



Safe Animal Handling Operations

According to the US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH):



- Allergic reactions are among the most common conditions that adversely affect the health of personnel involved in the care and use of animals in research.
- Symptoms of allergies include sneezing, nasal congestion, itchy eyes and cough.
- Some personnel may even develop asthma or other respiratory disorders.
- Personnel should protect themselves from exposure to animals and animal products.
- Seek medical attention in case allergy symptoms develop.

Animal handlers should take steps to protect themselves from exposure to animals and animal products:



- Perform animal manipulations within ventilated workstations or safety cabinets when possible.
- Avoid wearing street clothes while working with animals.
- Leave work clothes at the workplace to avoid potential exposure problems for family members.
- Keep cages and animal areas clean.
- Reduce skin contact with animal products such as dander, serum, and urine by using gloves, lab coats, and approved particulate respirators with face shields.

Cage-Changing Recommendations for Small Animals

- Utilize an Animal Containment Workstation which protects both animals and personnel.
- Plan the work session and prepare all items required before starting work.
- Turn on the fan and wipe down the work surface with a suitable disinfectant.
- Remove cages from the ventilated rack(s) and change them one at a time in the workstation.
- Spray your gloved hands with disinfectant before removing the rodent from a dirty cage.
- Remove the rodent by holding the mid-base of its tail and transfer it to a clean cage. If there is more than one rodent in the cage, transfer the rodents one at a time.
- Handle animals with care, as inappropriate handling may provoke an animal response and result in possible injury and discomfort.
- Ensure the feeder and water bottle are properly secured.
- Return the clean cage to the correct slot in the ventilated rack system.
- After all cages are changed, perform a final animal count and verify all rodent cages are properly secured in the ventilated rack(s).
- Wipe the work surface with suitable disinfectant and turn off the fan.
- Log all activities as required by your facility.

Bedding Disposal Recommendations



- If possible, wet down all dirty cages before dumping soiled bedding.
- Dump all soiled bedding in a suitable Bedding Disposal Workstation.
- Dispose of soiled bedding and other laboratory waste according to your facility's guidelines.

Maintenance



Workstations and safety cabinets should be re-certified by trained technicians at least once every 12 months.

Disclaimer: Esco does not in any way recommend or promote animal testing. Alternatives to animal testing are available and are currently being developed.

