



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

DATE: October 8, 2024
TO: Addressees
FROM: Deputy Director for Intramural Research, NIH
SUBJECT: Updates to the Nonhuman Primate Users Safety Program

This policy memorandum restates existing NIH policies and programs addressing the safety of personnel working with nonhuman primates (NHPs). The NIH Intramural Research Program (IRP) uses NHPs in biomedical research projects when they are identified as the best model for studying a specific disease question. However, the use of NHPs exposes research and husbandry personnel to unique health and safety risks. These risks include exposure to zoonotic diseases such as *Macacine alphaherpesvirus 1* (B virus), accidents related to moving heavy NHP caging, and injuries caused by inadvertent NHP contact. The program components listed below are intended to mitigate some of these risks and improve the NHP Bite, Scratch, and Splash Exposure (BSSE) program.

All IRP NHP research and husbandry programs shall ensure the following:

1. Personnel wound flushing equipment, and NHP BSSE response instruction charts are placed near or in NHP housing and laboratory areas.
2. All NHP research and husbandry personnel receive annual training on responding to an NHP BSSE incident, treating NHP BSSE wounds, and reporting NHP BSSE wounds to the NIH Occupational Medical Service (OMS) office.
3. Direct hand-to-mouth feeding of Old World NHPs is prohibited at NIH. The presentation of food, fluids or research test agents to the mouths of Old World NHPs may only be conducted indirectly using tongs, utensils or research apparatuses.
4. The personal protective equipment (PPE) required for working with NHPs in husbandry or research areas is based on the results of a job hazard analysis as described in the [ARAC Guidelines for Personal Protective Equipment in Animal Facilities](#).
5. Ancillary safety items are placed in Old World NHP housing areas, and personnel working in these areas are briefed on their location, purpose, and proper use.
6. All NHP husbandry personnel understand the facility's NHP cage-to-cage transfer procedures and use two-person teams when moving unanesthetized Old World NHPs between cages.
7. NHP users utilize two-person teams when moving unanesthetized Old World NHPs between cages and restraint devices outside routine facility working hours. The second team member (observer) may observe the procedure from a window looking into the movement area.
8. All personnel using a pole and collar device to move NHPs are briefed on the technique annually.

Please contact me or the Office of Animal Care and Use for policy clarification or to request an exemption.

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Addressees:

IC Scientific Directors
IC Animal Care and Use Committee Chairs
IC Animal Program Directors
IRP Principal Investigators and Animal Users