

Employee Health Policy for Possible Health Issues Associated with Classroom Demonstrations Involving the Use of Live Vertebrate Animals

Background:

In some disciplines the use of live vertebrate animals in classroom demonstrations is an important instructional tool. Although in those settings students will not come in direct contact with the animals there is still a remote chance that the presence of the animals may have an impact on student health. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students who attend such classroom demonstrations are made aware of steps they should take if they have any concerns about the impact of the animals on their health.

Policy:

The principal investigator for the relevant approved IACUC protocol must ensure that all students who have registered for the class are informed, in advance of the session, about the genus and species of any live vertebrate animals that will be present in the classroom; common names as well as Latin names should be provided. At a minimum, the instructors must verbally inform all students and also post in each classroom a notice describing the genus and species and include in that notice the following statement:

“Laboratory animals, including rodents, fish and other aquatic species can potentially harbor infectious agents that can be transmitted to humans. In general, the risk to a healthy person from observational activities involving healthy laboratory rodents or aquatic animals is minimal. Persons who have suppressed immune systems due to any cause including infections, cancer or long-term treatment with immunosuppressive drugs should consult their primary health care clinician before attending a classroom presentation that involves the use of live vertebrate animals.

Lab animals are also a source of allergens and can cause or worsen allergic symptoms in people with underlying allergies or asthma. If you experience any allergic symptoms while observing live vertebrate animals in a classroom presentation, you are advised to remove yourself from the exposure and consult your regular health care provider.”

ENDORSED BY THE IACUC: 1/17/2007