



Visitors Animal Safety Awareness

Welcome to the University of Texas San Antonio and The Laboratory Animal Resources Center (LARC)



The use of laboratory animals in research is a privilege. UTSA is committed to quality laboratory animal care and use. To this end, UTSA has established an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). This committee along with the University Veterinarian oversees the Laboratory Animal Care Program and actively works to promote animal welfare at UTSA.

The laboratory animal facility environment introduces several unique safety considerations for anyone accessing the facility. Not only does the presence of live animals pose a potential hazard in the form of animal bites and scratches, but also allergic reactions and disease transmission are additional animal associated hazards that should be considered. What's more, the very nature of facility operation requires that potentially hazardous chemicals, gases, radioactivity and controlled substances be used on a daily basis.

For these reasons, your access to UTSA LARC Facilities requires that you become familiar with a few basic safety practices and procedures.

The purpose of this document is to increase your awareness of personal safety and provide you with a few basic procedures to be followed when visiting or working in the Laboratory Animal Facility.

VISITORS SAFETY PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

Why This Information?

The information presented in this document is for the protection of visitors accessing areas where animals (and their byproducts) are housed or used within the Laboratory Animal Resources Center, including cage-washing facilities, but excluding the facility hallways. Examples of such visitors are AAALAC site visitors, vendors, service technicians, USDA/OLAW inspectors, trainees that are coming in for just a few training sessions, visitors attending facility tours and individuals coming in to observe procedures.

You Must be Sponsored

Individuals requiring access to the above areas must be sponsored by authorized personnel to enter a Laboratory Animal Facility. Your sponsor is responsible for assuring that you have received appropriate authorization from the Laboratory Animal Resources Center (LARC) to enter the Laboratory Animal Facility and for ensuring your safety while in the facility. This individual is your principal contact for safety or animal related issues. At any time before, during or after your visit, you are free to ask your sponsor any question related to Laboratory Animal Facility operations.

Food, Drink or the Use of Tobacco Products is Restricted in the Laboratory Animal Facility

The consumption of food, drink or tobacco products is prohibited anywhere within the animal-occupied areas of the animal facility. This includes hallways, empty animal holding rooms and laboratories. Food and drink may be consumed in LARC administrative areas only (office & break room). UTSA is a tobacco-free campus.

What Are the Risks?

Working with or around research animals and animal byproducts can expose workers to health and safety risks. The most common risk of working with or around research animals is development of or worsening of allergies. If you have a history of allergies, you are potentially at greater risk when working with or around research animals. In addition, although humans usually are not susceptible to animal diseases, there are some important exceptions where transmission of an infection from an animal to a human can cause serious illness.

You Must Wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Where Required

Depending on the area you will be visiting, PPE may be required. If you are required to wear personal protective clothing or equipment, your sponsor will provide you with the appropriate PPE and assist you in its use. Postings in the facility indicate the required PPE to be used. We recommend covering any exposed scrapes, cuts, or area of non-intact skin.

You Must Report All Injuries

In the event that you sustain an injury of any kind while in the Laboratory Animal Facility, you must report the incident to your sponsor as soon as possible. Examples of injuries that may occur in the Laboratory Animal Facility include animal bites, scratches, direct contact with animal bodily fluids, injuries from equipment, and a slip or fall. Should an injury occur, your sponsor is knowledgeable on what to do and will advise and assist you as needed.

You Must Obey Fire, Severe Weather or Evacuation Alarms

In the event of a fire, severe weather or other emergencies, an alarm will sound within the Laboratory Animal Facility. You must immediately stop any activity in progress and proceed as instructed by the alarm voice enunciator or University's Emergency Telephone Alert System. In the event the alarm is for a fire, you are to evacuate the building. In the event the alarm is for a tornado, you are to remain in the building. In both instances you are to contact your sponsor as soon as possible. You may seek assistance from any member of the LARC staff. Remember, your safety is always first and foremost.

Do Not Leave Your Designated Area to "Have a Look Around"

Stay in the area agreed upon between you and your sponsor. There are chemicals, gases, radioactive agents and even steam that are in use throughout the Laboratory Animal Facility. Although signage is in place, this alone cannot guarantee your safety if you walk into an unfamiliar area. Please, for your safety, do not decide to "look around" the facility without an approved escort. Remember that you are not permitted to leave your designated work or visiting area without the knowledge of your sponsor.

Use Good Hygiene

You should develop the habit of keeping your hands away from your face, eyes, nose and mouth when visiting or working inside the Laboratory Animal Facility. Always wash your hands thoroughly when leaving the area and especially before smoking, eating or drinking, even if you have been wearing protective gloves. Washing your hands frequently is the single most important step you can take to prevent the spread of animal contaminants to you and others.

Animal Use Ethics and Policies

Research utilizing animals is a privilege, not a right. UTSA's University Veterinarian and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) are responsible for ensuring that animal research is performed according to the highest standards. Any questions or comments regarding the care and use of laboratory animals should be directed to your sponsor and/or LARC management, or any IACUC member.

Purpose of the IACUC

The Institutional Official (IO) appoints an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) qualified through the experience and expertise of its members to assess the research facility's animal program, facilities, and procedures. The IACUC is responsible for making sure

that all federal and institutional laws, regulations and policies are followed when investigators perform animal research. Federal regulators regard the IACUC as a critical partner in ensuring compliance with animal welfare laws and guidelines. In effect, the IACUC functions as the local self-regulating body for animal research on behalf of the institution. Federal inspectors and accrediting (AAALAC International) bodies periodically visit the institution to evaluate the overall animal care and use program.

Animal Use Protocols

An animal use protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IACUC prior to initiating any animal study. The protocol is a full description of the use of the animals and covers the core elements required by the regulations.

Animal Welfare Policy

UTSA strongly promotes the humane care and use of all laboratory animals. Should you have a concern or question related to animal welfare, please advise your sponsor or you may contact a member of LARC management or the IACUC to voice your concern.

Concerns Regarding Animal Health/Welfare

Should you have any concerns regarding animal health, animal welfare, environmental conditions, occupational health and safety or emergency procedures please contact:

Director (University Veterinarian), Assistant Director and/or Quality Assurance Coordinator, Laboratory Animal Resources Center, (210) 458-6692

Safety Office, (210) 458-5250

IACUC Chair & IACUC Coordinator, (210) 458-7733

Campus Police, (210) 458-4242

Visitor Animal Facility Access Request



I have read the TRLARC004 *Visitor Animal Safety Awareness* notes and understand the risks associated with entering the Laboratory Animal Facility and exposure to research animals and/or their byproduct(s)*

Visitor's Name: _____

Dept, Company, Institution: _____

Phone #: _____ **Email:** _____

Date(s)/Time(s) Access Needed: _____

Protocol # (if applicable): _____

Purpose of the Visit: _____

Sponsor's Name: _____

Sponsor's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Visitor's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Before escorting visitors into the animal facilities, sponsor must:

1. Return, email or fax this SIGNED form to the LARC (PNB 2.104D, larc@utsa.edu, or fax: 210-458-6087) at least two business days prior to the visit.
2. Receive e-mail confirmation that access is granted from authorized LARC personnel.

*This form is not needed if access is restricted to the facility hallways and rooms where no animals or their byproducts are being used (e.g., when tours are given).