zoonosis may need to be handled with additional protective measures. This must be coordinated with the ARC and EH&S.