Working Safely With Canines

This information is provided to assist you in understanding the potential occupational hazards when working with dogs and the need in some instances to take precautions to minimize the potential for animal-to-human zoonotic disease.

Possible risks when working with dogs
Potential illnesses associated with dogs include Brucella canis, Campylobacter jejuni and Rabies. Dogs used in research have been vaccinated against rabies. However, it may be prudent to consider prophylactic immunization. Bites and scratches may also pose serious problems through trauma and/or bacterial infection. Dogs may also have enteric bacteria such as Salmonella released in the feces. Personnel must wash hands with disinfectant hand soap before leaving the facility. Dogs, like most mammals, can shed fur so anyone with allergies to fur, dander or animal bedding should wear personal protective clothing to minimize discomfort. Dogs may also carry biting insects, such as fleas, so personal protective equipment may also be used in this instance as well.

Bites or scratches involving dogs or injuries from objects contaminated with body fluids from dogs require immediate first aid and medical attention.

Recommended personnel protective equipment (PPE)
Gloves and a laboratory coat (or other dedicated protective clothing such as a scrub suit) must be worn when working with dogs. In some cases protective eye wear is also indicated. Do not eat, drink, or apply cosmetics while working in an animal use area, and always wash your hands after handling dogs. Remember that body fluids and other materials derived from dogs may also pose a risk.

Cleaning and sanitization recommendations
Please contact LAMS Husbandry staff at (513) 558-5171.

Contact Environmental Health & Safety at (513) 556-4968 for any concerns or questions you have about working with dogs or any vertebrate animal and occupational risks. Help with training personnel in specific work practices to minimize risk can be obtained by contacting the LAMS Husbandry Staff at (513) 558-5171.