



## **POLICY: Vivarium Injury Treatment and Reporting (Bites, Exposures, and Other Injuries)**

<b>Objective:</b>	To describe the treatment and reporting of injuries and exposures in the Vivarium.
<b>Author:</b>	Office of Research Protections & Integrity and Laboratory Animal Resources
<b>Date:</b>	August 26, 2024

### **I. Purpose**

Working in the Vivarium involves working with or near live vertebrate animals. There is not merely a concern of physical injury, but also a risk of allergic reactions. Additionally, animals, even if domesticated, can have a propensity to bite or scratch, especially when threatened or fearful.

In alignment with [PIM 27](#) and Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) requirements, these procedures are designed to mitigate harm to researchers, teachers, and students by describing basic injury assessment, treatment, and reporting expectations. Timely and accurate reporting helps to ensure the health of personnel and supports an effective program of injury and illness prevention.

### **II. Scope**

These procedures apply to all injuries and exposures sustained within the Vivarium, regardless of severity. Incidents can occur even with proper training. Reportable incidents include, but are not limited to, animal bites or scratches, needlesticks, lacerations, and other sharps injuries, slips/trips/falls, musculoskeletal injuries, injuries due to equipment misuse or malfunction, exposure to radiation, and exposures to hazardous chemical or biological materials. All individuals working within the Vivarium, including animal care staff, research personnel, and support staff, are expected to follow these procedures.

### **III. Procedures**

#### **A. Prevention/Preparedness**

##### **1. Required Materials**

- First aid kits in breakroom (room 172) containing the following:
  - Surgical scrub brushes impregnated with antiseptic soap
  - Gauze pads
  - Adhesive tape or non-stick wrap
  - Band-aids
  - Topical antibiotic ointment
- Spill kits available
- Eyewash stations in each room

- Bite/scratch kits in each room
2. Handling of Animals
    - Species-specific animal handling techniques are taught by the Laboratory Animal Resources AV and staff. Researchers should be proficient in these techniques.
    - Direct handling of animals should be avoided by using tongs, bite gloves, squeeze cages, shields, or other protective equipment.
    - Animals known to be aggressive should always be handled with the utmost of care and using an appropriate number of people for the size of the animal.
  3. Secondary infections can occur with bites/scratches or other exposures to common skin, intestinal, and soil bacteria on you or the animal. Exposure to infectious diseases being studied can also lead to infection. Become more familiar with zoonotic diseases by referring to the [Policy: Occupational Health Surveillance for Personnel with Animal Exposure and/or Entering the Vivarium](#).
  4. Maintenance of a safe environment in the Vivarium is the joint responsibility of the Director, LAR, the Animal Care Manager, the Attending Veterinarian, the IACUC, the Nursing Director, and the Environmental Health and Safety Office.

## B. Treatment/Response

1. **For life-threatening emergencies or injuries:** Contact Campus Police ([from a campus phone dial 911; from a cell phone dial 704-687-2200](#)).
2. **For non-life-threatening injuries:**
  - a. **Slips, trips, or falls:**

The following guidance from EHS provides general awareness about contributing factors and tips to prevent these types of accidents in the workplace.

    - Slips, Trips and Falls training
    - [Slips, Trips, and Falls Fact Sheet](#) safety talk
    - Remove the source of the slippery surface
    - Clean up all spills
    - Install caution signs
    - Wear appropriate footwear
    - Submit an [EHS Safety Service Request](#) to report a hazard
    - Call for help/assistance: a co-worker, vivarium staff, and/or emergency services depending on severity, accessibility, and availability.
    - Unless you are in danger from radiation, chemicals, or biological hazards, try not to move without assistance.
    - Treat any exposures and/or open/bleeding wounds (per below).
  - b. **Contact/contamination with hazards (Biological or Chemical)**

- Contact may occur via many different routes including (but not limited to) bite, scratch, needlestick, lacerations, direct or indirect contact with hazards in bedding, splashes to eyes, mucous membranes, or wounds already present on the skin, etc.
  - Bites and scratches should be considered contaminated.
  - If hazards such as chemotherapy or biological infectious agents are being used, they may be in ABSL2/ABSL3 animal housing.
    - A SOP should be posted on the ABSL2/ABSL3 door of the room.
    - Check the SOP for the name of the Principal Investigator and an emergency contact number to contact someone from the lab.
    - The SOP should describe the organism/hazard that the animal has been treated with and safety procedures following human exposure.
    - Follow the safety procedures listed.
  - **For all Chemical Hazards:**
    - Treat the exposure according to the SDS sheet.
      - [Laboratory & Research Safety](#)
      - [Chemical Management: Safety Data Sheets \(SDS\)](#)
      - <https://chemistry.charlotte.edu/safety/>
    - Use the spill kits located in the laundry as needed.
  - **For all Biological Hazards:**
    - For any suspected or actual exposure, immediately scrub the site under running water with a surgical sponge and antiseptic soap (such as Nolvasan® - chlorhexidine or Betadine®-povidone iodine) for at least 15 minutes.
3. After cleaning:
    - **If bleeding**, after cleaning (per above) apply firm pressure. Dry and wrap appropriately (antibiotic ointment, bandages).
    - **If not bleeding**, mark the area with a Band-Aid or circle with a Sharpie marker for identification of the site at follow-up evaluation.
  4. Report the incident/injury to your supervisor and PI. Together, report the incident per section **C. Reporting** (below).
    - Fill out the [Employee Incident Report](#) and **Supervisor Incident Investigation Report** within 24 hours.
 

**Note: Reporting is required for ALL incidents, no matter how minor they may seem.**

**Note: The Employee Incident Report is needed if seeking follow-up treatment for an injury or exposure.**
  5. Contact the UNC Charlotte Institutional Biosafety Officer (704-687-1825) and notify them of the incident and the Biosafety protocol number.
  6. Notify the Laboratory Animal Resources Manager (704-687-5017).
    - Describe the incident and both the Biosafety and Animal Use protocols (with corresponding numbers) under which the work was being performed.

7. Seek follow-up care per **D. Seeking follow-up treatment...** (below).

### C. Reporting

All injuries or illnesses, no matter how minor, shall be reported, evaluated by a supervisor, and treated. Each employee has the responsibility for reporting injuries/illnesses to his/her supervisor and PI using the Employee's Incident Report. The purpose of reporting injuries is threefold:

- To ensure the health of employees by administering appropriate treatment as soon as possible after the injury,
  - To maintain a good, ongoing injury and illness prevention program through investigation and elimination of accident causes,
  - For documentation and recordkeeping.
1. Immediately inform the Animal Care Manager and your Principal Investigator of the incident. This can be a verbal or written report.
  2. Within 24 hours of the incident, fill out the online [Employee Incident Report](#).  
***NOTE: This is especially needed if seeking treatment off campus.***
  3. The Supervisor needs to fill out the **Supervisor Incident Investigation Report** form within 24 hours of the incident.

***NOTE: REPORT THE INCIDENT if there is any chance of exposure to biological, chemical, or radiological hazards. A report needs to be made regardless of whether you seek medical assistance or not. There needs to be a record of the injury in case of illness and/or treatment at a later time.***

### D. Seeking follow-up treatment for an injury or exposure

***NOTE: It is recommended that you seek medical care.***

- For life threatening emergencies or injuries: Contact Campus Police **(from a campus phone dial 911; from a cell phone dial 704-687-2200)**.
- For non-emergent injuries, the Student Health Center is the primary contact.
  - Monday – Friday, 8:30am – 5pm.
  - 9524 Poplar Terrace Drive, Charlotte, NC 28223  
(704) 687-7400
- If the SHC is closed, other options include:
  - FastMed: 2728 W. Mallard Creek Church Rd., Charlotte, NC 28223  
(980) 218-1860
  - University Hospital Emergency Room: 101 W. T. Harris Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28223

- Employees requiring treatment should be escorted by their supervisor and shall provide the signed original [Employee Incident Report](#) to the SHC, urgent care center (FastMed), or hospital.

#### **IV. Non-compliance**

Failure to comply with this and related policies can lead to serious or even potentially fatal health issues. For this reason, lack of compliance is subject to action in accordance with applicable disciplinary procedures.

#### **V. Related Information**

UNC Charlotte is a community in which employees are encouraged to share workplace concerns with the University leadership. An individual may call the Office of Research Protections & Integrity at 704-687-1872 or -1876. Additionally, the [Animal Welfare Concern Report](#) allows anonymous and confidential reporting on matters of concern online.

#### **VI. References and Additional Information**

Occupational Health and Safety in the Care and Use of Research Animals (1997).

[Policy: Occupational Health Surveillance for Personnel with Animal Exposure and/or Entering the Vivarium](#)

[PIM #27 Incident Reporting and Investigation](#)

[EHS Injury Incident Reporting](#)

[Quick Reference Guide for Employees](#) (EHS checklist for incident reporting)

[Medical Providers Authorized for Work-Related Injuries](#)

[Student Health Center](#)

[University Policy: 712 Medical Services](#) (Office of Legal Affairs)

[Supervisor Incident Investigation EHSA Onsite Instructions](#)

[Incident Investigation Guide](#)

#### **VII. Appendices**

##### **A. Contact List**

##### **B. Signage – Injured on the Job**

#### **Supporting Information**

##### **Health & Safety**

- Caution should be used when working with animals.
- Caution should be used around all hazards – chemical or biological.
- Proper PPE should always be used.

##### **Personnel/Training/Responsibilities**

- All vivarium staff will review the related policies and procedures listed.

##### **Required Materials**

- Spill kits
- First Aid Kits
- Eye wash stations

**Guidelines**

- PIM #27
- EHS Injury Incident Reporting
- University Policy: 712 Medical Services

**Quality Control Checks & Acceptance Criteria**

- Vivarium staff will report all injuries via the EHS Injury Incident Report, regardless of severity.

**Review History**

Created April 1, 2024

Approved August 26, 2024

**POLICY: Vivarium Injury Treatment and Reporting  
(Bites, Exposures, and Other Injuries)  
Appendix A**

**If life threatening emergency:  
CALL 911 (Campus Phone) or (704) 687-2200 (Cell Phone)**

**UNC Charlotte Student Health Center**

704-687-7400

<https://studenthealth.charlotte.edu/>

**Laboratory Safety**

704-687-1111

<https://safety.charlotte.edu/services/laboratory-research-safety>

**Biosafety**

704-687-1825 or [uncc-ibc@charlotte.edu](mailto:uncc-ibc@charlotte.edu)

<https://research.charlotte.edu/departments/office-research-protections-and-integrity-orpi/biosafety/>

**Occupational Health Physician via Office of Research Protections & Integrity (ORPI)**

704-687-1872 or [uncc-iacuc@charlotte.edu](mailto:uncc-iacuc@charlotte.edu)

ORPI Occupational Health Surveillance Program information and forms:

<https://research.charlotte.edu/departments/office-research-protections-and-integrity-orpi/animal-care-use/occupational-health-0>

**Mecklenburg County Health Department**

<https://health.mecknc.gov>

Communicable Disease Control ([Bites@CMPD.org](mailto:Bites@CMPD.org) or fax: 704-423-9400)

Charlotte/Mecklenburg Animal Care and Control **Animal Bite/Scratch Referral Form:**

<https://mecknc.widen.net/s/kbvzvr7jmq/victim-bite-scratch-referral-form>

**Zoonotic Disease Consultation/Department of Public Health**

Main line: 919-733-3419 (24hr)

Veterinary Public Health, including Rabies: 919-733-9555

Veterinary Public Health Diseases & Topics: <https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/diseases/vph.html>

Rabies Information: <https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/diseases/rabies.html>

NC Rabies Public Health Program Manual:

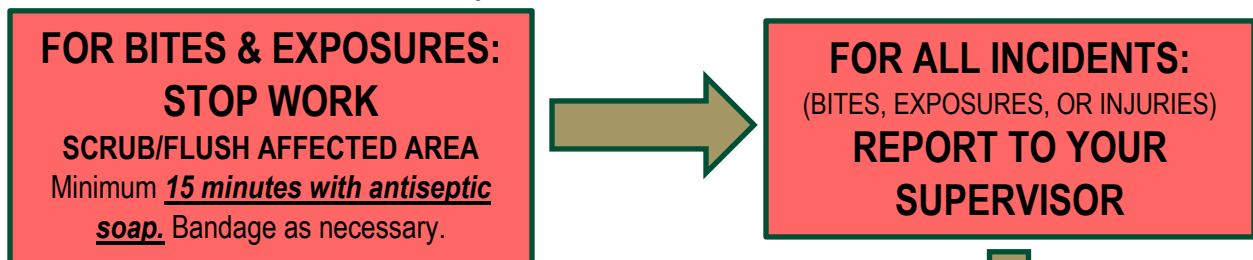
<https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/cd/lhds/manuals/rabies/toc.html>

**Or contact your personal local physician**

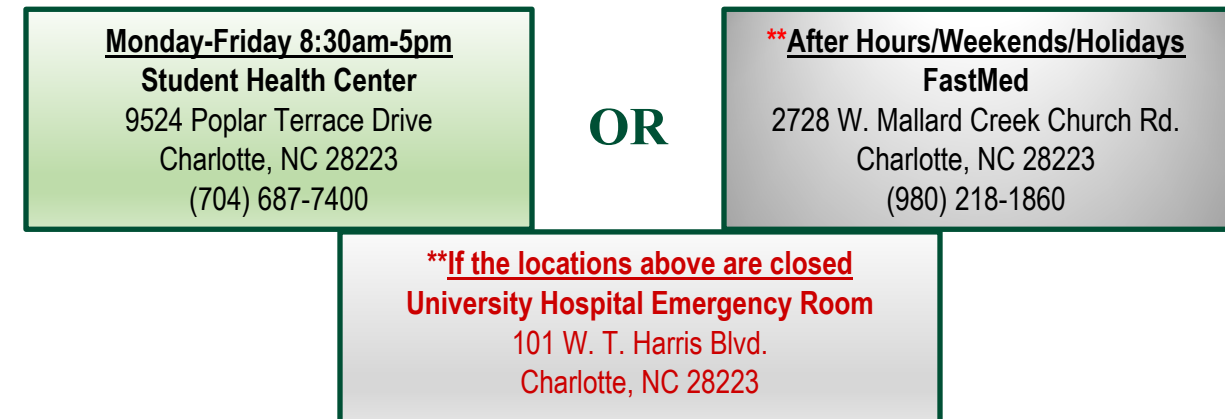
## Injured on the Job?

**In case of life-threatening emergency call:  
911 (Campus Phone) or (704) 687-2200 (Cell Phone)**

### 1. IMMEDIATELY



### 2. SEEK TREATMENT



### 3. REPORT

